

THE ILLUSIONS OF NEW INDIA

BY

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CALCUTTA :

W. NEWMAN & CO.

1916

Price Three Rupees

BEE PRESS:
Printer:—PASHUPATI GHOSH,
31-5, Dharamtala Street,
CALCUTTA.

PREFACE

MOTHER India is usually regarded by us, her Western-educated sons, as an invalid; and it is considered to be a point of patriotism with the great majority of us to try to restore her to health by the assiduous application of various foreign remedies. The fact that notwithstanding such application her condition has been deteriorating, instead of improving, during the last half century set me sometime ago to watch and observe her closely. The results of this observation are:—

First. That I have not noticed anything seriously wrong with her.

Secondly. That it is true, as I have just said she has latterly been getting worse, and been exhibiting symptoms of an alarming character. This is, no doubt, due, in part, to the operation of a complication of causes. But, I firmly believe, that it is also, in part, attributable to the injudicious application of unsuitable remedies.

But for these, mother India, would, I expect, be still as hale and hearty a dame as any might be expected to be at her age and the circumstances in which she is placed. She has, no doubt, long since passed the bloom, alertness and activity of her youth, but with them also the numerous snares and pitfalls to which youth is subject; and the best proof of her vitality and recuperative capacity is the fact, that she has successfully withstood the ravages of time for untold centuries. She does not make such a brave show as several of her proud and powerful young sisters of the West. Nevertheless, in all her native simplicity she appears to me to be radiant with an ethereal beauty, and a calm, healthy, benignant expression which it would take the latter long to attain, if, indeed, they live long enough to attain it at all.

This is my humble answer to one of the charges which some of my Neo-Indian brethren who have the patience to go through this book will probably bring against me—the charge of pessimism. I am certainly pessimistic about the outlandish remedies our Mother is plied with;

and the purpose of this work is to expose their injurious tendencies. But I am pessimistic about the remedies, because I am optimistic about the condition of the patient, because I am fully convinced that they are not suited to her constitution, and that they are aggravating rather than alleviating the insalutary effects of unavoidable causes of an adverse character, and are, on the whole, doing her more harm than good. Treated as an invalid, she is gradually becoming one, and losing confidence in her own recuperative power. She undoubtedly has her ailments. But for them such drastic treatment in accordance with the methods and principles of an immature civilization as is resorted to by my Neo-Indian friends is quite uncalled for and is decidedly harmful.

From the conversations I have had with friends in regard to the views expressed in this work, I may anticipate another criticism of an adverse character—that I am destructive and have but little to offer by way of construction. On this point I have to observe:—

First. In reality, it is my Neo-Indian compatriots who have been destructive.

Consciously or unconsciously, with the best of motives, no doubt, they have been doing their utmost to demolish an old structure with a safe and strong foundation which has hitherto afforded as happy a home as any nation may reasonably aspire to have, and to raise a new structure after the Western pattern. I have in this work endeavoured to show how very insecure the foundation of this new structure is, and how very illusory is the prospect of its affording a nappier home than the one we are deserting. Thus, in one sense, the tendency of this work is destructive, but destructive of what I conceive to be an unsubstantial, though imposing "castle in the air" on the erection of which a good deal of energy is being wasted. In another sense, it is preservative, for in trying to pull down this newly started structure, I am indirectly seeking to preserve the old one.

Secondly. I confess I have nothing new to construct. Throughout this work there are

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abundant hints which show my predilection for our modest old home. It certainly needs repairs; and I propose in a future work to state my ideas of the lines on which the reforms should be carried on.

RANCHI, INDIA, }
April, 1916. }

P. N. BOSE.

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THE ILLUSIONS OF NEW INDIA

INTRODUCTION

NEW India is the product of the various forces of Western Civilization, which have been in continuous operation in this country for nearly four generations. If they had been of a temporary character, the dream of the poet, that the East would "bow low before the blast," let the "legions thunder past", and then "plunge in thought" again might have been realised. But the "blast" has proved not to be a casual visitation, and the "legions" have but little consideration for the introspective proclivity of the East and are not in a hurry to "thunder past." A century, however,

is not a very long time in the life of a nation, and the prediction of the poet-Seer may yet be fulfilled. But, for the present, the persistence and the annually accelerated intensity of the forces of Western Civilization have created a new India, as they have created a new Japan, and are creating a new China. And new India regards the methods and ideals of that civilization to be so superior to those of Hindu civilization as to render their propagation to be, on the whole at least, a boon and a blessing, and eagerly pursues the path of Western Civilization as the right path of progress and reform.

This is the great Illusion of new India. The causes for it are not very far to seek. In the first place, new India consists of people who have been educated on Western lines—Neo-Indians as they may be conveniently called. Macaulay had the foresight to predict that English education would train up a “class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect.” That is exactly what has happened. The Western-educated Indian can hardly be said to have a mind of his own. It

is more or less a shadow, a reflection of the Western mind. I find this passage in a work on Indian economics, by a distinguished Indian author, a work the popularity of which may be gauged by the fact of its having run through two editions in four years:—"The rise to a higher standard of life without which no advance in civilization is possible has begun in India."

This is only an echo of the prevailing Western view, that we are just emerging from a lower to a higher state of civilization under Western tutelage. The Western-educated Indian does not pause to ponder whether this "rise" adds to our social efficiency, whether it does not rather diminish it—materially by attenuating to the vanishing point our meagre margin between sufficiency and privation, and morally by inordinately enhancing the stringency of the struggle for animal existence, and thereby leading to the scramble of individual against individual and of class against class and the consequent diminution of that spirit of benevolence and of social service which has so long cemented our society together, and to various other ethical obliquities.

It cannot be gainsaid, that a rise to a higher standard of living is the necessary concomitant of advance in civilization. Such a rise took place in the case of the Hindus as they advanced in civilization some two thousand years ago, and until recently they kept to the standard of decency, comfort and luxury which they then attained. The so called "rise" which is now taking place under the influence of a highly materialistic culture like the modern is only an exchange of the indigenous standard of decency, cleanliness, comfort, and luxury for an exotic one. The exchange, instead of benefiting our community, is, on the whole, doing endless mischief. For instance, in a climate where the minimum of clothing consistent with the indigenous idea of decency, is conducive to health and comfort, the swathing of the body in a multiplicity of cumbersome apparel from head to foot in accordance with the Western idea of decency, produces discomfort, injures health, and drains the purse without any equivalent advantage.

The bias of education, formed at the most impressionable time of life, is always very strong

and very difficult to remove. It has made the typical Neo-Indian more or less an automaton, moving, acting, and talking much as the Occidental would make him do. He hesitates to take single step for which there is no precedent in the West. He attempts nothing which is not likely to meet with Western approbation, and nothing passes with him which has not the "hall-mark" of Western approval. He merely echoes the views and shibboleths of the Westerner and does it with all the zeal of a neophyte. The Occidental—naturally enough from his view-point—regards the sparsely clad Indian of simple habits living in the style of his forefathers as but little removed from a barbaric condition. His Indian disciple, as we have just seen, forthwith pleads vehemently for a "rise in the standard of living" after the Western fashion as essential for the emergence of his compatriots from such condition, forces up the demand for drapery and all the tawdry paraphernalia of Western Civilization hundredfold, and thus adds fresh links to the ever-lengthening chain of India's industrial slavery and swells the volume

of an exhausting economical drain. The European accustomed to a different state of society, and but little acquainted with ours, views, as a rule, the restricted freedom of higher class Hindu females, the comparative seclusion in which they live and their untiring wholehearted, selfsacrificing devotion to household duties as little better than a state of drudgery and bondage, and, unable to reconcile illiteracy with enlightenment, regards them as immersed in darkness. New India at once rings with the cry of the "degraded condition of our womanhood" from end to end; the unregenerate males of old India are reprobated by a hundred tongues and castigated by a thousand pens for perversely keeping their women in a condition of slavery wallowing in the slough of ignorance. That there is room for reform in Hindu society as there is in every other society goes without saying. But the Neo-Indian reformer knows no way of reform except that of Western Civilization; and burning with zeal he loudly proclaims the gospel of female emancipation on Western lines, and girds up to lift up the benighted females by

making the mraice with the males along the paths of University education and Western Civilization little reflecting upon the goal to which they are likely to lead and to which they are already leading in the West. The Upanishads were for a long time sealed books to the Neo-Indian. But when a Western philosopher (Schopenhauer) declared emphatically, that "in the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads," and that "it had been the solace of his life, and would be the solace of his death," he began to see that there might really be something in them and to pay them some sort of lip-homage. Vedantism, the most scientific religion which civilized man has risen to as yet, has for good many centuries been, and still is the dominant creed of the enlightened in old India ; but new India knew but little of it until it secured the adherence of Max Muller, Deussen, and other European savants. Even now, the great majority of the Neo-Indians, like the great majority of the Westerners, look upon Vedantism and similar products of ancient Hindu culture much as they

look upon Museum specimens of palæontological and archæological curiosities. The Caste-System is generally regarded by the Westerner as a "monstrous engine of pride, dissension, and shame," and the Neo-Indian, following his lead anathematizes it and exclaims from house-tops: "Our character is being unhinged, our divisions and dissensions are being sharpened, our activities for public good are being weakened, our very national existence is being threatened by this demon of caste, which has made, and is making cowards of us." Sour milk which has for ages been an indispensable article of the dietary of old India was interdicted in Neo-Indian gastronomy until Metchnikoff certified to its manifold virtues. Deep breathing which has, for untold generations, been a well recognised means of Hindu self-culture is now attracting the attention of the Neo-Indian, because it has been commended by some Western scientists. The new school of indigenous painting which has arisen in Bengal could not have made the headway it has were not its cause championed by a few appreciative Europeans.

It should be observed, that new India is no longer characterised by that attitude of aggressive hostility which it assumed towards old India in the early years of English education. It was not enough for the first generation of English-educated youths, at least in Bengal, to show their liberation from Hindu superstition by taking beef and drinking spirituous liquors, but some of them went so far as to purposely offend their orthodox neighbours by throwing beefbones into their houses. Happily, new India is now generally free from this pugnacious spirit, and there has of late been considerable abatement of the drink evil among the Neo-Indians. Reciprocal action between new India and old India has been gradually increasing. But in this interaction, new India is decidedly the more articulate, if not the stronger factor. There has recently grown in new India what is known as national consciousness. But the new idea of nationality is entirely Western in as much as it rests solely upon politics. It is antagonistic to cosmopolitanism and has led to the perverse Western doctrine of the "State being superior

to every moral rule." It no doubt fosters patriotism. But patriotism is a virtue of lower order than cosmopolitanism. In fact, unless the interests of a nation are subordinated to those of humanity, it may degenerate into a vice. The Hindus have always been a nation, but not a nation in the narrow Western sense. Their idea of nationality was broad-based upon religion. It is the bond of religion, almost impalpable though it may often seem to be, which has hitherto formed the chief nexus between the congeries of heterogeneous tribes, castes and sects which compose the Hindu nation. They have not been "patriotic" in the Western sense. They did not concern themselves much with the central Government so long as the Government was not oppressive, did not exceed the traditional limits of taxation, and did not interfere with their religious and socio-religious practices. Humane, just rulers like Akbar, though foreigners, were, nevertheless, highly popular, but they offered a most determined national opposition to Mahomedan rule during the reign of the bigoted Aurangzeb, who persecuted them,

reinforced the *Jezia* (a capitation tax on the Hindus), demolished their temples, forbade them to ride in palanquins without permission, and called upon them to pay heavier duties than the Mahomedans. And the opposition which these measures evoked shook the foundations of the Empire which had been built up by the enlightened and tolerant policy of his predecessors.

Old India did not care much about the central Government, because it enjoyed a measure of real self-government greater even than that of the most democratic governments of the West, in that it managed its own affairs social, educational, sanitary, industrial, legal, &c. "India for the Indians" is the vision of new India. But it is a vision of Westernised India to be realised on Western methods, some of which have brought catastrophic consequences upon patriotic young men of a generous and selfless disposition. New India views with apathy and indifference the crumbling away of a homely but substantial structure of real democratic self-government, but is almost delirious with ecstatic joy when a few additional seats are vouchsafed on the Legislative Councils.

The late Swami Vivekananda, originally a Neo-Indian, became one of the most eminent apostles of old India. But, it appears that, even he could not shake off his pro-Western prepossessions. As a writer points out in the *Modern Review*, "he was never tired of emphasizing the fact, that our present condition is one of *Tamas* however much we may mistake it for *Sattva*. The West is in the *Rajasik* stage, and we must pass through that stage, before we can attain the stable equilibrium of the *Sattvik* stage. That way alone salvation lies, the other is the way to death."*

This is the Occidental view, and it is rather surprising, that Vivekananda, who might not unreasonably be expected to be well acquainted with the relation between the Indian and the Western Civilization, should have been so largely influenced by it. The *Tamasa* stage roughly corresponds to the first stage of civilization as defined by me in my "Epochs of Civilization," as the *Rajasa* does to the second, and the *Sattvik* to the third. In every community, however civilized, there are

* The *Modern Review*, November 1913, p. 442.

people of these three stages, those belonging to the lowest being numerically preponderant. A nation may be said to have attained the third or *Sattvik* stage when the people of that stage, always the smallest class, influence the ideals and activities of those belonging to the other stages. Judged by this standard our forefathers reached the highest stage of civilization during the last epoch. As the attainment of the harmonious and equipoised condition of that stage necessarily involves loss of mobility to a great extent, Hindu civilization has since then been exuberantly encrusted with thick parasitic outgrowths of ignorance and superstition, the products of stagnation. And there are many people who mistake the exterior encrustation for the interior real thing. The function of our great men has always been to remove the adventitious excrescences and expose the underlying genuine substance to the blurred vision of such misguided people. That there is still, and there will always be much "spade-work" to do in this way is unquestionable. But it would, nevertheless, be a travesty of history to say with the Western

writers that our civilization is extinct, and that we have lapsed into the *Tamasa* stage. Any one who has mixed with our people, especially away from large cities, would, I think, agree with me when I say, that they are still to a large extent pervaded by the Hindu ideals of self-abnegation and benevolence, and that there is still much less of animality in them than in the corresponding classes in the West. The number of criminals, especially of female criminals in proportion to the total population in India is much less than in the highly civilized countries of the West. I was touring in the Central Provinces during the great famine of 1898, and was greatly struck by the patient resignation with which they bore the dire calamity and the benevolent spirit in which they helped one another. There were no riots, no increase in crimes to speak of. There is more poverty here than in the West, and more ignorance judged by the standard of literacy, but there is much less of squalor and brutality, much less of degradation and misery. Our community still produces men of the *Sattvik* type, though their number is much smaller than before, and they still

exert considerable influence upon the other classes. They rarely, if ever, appear in newspaper; what they do is done in silence and secrecy. While touring in the Rewah State in the nineties of the last century, I was surprised to find that the Gonds of an extensive tract in that state, who, like most other aboriginal tribes are generally addicted to intoxicating drinks, had given up drinking; and on inquiry, I found out the reason to be the fiat of a *Yogi* who had visited the state sometime before me.

"His order had gone forth from village to village, and the Gonds without question had become total abstainers. No crusade against intemperance could have produced such a wonderful and widespread result. There are no doubt charlatans among the *Yogis* who live upon the credulity of ignorant people. But there cannot be the shadow of a doubt, that there are also genuine men among them, men who devote their lives to spiritual culture in a manner inconceivable to the European."^{*}

The pro-Western bias of new India imbibed with Western education and fostered by the Western environment is further strengthened by the prestige, the power, and the apparent prosperity and success of Western Civilization. The

^{*} *A History of Hindu Civilization under British Rule*, Vol. I, p. xii.

vision of new India is bedimmed by the glamour of the magnificent material and inventive achievements of the West. There is nothing which ordinary people worship more than mundane power and prosperity whether in individuals or in communities, and the most puissant and apparently prosperous nations of the present day belong to the West. I have elsewhere tried to show that Western Civilization is still in the second stage, the stage of intellectual progress; that it has not yet attained the degree of ethical culture which is necessary to insure its stability; that the practical applications of Natural Science to Industry on such a gigantic scale which constitute its distinguishing feature have done more harm than good to humanity as a whole; and that the inventive achievements of the West are more a matter for condemnation than for commendation.* The Western nations are, however, under the illusion that their material developments are advancing them on the path of civilization and

* *Europe of Civilization*, pp. 285 et seq.

Essays and Lectures, pp. 231—272.

The Root cause of the Great War, pp. 31—50.

are, on the whole at least, making for their own welfare as well as the welfare of humanity outside the pale of Western Civilization. It is this illusion which in the case of otherwise clear-sighted and level-headed men occludes the causal connexion which to us appears to subsist between the recent industrial and inventive miracles of the West and the manifold evils of Western Civilization that spring from its capitalism, mammonism and militarism, evils which all right-thinking men so heartily denounce and deplore.

This illusion is shared by all who are obsessed by Western views, Neo-Indians among them. They heedlessly abandon their moorings in the ancient harbour which had been discovered by their ancestors over two thousand years ago after breasting many a storm, and make frantic efforts to follow in the wake of the interpid, but as yet inexperienced mariners of the West in quest of the "Happy Isles." They do not reflect where those "Happy Isles" are, what they are like, and whether they are likely to be discovered or not, the more thoughtful among the Westerns themselves being apprehensive of the not unlikely

contingency of being "devoured by the waves" before that much coveted consummation.* There have been, and still are philosophically disposed men in the West who appraise their civilization rightly. Rousseau went so far as to declare, that "if he were a chief of an African tribe he would erect on his frontier a gallows, on which he would hang without mercy the first European who should venture to pass into his territory, and the first native who should dare to pass out of it," and Rousseau lived long before the miraculous inventive, industrial and armament development of the present age. A thoughtful English writer speaking of the "grip of the West" which has begun to close on China, says, that it "will more and more be felt in the general dissemination of ugliness, meanness, and insincerity throughout the empire." "In Japan, as in India and in China," says the same writer, "but in Japan in pre-eminent degree,

* "Come, my friends,

'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.

It may be that the gulfs will wash us down :

It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles."

Tennyson, *Ulysses*.

one is struck by the rout of æsthetic taste before the Western invasion. In old Japan roughly everything was beautiful; in modern Japan everything is hideous.”*

The great world-war which is now raging in Europe and Eastern Asia should serve to disillusion new India. But whether it will really do so or not will depend upon how long it continues, and whether it will disillusion the Western world or not in regard to the real value of its culture. As I have said elsewhere, “the materialism of modern culture accounts for its being kept down at a level not very far removed from the barbaric. The inhumanities and barbarities perpetrated in connection with the war remind one of the savageries of the Huns and Vandals. What a sorry spectacle, that such a large portion of the best manhood of the great nations of Europe should be engaged either in making munitions or in being trained to be ‘food for powder,’ that the colossal wealth derived from the exploitation and spoliation of countless

* *Civilisations of India, China and Japan* by G. Lowes Dickinson, p. 52.

toilers all over the habitable globe should be so heedlessly and recklessly shot away! What a sad waste of energy! Such a consummation of culture is reminiscent rather of the stone age than of the most advanced stage of the latest epoch of civilization".*

One has glimpses of the searching of the heart and of spiritual awakening in the current Western war literature which may eventuate in the disillusionment of the West, and consequently of the Westernised East also. The following very sensible passages, for instance, occur in the Papers for War Time published by the Oxford University Press:

"We point to the long history of Prussian aggressiveness, to the writings of Nietzsche, Treitschke, and Bernhardt, to the violation of Belgian neutrality. But even if the beam is in Germany's eye, and only the mote in ours, we cannot deny that the mote at least is there. And is it only a mote? Our history and our position have made us more commercial than military; but in our industrial system we have let loose the spirit of grab and push, the oppression of the weak and the admiration of mere success, as scarcely any other land has done. This is the spirit, which, in its military shape, seems to us the evil genius of Prussia."—*Christianity and War*.

"Current events are telling us that our civilisation has

* *The Root cause of the great War*, p. 29.

outrun its moral resources We have come to a stage where mankind cannot even hold the ground it has gained without a large accession of moral and spiritual powers. The vaster issues of this time demand that the normal man shall be a more thoughtful and self-forgetful creature than he at present is. The ancient commandments of love to God and to our neighbour return upon us with extraordinary urgency of appeal to-day."—*Active Service: The Share of the Non-combatant*. "Two things menace peace, one externally, the other internally. They are militarism and luxury. While our men go forth to fight the one, women at home must finally crush the other. Extravagance in dress and food has become as competitive as our armaments, and if the budget for armaments has been in the hands of men, women have been chiefly responsible for the budget for luxury."—*The Women's Part*.

Whether the disillusionment will come or not is still a matter for speculation. In the meantime, the "terrible prestige" and apparent prosperity of Western Civilization hold enthralled the mind of new India. Just as fishes are attracted by the torchlight of the fisherman only to be caught in his net and be killed sooner or later, so are numbers of Neo-Indians enticed by the glitter and glamour of Western Civilization to be entangled in the silken meshes of its finely knit, widespread net and be ultimately strangled—strangled mentally, physically, morally and spiritually.

CHAPTER I.

THE ILLUSION OF INTELLECTUAL PROGRESS.

The Neo-Indian is so fully convinced of the beneficence of the present system of Education on Western lines, and is so enamoured with it, that he constantly urges its extension in the press and on the platform, for males as well as for females, for the upper as well as for the lower classes ; and recently he earnestly sought to make the primary education which is in vogue now compulsory. He measures the progress of any particular area, or of any particular section of the population by its progress in literacy on Western methods. The Neo-Indian scholar considers himself so far above the learned of old India, that they evoke in him a complacent feeling of benignant patronage, if not of contemptuous indifference. A discussion at a meeting of the Senate of the Bombay University,

held in October, 1913, will illustrate the attitude of new India in this respect. The discussion arose out of the following letter from the Secretary to the Government of Bombay, Education Department, to the Registrar of the University :—

"I am directed to state that at the conference of Orientalists held at Simla in July, 1911, there was a general consensus of opinion that it was necessary while making provision for Oriental study and research on modern critical lines, to maintain side by side with it the ancient and indigenous systems of instruction, since the world of studentship would, it was thought, suffer irreparable loss if the old type of pandit and maulavi were to die out, and that what was needed to promote this indigenous system was encouragement rather than reform. With this object in view it has been suggested that a Sanskrit school might be established at Poona for the training of pandits. The school should be furnished with a good library to which the collection of manuscripts at the Deccan College might be transferred. The students at the proposed school would be partly pandits engaged in the acquisition of Oriental learning on the traditional lines, and partly graduates interested either in Oriental research or in extending their knowledge of the more recondite branches of Oriental studies. The staff would consist partly of the repositories of the ancient traditional learning and partly of modern Oriental scholars. Provision would also be made for the imparting of an elementary knowledge of the English language to the pandit students, and of the German and French languages, a knowledge of which is necessary for the study of modern methods of criticism."

In connection with this letter an elderly Fellow of the Bombay University, who is on the borderland between old and new India, proposed:—

“That Government be informed that the University is prepared to establish a branch of Oriental studies with suitable titles of distinction if arrangements are made for the teaching of this branch of knowledge generally on the lines indicated in the Government letter.”

This proposal met with a storm of opposition which was led by a prominent representative of new India. So far as I can gather, his reasons for opposing it are—

First: The traditional mode of learning developed the faculty of “cramming.”

Secondly: It was adverse to “liberal education.”

“The old traditional learning,” said this gentleman, “would not stand the test of modern ideas. They should leave the pandits to take care of themselves. If Government desired to give them encouragement let them do so, but the University should have nothing to do with them. He did not want traditional learning at the expense of liberal culture.”

Another Neo-Indian gentleman in seconding the amendment said, that

"he was surprised that at that time of the day they should talk of the preservation of the pandits. Considering the harmful mode of their learning it was not advisable for the University to recognise them by instituting degrees. The University should not extend its recognition to any one who had not acquired an insight into what he called the modern outlook of life. The pandits' outlook of life was so narrow, and the traditional school of learning was so harmful and opposed to modern learning, that by encouraging it they would not be encouraging what was termed liberal education."

Poor pandits ! The fact that such men as Bhâskarâchârya, Râmânuja, Râmânanda, Mâdhavâchârya, Chaitanya, Râmmohan Râya, Isvara Chandra Vidyâsâgara, Bâpudeva Sâstri and Dayânanda Sarasvati have come from their ranks in comparatively recent times—not to speak of the great sages and scientists who flourished during the heyday of our civilization—should have afforded food for reflection to men who have any pretension to "liberal" education. That there are serious defects in the indigenous system of higher education would be readily admitted by all who know anything about it. But it is not so harmful, nor does it compare so very unfavourably with the system of English education in vogue among us, as to be undeserving of the small measure of

encouragement vouchsafed by Government. There is I think, no less of "cramming" among us than among the pandits. They exercise their memory to be thorough, we do so merely to pass examinations. Thoroughness and profundity are writ large on the brow of the pandits, as superficiality and shallowness on ours. Then, in regard to the matter "crammed," I am not sure that we can reasonably boast of superior discriminative capacity, when we remember that a good portion of our time has been consumed in committing to memory such things as the feats (with dates) of glorified assassins, murderers, freebooters, and swindlers.

A tree is to be judged by its fruit; and I have grave doubts if the fruit of the exotic recently planted is so markedly superior to that of the indigenous plant that we can despise it and leave it to perish. The pandit is the embodiment of a high cultural ideal which actuates but few of us. He is but little influenced by commercial considerations. He not only imparts education without any fee but also feeds his pupils; and though "Brahmacharya" has

undergone considerable relaxation of late, the physical and mental discipline they are still subjected to is far more wholesome than what is enforced in our English schools.

Physically, intellectually, and morally the average pandit does not compare at all unfavourably with the average product of English education. I doubt if the pandits as a body are more narrow-minded and illiberal than such sticklers for "liberal culture" as the Neo-Indian scholars who have arraigned them. Lest I should be charged with bias in favour of the pandits, I shall cite the testimony of some Western scholars.

"The Brahmans who compiled," says H. H. Wilson, "a code Hindu law, by command of Warren Hastings preface their performance by affirming the equal merit of every form of religious worship. Contrarities of belief, and diversities of religion, they say, are in fact part of the scheme of Providence; for as a painter gives beauty to a picture by a variety of colours, or as a gardener embellishes his garden with flowers of every hue, so God appointed to every tribe its own religion, that man might glorify him in diverse modes, all having the same end, and being equally acceptable in his sight. To the same effect it is stated by Dr. Mill in his preface to the *Khrista Sangita*, or *Sacred History of Christ*, in Sanskrit verse, that he had witnessed the eager reception of the work by devotees from every part of India, even in the

temple of Kali, near Calcutta, and that it was read and chanted by them with a full knowledge of its anti-idolatrous tendency.”*

It would be difficult to find such catholicity and philosophic toleration even now in many parts of the civilized West.

Max Müller thus writes about the pandits:—

“During the last twenty years, however, I have had some excellent opportunities of watching a number of native scholars under circumstances where it is not difficult to detect a man's true character, I mean in literary work and, more particularly, in literary controversy. I have watched them carrying on such controversies both among themselves and with certain European scholars, and feel bound to say that, with hardly one exception, they have displayed a far greater respect for truth, and a far more manly and generous spirit than we are accustomed to even in Europe and America. They have shown strength, but no rudeness; nay I know that nothing has surprised them so much as the coarse invective to which certain Sanskrit scholars have condescended, rudeness of speech being, according to their view of human nature, a safe sign not only of bad breeding, but of want of knowledge. When they were wrong, they have readily admitted their mistakes; when they were right, they have never sneered at their European adversaries. There have been, with few exceptions, no quibbling, no special pleading, no untruthfulness on their part, and certainly none of the low cunning of the scholar who writes down and publishes what he knows perfectly well to be false, and snaps his fingers at those who still value truth and self-respect

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more highly than victory or applause at any price. Here too, we might possibly gain by the import cargo. Let me add that I have been repeatedly told by English merchants that commercial integrity stands higher in India than in any other country, and that a dishonoured bill is hardly known there.”*

Mr. Adam gives the following interesting description of the pandits:†

“ I saw men not only unpretending, but plain and simple in their manners, and though seldom, if ever, offensively coarse, yet reminding me of the very humblest classes of English and Scottish peasantry; living constantly half-naked and realising in this respect the descriptions of savage life; inhabiting huts which, if you connect moral consequences with physical causes, might be supposed to have the effect of stunting the growth of their minds, or in which only the most contracted minds might be supposed to have room to dwell—and yet several of these men are adepts in the subtleties of the profoundest grammar of what is probably the most philosophical language in existence, not only practically skilled in the niceties of its usage but also in the principles of its structure; familiar with all the varieties and applications of their national laws and literature and indulging in the abstrusest and most interesting disquisitions in logical and ethical Philosophy. They are, in general, shrewd, discriminating and mild; in their demeanour. The modesty of their character does not consist in abjectness to a supposed or official superior, but is equally shown to each other. I have observed some of the worthiest speak with unaffected humility of their own pretensions to

* *India : what can it teach us*, Lecture II.

† Quoted in F. W. Thomas' *History and Prospects of British Education in India*, p. 8.

learning, with admiration of the learning of a stranger and countryman who was present, with high respect of the learning of a townsman who happened to be absent, and with just praise of the learning of another townsman after he had retired, although in his presence they were silent respecting his attainments."

The pandits have at least preserved the precious heritage bequeathed by our ancestors. But for them much of it would have been irrecoverably lost. Instead of being grateful to them, to load them with contumely, argues a degree of flippancy and narrowmindedness which one would be loath to associate with "liberal culture." Our outlook on life is certainly broader than that of the pandits. But how many of us have either the time or the inclination to inquire whether it is not shallower than of yore? We have learnt to take a brighter view of mundane life than the pandits, but is not much of the brightness the mere shine of flimsy tinsel?

Education is obviously a means to an end. That end is knowledge. But all knowledge is not desirable, as, for instance, the kind of knowledge which enables one to practise robbery or murder more efficiently and more scientifically than he would be able to do without it. From

this point of view, the spread of the knowledge of submarines, large, long-range, quickfiring guns, aeroplanes, asphyxiating gases, explosives, &c. is condemnable. Had the Western world been more discriminating and more careful to check the dissemination of such knowledge, it would not have been landed in such a disastrous situation as it is occupying at present. But the Westerners have been under the delusion that the practical applications of physical science to the art of war would make war less frequent and less destructive. The wars of the present century, especially the titanic warfare which is now being carried on, have frustrated this expectation, and will, I hope, serve to disillusion them.

Right knowledge, then, is the end of education. But what is right knowledge? There is a certain amount of conflict of opinion between the Ancients and the Moderns in this respect. With the Hindu sages the goal of knowledge was ethical and spiritual advancement. Every system of Hindu philosophy whether theistic, pantheistic, monistic or even agnostic, recognises the salvation of the soul as its end. Its object is to secure

the good or well-being of humanity by the development of the inner life for which more or less of abstention from sensual gratification, a life of more or less ascetic simplicity is requisite. In this respect Hindu culture is at one with the Roman or Greek culture. No Hindu teacher could have exhorted his disciples to be independent of external circumstances and bodily conditions more forcibly or more earnestly than did the Socratic or the Stoic sage. Even Epicurus, with whom pleasure was the sole ultimate good, maintained the immense superiority of the pleasures of the mind over those of the body, and the Epicurean sage no less than the Vedantic sought for happiness and tranquillity of soul from within rather than from without. The ancient philosopher, Eastern as well as Western, strove to keep the struggle for animal existence to the lowest point of animal necessity in order that one might be free, so far as possible, from the moral corruption incidental to it, and might, if he chose, devote more time and energy to the higher and more arduous struggle for spiritual development than he would otherwise be able to do.

The Bhagavatgītā says :—

सर्वभूतेषु, येनैकं भावमव्ययमीक्षते ।
अविभक्तं विभक्तेषु, तज्जानं विद्धि सात्त्विकम् ॥

“That by which the one Indestructible Being is seen in all beings, the Inseparated in the separated, know thou that knowledge is pure.”

One of the popular definitions of a really learned man, a pandit, is :—

मातृवत् परदारेषु, परद्रव्येषु, लीट्टवत् ।
आत्मवत् सर्वभूतेषु, यः पश्यति सः पण्डितः ॥

The learned man is he who looks upon the wives of others as his mothers; upon other people's things as mere stones, and upon all beings as his own self.

This Hindu ideal of knowledge is based upon a profound sociological interpretation. Excessive material development is the characteristic of the first stage of civilisation and the tendency of this growth is to take man away from Nature and his fellows; and make him, on the whole, less moral than the average savage. The fact is well known in India, that the aborigines, such

as the Sonthals, Mundas, Khasias, Gonds, etc., are in their primitive state remarkable for their honesty, truthfulness, straightforwardness, and benevolence (within their own community). But as soon as they come into close contact with civilization and rise to its first stage, they imbibe traits of character which are just the reverse of these. The same remark generally holds good in regard to savages in other parts of the world. Russell Wallace, for instance, observes: "I have lived with communities of savages in South America and in the East, who have no laws or law courts, but the public opinion of the village freely expressed. Each man scrupulously respects the rights of his fellows, and any infraction of those rights rarely or never takes place. In such a community all are nearly equal. There are none of those wide distinctions of education and ignorance, wealth and poverty, master and servants, which are the products of our civilization. There is not that severe competition and struggle for existence or for wealth, which the dense population of civilized countries inevitably creates. All incitements to great crimes

are thus wanting and petty ones are repressed, partly by the influence of public opinion, but chiefly by that natural sense of justice and of his neighbour's rights, which seems to be in some degree inherent in every race of man. Now although we have progressed vastly beyond the savage state in intellectual achievements, we have not advanced equally in morals.....It is not too much to say, that the mass of our population have not at all advanced beyond the savage code of morals, and have in many cases sunk below it."

"Fundamentally," says A de Quatrefages, "the White, even when civilized, from the moral point of view is scarcely better than the Negro, and too often by his conduct in the midst of inferior races has justified the argument opposed by a Melagache to a missionary: 'Your soldiers seduce our women.....You come to rob us of our land, pillage the country, and make war against us; and you wish to force your God upon us, saying that He forbids robbery, pillage, and war, go; you are white upon one side, and black upon another.' Such is the criticism of a savage.

The following is that of a European, M. Rose, giving his opinion of his own countrymen: "The people are simple and confiding when we arrive, perfidious when we leave them. Once sober, brave and honest, we make them drunken, lazy and finally thieves. After having inoculated them with our vices, we employ these vices, as an argument for their destruction.' However severe these conclusions may appear, they are unfortunately true, and the history of the relations of Europeans with the populations they have encountered in America, at the Cape, and in Oceania justify them only too fully."*

The end of civilization in its higher phases should be to set free and develop forces which by promoting ethical and spiritual development would counteract the evil influences of the excessive material development of the lower. Education is one of the most important of such forces, and the Indian sages with very commendable foresight directed it towards that end. The standard of right knowledge which they

* *The Human Species*. (International Scientific Series) Second edition, pp. 461-462.

prescribed is certainly conducive to the highest ethical and spiritual development, and to the happiness of the individual as well as of the community.

But, as in this world, the soul cannot remain without the body, material progress up to a certain point is the necessary antecedent to ethical and spiritual development. Knowledge which secures the former must precede, or be concomitant with that which makes for the latter. The object of education with the Hindus is thus twofold—primarily ethical and spiritual unfolding on a rationalistic basis without which such unfolding has but little value, and secondarily material development. This view is not in consonance with the view which is prevalent in the West at the present day. James Mill, for instance, lays down the end of education to be, "to render the individual, as much as possible, an instrument of happiness, first to himself, and next to other beings." Here egoism is placed before altruism. True, in practice, that is generally the case. Man, like all other animals, being naturally egoistic, it is not at

all necessary to tell him that he must regard his own interests before those of others. He would do that of his own accord. On the contrary, it is only a very strong impulse towards self-abnegation which can make him practise it even to a small extent. The gospel which puts egoism before altruism ends as a rule, in egoism but little mitigated by altruism as has been the case in the West. The egoistic force is naturally so very strong that an unusually strong altruistic force is needed to counteract its effects. That is why Indian sages, whether Hindu or Buddhist, have laid so much stress upon self-lessness.

There is another point on which the Indian ideal of education is still more strongly at variance with the current Western ideal, and that is the means by which "happiness" is to be secured. The Hindus seek it more by self-denial than by self-indulgence, more by curtailing the animal wants of life than by increasing them, more by suppressing desires than by gratifying them. The present-day Westerners, on the other hand, lay a great deal more stress upon external than upon internal conditions, upon the outer than

upon the inner life, upon the gratification of the senses than upon their suppression. The environment counts more than the dominion within. The contrast between the Hindu and the Western ideal of education will be apparent from the following classification by Herbert Spencer of the leading kinds of activity which according to him, constitute human life, in the order of their importance, and which education is intended to subserve:—

“ 1. Those activities which directly minister to self-preservation; 2. those activities which by securing the necessities of life indirectly minister to self-preservation; 3. those activities which have for their end the rearing and discipline of offspring; 4. those activities which are involved in the maintenance of proper social and political relations; 5. those miscellaneous activities which fill up the the leisure part of life devoted to the gratification of tastes and feelings.”*

In this classification, the most important activities, which come under the first two heads, are for material ends. It is only the third and fourth class of activities which concern ethical development, and that too more or less indirectly. They ignore spiritual progress altogether, and do not give that prominence to higher

* *“Education, Intellectual, Moral and Physical,” p. 8.*

moral progress, especially to altruism, which its importance deserves. Highly educated people might efficiently rear and discipline their offspring and maintain proper social and political relations, with a very low code of morals. The case of the Germans is one in point. They are pre-eminent among the Western nations for their social and political efficiency and for the remarkable advance which they have made in education. Yet their standard of morality, especially as revealed by the present war, is atrociously low. The official report of German barbarities drawn up by men of such authority as Lord Bryce, Sir Frederick Pollock, Sir Edward Clarke, Sir Alfred Hopkinson and others is a most appalling document :

“Apart altogether from the looting and burning of thousands of houses, irrefutable evidence is given of the wholesale massacre of unarmed civilians in groups of ten ; of five hundred and a thousand men being fastened to machine guns which were then fired through their bodies ; of women and young girls being stripped, outraged and bayoneted not by scores, but by thousands ; of little children being pierced through the stomach, by German bayonets and carried off thus impaled along the march, their blood dripping down on the uniform of the men, often mutilated in so revolting a fashion that the details cannot be quoted ; of scores of women being

found with their breasts cut off; of babies whose feet and wrists have been severed; of children being nailed to doors by the hands and feet. In one case the naked and mutilated bodies of a number of young women were found hanging head downwards from the branches of a tree, to which they had been tied by the feet. In other cases whole families have been tied together and burned alive.....From the moment the German army crossed the frontier the killing of non-combatants was carried out to an extent for which no previous war between nations claiming to be civilised furnishes any precedent. That this killing was done as part of a deliberate plan is clear from the facts set forth regarding Louvain, Aershot, Dinant and other towns. The killing was done under orders in each place. It began at a certain fixed date, and stopped (with some few exceptions) at another fixed date."

In Germany the new Jehovah is the State, before whom the German savants positively grovel. Bernhardi and Treitschke have given forcible expression to the moral ideals of Germany; and they are disgustingly loathsome. Yet modern culture has been developed almost to perfection in Germany; the horrible enormities mentioned above were perpetrated not by mere mercenaries in whom the brutal instinct might, not unreasonably, be supposed to be well developed. But the Rectors of twenty-two German universities who have issued a protest against the accusations brought against the

German troops emphatically point out that the German army is "not an army of mercenaries, that it comprised the whole nation from the first to the last man, that it is led by the best of our country's sons, that at this hour thousands of professors, and students are falling as officers or soldiers on the battlefields of France or Russia."

Herbert Spencer's fourth classes of activities which include Art and Literature, while they undoubtedly have formative influence on civilization to some extent, are chiefly significant as indicative of its tone and character. The cultural trend of a people can be gauged by the kind of art or literature which is most prized by them. The fact that in Germany the works of Treitschke and Bernhardi, are very popular now shows the direction which her culture has taken since the days of Gœthe, Kant and Schopenhauer.

We are disposed to consider the Hindu conception of knowledge as far more profound than the Western. However, they both have suitable equipment for the struggle for animal existence and ethical (especially altruistic)

development as its objects, though the latter is subordinated to the former, if not sometimes practically ignored altogether, in the West. We shall in the succeeding chapters see that these objects have not, on the whole, been furthered by the current system of education. The intellectual progress of new India, which it is supposed to secure, is thus of a more or less illusory character. In the face of the immense literary activity of new India as evidenced by largely circulated numberless newspapers, periodicals, novels, dramas, etc., the like of which was absolutely unknown in old India, such a statement may sound astounding and paradoxical. But there does not appear to us to be any warrant for the inference of intellectual superiority which is drawn from it. It is based upon the unwarrantable assumptions, that the diffusion of literacy on modern lines implies diffusion of right knowledge, and that literacy on old Hindu lines or illiteracy implies ignorance. There are good many people of both sexes in old India who, though innocent of Western education or even illiterate, are better conversant with the affairs pertaining to their

spheres of life and are morally and spiritually more advanced than are many literates of corresponding classes in new India. The intellectual development of the former, though its range is restricted, cannot be reasonably presumed to be inferior to that of the latter. The fact of the matter is, new India has her full share of the superstitious veneration of the present age for printed matter. Reading and writing are accomplishments, the importance of which is grossly exaggerated by the moderns. Book education*

* The sages of the West, it should be noted, are generally free from the superstition about Book-education. "I do not care," declares Ruskin emphatically, "that children as a rule should learn either reading or writing, because there are very few people in this world who get any good by either. Broadly and practically, whatever foolish people read does them harm; and whatever they write does other people harm." "Even as appliances to intellectual culture" says Herbert Spencer, "books are greatly over-estimated. Instead of second-hand knowledge being regarded as of less value than first-hand knowledge, and as a knowledge to be sought only where first-hand knowledge cannot be had, it is actually regarded as of greater value. Something gathered from printed pages is supposed to enter into a course of education; but if gathered by observation of Life and Nature, is supposed not thus to enter. Reading is seeing by proxy—is learning indirectly through another man's faculties instead of directly through one's own faculties, and such is the

is prized much more highly than education from nature, life and tradition, and reading much more than thinking. The results are shallowness, a sad dearth of literature which, in the words of Bacon, may be "chewed and digested" to advantage, and an exuberance of literature which is hardly fit even to be barely "tasted."

prevailing bias that the indirect learning is thought preferable to the direct learning, and usurps the name of cultivation! We smile when told that savages consider writing as a kind of magic.....Yet the current notions about printed information betray a kindred delusion...And this delusion, injurious in its effects even on intellectual culture, produces effects still more injurious on moral culture, by generating the assumption that this, too, can be got by reading and the repeating of lessons." "Books are good enough in their way," says Stevenson, "but they are a mighty bloodless substitute for life."

CHAPTER II.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION AND THE ECONOMIC PROBLEM.

New India is under no illusion as to the material condition of the people of India. It reverberates with the cry of their excessive poverty, and of their gradual impoverishment in recent times. The highest official estimate of the annual income of an Indian is only thirty rupees. The condition of our agricultural classes who constitute more than three-fourths of our population is no better, and is probably much worse now than in 1878 when Sir James Caird wrote :

“ Three-fourths of the cultivators have no capital. In a good year they have enough for their simple wants ; in a year of abundance their banker has something to apply in reduction of their debt ; in an unfavourable year they live very poorly, and partly by help of their credit ; in a year of famine, that is withdrawn, and they have no means left of employing labour, and the poorest of them and their labourers are equally destitute.”*

* *India, the Land and the People*, pp. 212-213.

The increase of population (which is by no means high), and the decadence or extinction of indigenous industry have enormously increased the pressure upon land. But its productive capacity appears to be either stationary or diminishing, "Wheat land in the North-West Provinces," says Sir W. Hunter, "which now gives only 840 lbs. an acre, yielded 1140 lbs. in the time of Akbar."* The food-grains which are exported in such large quantities are generally supposed to represent the surplus left after meeting the requirements of the country. "It may, however, be alleged with some truth," says the same writer, "that if the whole population ate as much as they could, the surplus would not exist. The grain exports of India represent many hungry stomachs in India.....If all the poor classes in India ate two full meals every day, the surplus for export would be much less than at present. That surplus only proves that the yearly supply of food in India is greater than the effective demand

* *England's Works in India*, pp. 68 & 75-76. It should be observed that no reliable statistics are available concerning the recent deterioration of the soil, and there are authorities who aver that there has been no deterioration at all.

for it." Some forty millions of our people were supposed by Sir W. Hunter to be on the brink of starvation.

Various causes have been assigned for this colossal poverty. The annual drain on account of the Home charges and remittances of the profits from railways and various commercial undertakings, and of the savings of officials and others, which is now computed at some twenty millions sterling, is urged by some as the main cause of India's impoverishment. There are others who lay stress upon the stringency of the present Land Revenue System, and upon the revision and undue enhancement of assessment at comparatively short intervals. "In no respect," says Sir H. J. S. Cotton, "are we more ready to contrast British rule with native rule so largely in our own favour as in our dealings with the land. We point to our equitable assessments as enhancing the value of landed property, to our agricultural experiments as increasing its productiveness, and to the benign protection of the British Government as enabling the Ryot and his family to enjoy the fruits of their toil in

unmolested quiet. But there is not one of these beliefs which is not delusive. Our dealings with the land have been more destructive of all ancient proprietary rights than were the old methods which preceded our own. Our rigid and revolutionary methods have reduced the peasantry to the lowest extreme of poverty and wretchedness, and the procedure of our settlement courts has been the means of laying upon them burdens heavier than any they endured in former times. Famine is now more frequent than formerly, and more severe, and it is the irony of fate that our statute book is swollen with measures of relief in favour of the victims whom our administrative system has impoverished."

"Short settlements," says the same writer, "an exacting demand, and an unbending severity in collecting rent have driven the simple husbandmen into the clutches of the money-lender, and are responsible for their share in intensifying the effects of famine."*

The strict reservation of forests, the cultivation

* *New India*, Revised edition, pp. 68-69, and 77.

of lands formerly maintained for pasture, and the closing of the mints to the free coinage of silver have also been adduced by various writers as causes of the gradual impoverishment of the people of India. But whatever the cause urged, the extension of the existing system of education is almost universally held to be the principal means of ameliorating the condition of the people. In fact, new India is under the illusion that it will prove to be the panacea for all the evils India is suffering from. "The death-rate," says a Neo-Indian writer, "is increasing alarmingly in the towns through overcrowding, and in the villages through malaria, plague, and contamination of drinking water. Universal education is the only remedy for the evil."* The late Mr. G. K. Gokhale, who devoted his life to the good of his country in a spirit of self-sacrifice unsurpassed in new India, declared: "I am glad there are signs visible on all sides which go to show that this great truth—this profound truth—that there can be no real national progress for our people without universal mass

* J. N. Sircar, *Economics of British India*, p. xi.

education—this great fundamental and profound truth is being realised in an ampler and ampler measure on all sides of us.....That ninety per cent. of our people should be sunk in ignorance, superstition and squalor—I can think of no injustice more cruel or monstrous than this.”

It should be observed, that the mass of our people, though illiterate, are generally not such numskulls, or sunk in such “ignorance, superstition and squalor” as they are usually supposed to be. The Government of India in a recent resolution on sanitation says: “The diffusion of sound education will, however, remain the most potent and penetrating instrument of sanitation among a population which still views it with hostility or unconcern.” This is a charge against our people which has hardly any solid foundation in fact. Colonel King, late Sanitary Commissioner of the Madras Presidency, testifies in a recent lecture delivered in London, that “the Institutes of Vishnu and the Laws of Manu fit in excellently, so far as the subjects touched go, with the bacteriology, parasitology, and applied hygiene of the West. The hygiene

of food and of water, private and public conservancy, disease suppression, and prevention are all carefully dealt withNor if racial prejudices are to be considered can it be held that either by the teachings of the Koran or the Muhammadan traditions, opposition to hygiene can be reasonably expected.....Personally, I have found in the South of India, where caste prevails more tenaciously than in most parts of the country, that in dealing with the knotty question of religious festivals it was not difficult to secure the support of leading Hindus to refinements of hygiene that could not be enforced by extant laws, by appealing to the fact, that my recommendations were fully within the principles recognised by Vishnu and Manu." Hygienic rules, the results of the experience of untold centuries, well adapted to our physical environment and economic condition have in many cases crystallised into superstitious practices among the vast majority of the Hindus. Their abodes appear to the Western eye as mere hovels, but they are usually clean hovels. The homestead is generally kept as clean as their

means would permit, and the kitchen and the utensils for cooking and eating are kept scrupulously clean. In personal cleanliness they are, class for class, more particular than the peoples of the West. In fact, as Elphinstone observed long ago: "The cleanliness of the Hindus is proverbial." Away from large towns where there are streams with sandy beds, they dig holes in the sands, and carefully ladle out the water therefrom for drinking purpose which shows the importance they attach to wholesome drinking water.

"The Ryots of India," says Sir H. J. S. Cotton, "possess an amount of knowledge and practical skill within their own humble sphere which no expert scientist can ever hope to acquire."* "The Indian peasant," observes Sir T. W. Holderness, "though illiterate is not without knowledge. He has been carefully trained from boyhood in the ritual and the religious observances of his forefathers. He hears the ancient epics read in their pithy vernacular form.

* *New India*, p. 85.

He is full of lore about crops and soils and birds and beasts.”*

Dr. Voelcker, a renowned agriculturist, who was, some years ago, engaged by the Government to report upon the possible directions in which our agriculture might be improved, says, after carefully inspecting nearly every part of India : “I unhesitatingly dispose of the ideas which have been erroneously entertained that the Ryots’ cultivation is primitive and backward, and say that nearly all the attempts made in the past to teach him have failed because he understands far better than his would-be teachers, the particular circumstances under which he has to pursue his calling.” The peasants are, as a rule, quite ready to introduce improvements in their cultivation if they are demonstrated to be to their advantage, as is evidenced, among other things, by the recent extension of potato and cotton cultivation, and of “garden cultivation” where they can afford it, the almost universal adoption of the Behea Sugar Mill, etc. The multitudinous varieties of food-grains and fruits, the mechanical contri-

* *Peoples and Problems of India*, p. 84.

vances for irrigation, etc., show that they are not wanting in knowledge or intelligence. They know very well that the liberal application of manures would give increased outturn. No education is necessary to teach them that. But they are often so poor that they are unable to conserve even all their cowdung for manure, the dearness of fuel compelling them to utilise at least a portion of it for culinary purposes. They are fully aware of the value of pasture lands, and they have always had such lands attached to every village. They have, however, now been reduced to the necessity of bringing them under cultivation to the detriment of their cattle.

Though the mass of our people are not so obtuse or perversely conservative as they are usually supposed to be, education of the right sort, which would secure to them material or moral welfare, or both, would certainly be desirable. But, a broad survey of the results of the system of elementary education which has been spreading in India for well-nigh three generations has forced the conviction upon me that it has not subserved these purposes. I shall here con-

fine myself to the material aspect of the question, reserving the consideration of the moral aspect for a future chapter.

Education has not made the cultivators better cultivators, nor the artisans and tradesmen more efficient artisans and tradesmen than before. On the contrary, it has distinctly diminished their efficiency by inculcating in the literate proletariat a strong distaste for their hereditary mode of living and hereditary callings, and an equally strong taste for brummagem fineries and for occupations of a more or less parasitic nature. They have accelerated rather than retarded the decadence of indigenous industries and have thus helped to aggravate their own economic difficulties and those of the entire community. The following remarks which the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills makes in regard to the effect of education on the Lushais apply also to the major portion of the mass of the people in other parts of India, especially to the aboriginal section of it:—

“They are showing a strong tendency to desert agriculture, their hereditary occupation, and live by their wits. They have undoubtedly more money to spend or waste. This is evidenced by the change which is taking place in their

dress. Stout home-spun cloths are being discarded for foreign apparel, such as shirts, trousers, or "shorts," coats, caps, etc. Imported yarn is displacing the indigenous article in the manufacture of cloths, and cheap and tawdry articles of personal adornment are becoming very common. Though he may have more money to spend, it is impossible to say that the Lushai is now better off than he used to be. In his village he had all he wanted, and lived a simple and happy life. The effect on his moral character has also been far from satisfactory..... It is true that a certain number of the Lushais have taken advantage of the openings for improvement so freely provided by Government and have profited by them, but, on the whole the results are depressing, and are such as to give grounds for anxiety for the future welfare of the race."*

It is very doubtful if the literate peasantry have "more money to spend or waste" than their unlettered brethren. They generally live far beyond their means; and if some of them have more money, it is usually obtained not by the improvement of agriculture or manufacture, but by occupations of an unproductive, and not unoften also of a shady character, the aspiration of the literate proletariat being to enter some service or live upon his wits. The best patrons of native manufactures are still the illiterate peasantry who have not yet taken to

* *Moral and Material Progress and condition of India*, 1913, p. 385.

shoddy apparel and "cheap and tawdry articles of personal adornment," at least to the extent the literates have. In fact, it is they, especially their women, who have arrested the utter annihilation of indigenous industry.

The subjects which the current system of education comprises have mostly no immediate reference to the requirements of our cultivators, artisans and traders. Their boys cannot derive any earthly benefit, so far as their hereditary occupations are concerned, by going through a course of elementary Physics, Chemistry and Biology, which there are hardly any teachers at present who can teach properly, or by conning a bald list of kings and Governors and the wars they waged, which is called history, or by learning the names of mountains, rivers and towns only to be forgotten soon after. If they are sent to schools it is with the view that they may enter some service, preferably Government service, or some profession, preferably the legal profession. The Primary standard is looked upon as a stepping stone to the Middle Vernacular or Middle English, and the Middle Vernacular or Middle

English to the High School standard, and the High School standard to the Collegiate standard. This is applauded as the "uplift" of the "lower" classes by Government as well as by new India, though it is hardly consonant with common sense to dub the people who pursue agriculture among whom are to be found representatives of the highest Hindu castes,* as "lower" than those who earn their livelihood by service or by some profession of a more or less parasitic character, and to regard the translation of the former into the fold of the latter as uplift. For a generation or two, in tracts which are called backward, that is, where the present system of education has not made much progress as yet, the literates through the favour and patronage of Government and of missionaries, in the case especially of the aboriginal tribes, appear to prosper, and their prospect seems very alluring. A Lieutenant-Governor

* It should be noted, that these "lower" classes comprise large sections of the higher Hindu castes. One-third of the Brahmans of Bengal, and two-thirds of the Billavas and Brahmans of Madras pursue agriculture. The proportion of cultivating Brahmans is even higher in Bihar and Orissa, (*Gait's Census Report for 1911, Vol. I, Part I, p. 429*).

of Bengal, for instance, Sir John Woodburn, who visited Ranchi in 1898, thus spoke of the possibilities of education among the aboriginal tribes of Chota Nagpur :—

“In the schools of the missionaries there are scores of Kol boys rapidly attaining University standards in education. It was to me a revelation that the savage intellect, which we are all apt to regard as dwarfed and dull and inept, is as acute and quick to acquire knowledge as that of the sons of generations of culture. It seems incredible, but it is a fact, that these Kol lads are walking straight into the lists of competition, on equal terms with the high-bred youths of Bengal. This is a circumstance so strange even to me, so striking, so full of significance for the future, that I could not refrain from telling you of this last surprise of this wonderful land we live in.”

Similar language of commendation and admiration was used by Government officials in regard to the youths of Bengal two generations ago. How different is their tone now! If the Kols and Oraons succeed in competing with the Bengalis for the various services under Government, leaving agriculture to take care of itself, two generations hence they would be threatened with an economic crisis such as the gentry of Bengal are confronted with to-day.

What with fees, stationery, text-books (which

are constantly changed), etc., education, even elementary education, has now become pretty expensive according to the Indian standard. So it is only the well-to-do and the more aspiring among the "lower" classes who are able to send their boys to schools; and the intelligence, ambition and resources which might have improved agriculture and arts are diverted into courses that lead to the professions and services which are yearly getting more and more congested. The number so transferred is really very small. In 1911, for instance, in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Assam taken together, of 2,305 gazetted appointments held by natives of the country, about eight-ninths were held by members of the Brahman, Baidya and Kāyastha castes.* But though the number "uplifted" from the lower castes is proportionately insignificant, they are the cream of those castes. This is a heavy loss. But this is not all. The current system of education co-operates with the other forces which such a highly material civilization as the Western has

* Report of the *Census of India, 1911*, by E. A. Gait, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 429-430.

introduced into this country to diffuse among the students a taste for luxuries (in the Indian sense), and inculcate in them Western ideas of decency and cleanliness which consist chiefly, if not solely in using shoes, stockings, caps, and finer and more plentiful clothing. The Government, with the best of motives, no doubt, make large grants for school buildings and boarding houses and their equipment. In fact, a good percentage of the total grant for education is employed for such purposes. Boys who have been accustomed to live in houses, which to the Westerners appear no better than hovels, and who have always been accustomed to squatting on mats are accommodated in well-appointed houses which the great majority of the middle class gentry can never aspire to live in. Not unoften, they are provided with chairs, tables, kerosine reading lamps, etc. The inexpensive outdoor games which formerly used to amuse and invigorate our young men have been superseded by the much more expensive football, cricket, hockey, etc. No wonder that under these conditions the sons of strong, sturdy simple husbandmen should be gradually converted

into full-blown, fashionably draped, effeminate, spruce "gentlemen." No wonder that they should imbibe a distaste for the "ungentlemanly" occupations of their forbears. No wonder that such occupations should cease to gratify their enlarged wants and minister to their "civilised" tastes. They undoubtedly assume a showy exterior which to the ordinary Western or the Westernised eye is an indubitable index of progress and prosperity, though, in reality, it is an index of just the reverse. They carry the torch of "civilisation" into their village homes. The fashion set by them is extensively imitated, and thus the "rise in the standard of living," which new India rejoices in, spreads far and wide. The economic effects of this "rise" are disastrous. In the first place, it runs away with resources which should be husbanded for improving agriculture and arts. Secondly, it entails an enormous increase in the consumption of foreign manufactures which accelerates the decadence of indigenous industry and swells the volume of economic drain from the country. The writer lately visited a village, among the

weaving population of which the Ranchi Union (the central organisation for financing co-operative credit societies in the Ranchi district) has been making a highly praiseworthy attempt to introduce the flyshuttle loom. One of the most serious objections which the weavers urged against the use of this improved loom was, that they could not find a good market even for the scanty produce of the primitive looms which they have been used to; what are they to do with the increased outturn of the improved looms? Yet all the male villagers who congregated round us, including even the weavers themselves, were, almost without exception, well habited in mill-made clothes! It is only the females who still affect the coarse and durable wide-bordered *saris*. The special encouragement which is being given to female education will, no doubt, soon do away with even this small amount of patronage which indigenous industry still receives from them. For in towns they too, especially the literates among them, almost universally adopt the current fashion which favours the more showy, but much less lasting mill-made fabrics.

A certain amount of literacy is undoubtedly beneficial to the agricultural, manufacturing and trading classes. The indigenous way of imparting elementary education which the present system has replaced was better calculated to secure this object and better adapted to Indian conditions and requirements. Even now some of the trading classes, like the Marwaris, adhere to it and set their face against the exotic system. The young men turned out by their *pāthshālas* have generally a much better head for figures and make far more efficient business men than even the graduates turned out by the universities. It is perhaps not generally known that there was a very wide-spread system of elementary education in old India. There was a net work of *Pāthshālās* all over the country. They are thus described by Mr. Adam :—

“These schools (*Pathshalas*) are generally held in the houses of some of the most respectable native inhabitants or very near them. All the children of the family are educated in the vernacular language of the country; and in order to increase the emoluments of the teachers, they are allowed to introduce, as pupils, as many respectable children as they can procure in the neighbourhood. The scholars begin with tracing the vowels and consonants with the finger on a sand

board and afterwards on the floor with a pencil of steatite or white crayon; and this exercise is continued for eight or ten days. They are next instructed to write on the palm-leaf with a reed-pen and with ink made of charcoal, which rubs out, joining vowels to the consonants, forming compound letters, syllables, and words, and learning tables of numeration, money, weight, and measure, and the correct mode of writing the distinctive names of persons, castes, and places. This is continued about a year. The iron style is now used only by the teacher in sketching on the palm-leaf the letters which the scholars are required to trace with ink. They are next advanced to the study of Arithmetic and the use of the plantain-leaf in writing with ink made of lamp-black, which is continued about six months, during which they are taught addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, and the simplest cases of the mensuration of land and commercial and agricultural accounts, together with the modes of address proper in writing letters to different persons. The last stage of this limited course of instruction is that in which the scholars are taught to write with lamp-black ink on paper, and are further instructed in agricultural and commercial accounts and in the composition of letters."

The end of Pathshala education was entirely material. It was eminently practical, and being indigenous and inexpensive was well suited to the social and economic conditions of the community.

Sir Thomas Munro had an investigation made into the state of indigenous education in the Madras Presidency. From the results of his

inquiries it appears, that in that Presidency, about 1825, the number of schools amounted to 12,498, and the population to 12,850,941; so that there was one school to every thousand of the population; but as only a very few females are taught in schools, we may reckon one school to every 590 of the population.

"It is remarked by the Board of Revenue," says Sir Thomas Munro, "that of a population of twelve and a half millions there are only 188,000 or 1 in 67 receiving education. This is true of the whole population, but not as regards the male part of it, of which the proportion educated is much greater than is here estimated: for, if we take the whole population as stated in the report at 12,850,000, and deduct one half for females, the remaining male population will be 6,425,000; and if we reckon the male population between the ages of 5 and 10 years, which is the period which boys in general remain at school, at one-ninth, it will give 713,000, which is the number of boys that would be at school if all the males above five years of age were educated: but the number actually attending the Schools is only 184,110, or little more than one-fourth of that number ... I am however inclined to estimate the proportion of the whole population who receive school education to be nearer one-third than one-fourth of the whole because we have no returns of the numbers taught at home. In Madras, the number taught at home is 26,903, or about five times greater than that taught in the Schools."

The advantages of this widespread system of elementary education were:—

First.—Being naturally evolved it was well-adapted to the material condition of the people and to their requirements.

Secondly.—Being maintained by the community it encouraged self-help and self-reliance.

Thirdly.—It did not promote luxurious tastes and extravagant habits.

The altered conditions of the country no doubt require some modification of the system. But, as we have seen above, its replacement by an exotic system of Government education unsuited to the condition and needs of the community spells calamitous consequences. Our agricultural classes who form quite three-fourths of our population form the material backbone of our community. They have to practically support the other classes. Anything which tends to attenuate their margin between sufficiency and starvation is therefore highly condemnable. As we have seen above, the present system of education is tending towards that baneful result. The cultivators undoubtedly get better prices for their crops. But assuming them to be free from debt (which is seldom the case), a

portion of their increased profits is often consumed in enhanced rents. A portion also goes to pay enhanced wages for labourers though unfortunately, as we shall presently see, the enhancement is generally not in the same proportion as that of the prices of food grains. The profits which they have left after meeting these charges may be considered to be the equivalent of the grain they would have stored had not the extension of railways offered them attractive prices to sell it. They are, however, usually no gainers, for having cash instead of a store of grain, they cannot generally resist the temptation to spend it upon festivities and upon various foreign inutilities and superfluities a strong taste for which has been disseminated among them by the various agencies of Western civilization, among which the current system of education is one of the most potent. The danger of these articles lies in their attractiveness and cheapness. The cultivators and their families unquestionably make a better show of "respectability" than they ever did before. But when famine threatens—and famines have become

more frequent than ever before—they find they have little cash and no store of grain to fall back upon. Our artisans, especially the weavers, have been very adversely affected if not well-nigh ruined by the yearly increasing influx of foreign imports and have largely swollen the ranks of the agricultural and labouring classes. It is true, that they get some relief from the various large industrial concerns which have been established especially by Western enterprise. But apart from the physical and moral degeneration which is inevitable in such concerns, it is only an insignificant fraction of our population, some two millions all told, who find employment in them.* It is also true that wages have risen, but not in the same ratio as the prices of food grains. Three centuries ago, in the time of Akbar, we learn from the *Ain-i-Akbari*, the average wages of unskilled labourers, such as bamboo-cutters, etc., was nine three-fifths pies

* In 1911 there were in India, 7,113 factories, giving employment to 2·1 million persons, the distribution being as follows: tea gardens 704,000; collieries 143,000; gold mines 29,000; cotton mills 308,000; and other textile industries 222,000.

per diem. and that of skilled artisans such as carpenters, was two annas nine three-fifth pies.* But wheat then sold for about five annas a maund, and coarse rice for about eight annas a maund. Since then the wages have increased four or five-fold, but the prices of wheat, rice and other necessaries have increased eight or tenfold, so that labourers in the time of Akbar had the means to be nearly twice as comfortable as they are now. They must go without not only some of the comforts which they then enjoyed, but, in many cases, without some of the bare necessities of life also.

Thus we find that the condition of our so-called "lower" classes is extremely miserable. And what is worse, their margin between plenty and privation is being gradually abridged. Mr. J. G. Cumming, lately Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, says in his report on the survey and settlement of the Chakla-Rosanabad Estate: "Intelligent native public opinion is, and I agree with it, that the standard of comfort has

* The details are given in the writer's *History of Hindu Civilization under British Rule* vol. I, p. lxxiii.

increased, but that the income of the raiyats has not increased in exact correspondence; or, in other words, that the raiyat inspite of increased income has a smaller margin of profit and saving than he formerly had." Sir H. J. S. Cotton declares even more emphatically, that "the increasing number of famines and the terrible mortality which results from them, in spite of all the exertions of the Government and the heroic effort of individual officers, are—if there were no other evidence—an overwhelming demonstration that the capacity of the people to maintain themselves is on the decline.....The reason why famines are more frequent than formerly, and more severe, is that the resources of the people are less able to resist them."* Yet these are the people who on their Atlas like shoulders bear the burden of a costly administration on the Western pattern and who have to maintain the unproductive upper classes. What they want is more food and more nourishing food, and new India vies with the Government in giving them what is called education which not only does

* *New India*, pp. 97-98.

not enable them to get it or holds out any reasonable prospect of their ever being able to get it, but, on the contrary, creates and fosters in them tastes and habits that make them sacrifice substance to shadow and part with a good portion of what food they have without any compensating benefit to themselves—an education which indirectly hastens the ruin of indigenous industry; and forges fresh links for the yearly lengthening chain of the industrial servitude of modern India.

It is true, that an endeavour has been made during the last two decades to impart industrial education through craft schools, and agricultural education, for a longer period, through demonstration farms. There were in 1906-7, in the whole of India (including Native states) 147 industrial or technical schools attended by 6,820 pupils. There is no doubt, that in industrial centres such schools meet a real demand and train up skilled workmen who find ready and lucrative employment. But the number of such workmen absorbed by the large industries is very small.*

* According to the Census of 1911, of the 2.1 million of the population of India, employed in mines and factories only 555,000 are skilled workmen.

and there is no prospect of its increasing, in the near future at least, so largely as to afford substantial relief to the colossal poverty of the mass of our people. The craft schools away from industrial centres are more or less a failure as in the present economic condition of our community they are destined to be. As Mr. Hornell writes:*—

“In the face of the great preponderance of classes teaching carpentry and smithy work it is difficult to resist the conclusion arrived at by Sir Edward Buck as regards technical and industrial schools in India, viz., that their object appears to be to teach these subjects to boys who have no intention to become carpenters or to engage in any manual occupation whatever. It is not maintained that there are no industrial schools at which sound work is being done. It must, however, be admitted that the effect of the existing schools on the industrial development of the province is practically negligible.”

The ordinary blacksmith supplies the simple needs of the villagers; and of furniture of any kind there is but little demand. Their wants in these directions are extremely limited, and they are supplied well enough at present. In regard to the Demonstration Farms which are intended

* *Progress of Education in India, 1902—1907, Vol. I, p. 207.*

to teach the peasantry, they have, from all accounts, proved, on the whole, a failure. The failure is attributable to their not being worked on an economic basis, little regard being paid to the resources of the raiyats, who consequently derive as much useful instruction from them as they do from the Museum or the "Zoo" in Calcutta.

CHAPTER III.

HIGH EDUCATION AND THE ECONOMIC PROBLEM.

We have in the last chapter referred to the baneful economic result of the "uplifting" movement. If, however, there had been a corresponding movement downward from the upper classes, if education had so equipped some at least of their members as to enable them to take to agriculture and industry and improve them, the mischief created by the "uplift" would have been amply compensated. But the current system of education has not only not done that, but has, on the contrary, made such of the upper classes as formerly earned their livelihood by trade and farming to gradually forsake them altogether. Before the diffusion of English Education, they subsisted much more largely on agriculture and trade than on service or profession. Agriculture had always been esteemed

by the Hindus, and esteemed rightly, as the best of all occupations.* The great majority of the members of the higher castes lived by it. Their intellectual capacity and resourcefulness greatly furthered the extension and development of agriculture and horticulture. But, as a result of various causes, among which the wide extension of the present system of Education is one of the most important, they are abandoning, in annually increasing numbers the healthy, peaceful, and useful rural life, for the unhealthy restless, and comparatively useless urban life. It is true the villages in some parts, especially of Bengal, have become hot-beds of malaria.† But their deser-

* This is shown among other things by grants of land by indigenous governments for good service and learning, and by various popular Sanskrit slokas one of which translated runs as follows:—

“One may leave household management in the hands of one who is like his father, the management of the kitchen with one who is like his mother, that of the cattle with one who is like himself, but he must attend to cultivation himself.”

† So far as the increase of population as shown by the last census is concerned, “the districts of Western and Central

tion by the well-to-do is one of the most important causes of their growing insalubrity ; for it leads to the rank growth of thick jungle, to scarcity of wholesome drinking water formerly supplied by well kept tanks, and to the absence of social amenities which contributed to the cheerfulness of rural life and to consequent fever-resisting vitality.

It could not be otherwise. Until lately, the education imparted under the auspices of our Universities was almost exclusively of a literary character. The recipients of such education have swollen the ranks of lawyers and of the hungry horde of impecunious *Umedwars* for Government and other services. Agricultural colleges have of late been started in all the provinces. But they are languishing for want of support, and are unable to counteract the already well established influences which drive our young men in such large numbers to service or the legal profession. Between 1891 and 1911,

Bengal are all nearly stationary. The largest is less than four per cent. while two districts, Nadiya and Jessore, show a decrease." *Gait's Census Report*, Vol. I, part 1.

while the number of graduates in Arts turned out by the Indian Universities rose from 1909 to 5895, and those in law from 225 to 877, the graduates in agriculture rose from 7 to 20 only. And there would not have been this small number of Agricultural graduates but for the expansion of the Agricultural Department which ensures their employment by Government.*

High education has furnished numerous luminaries of law and eminent servants of Government, but not a single captain of industry or commerce. What little has been done in these directions has been accomplished by men who have had little to do with high education. In

* The number of students on the roll of the Sabour Agricultural College at the end of June, 1913, was only 27, and the yearly admissions are reported to have been steadily decreasing. According to the Assam Director of Agriculture, the average entrance-passed student has neither aptitude nor liking for agriculture. He strongly objects to any form of manual labour and is not even willing to undertake the minimum amount of practical work on the farm attached to an agricultural college necessary to enable him to get a grasp of the principles of agriculture." In the United Provinces the number of students who took their admission into the Agricultural college was 50 of whom 40 were nominees for Government service.

Bengal where such education has been in vogue longer than in any other province and where it has made great and rapid strides, Bengalis who formerly almost monopolised all business connected with internal trade are now largely superseded by Marwaris. The only Bengalis who have thrived in business are precisely those who have had but little to do with University education.

It was Macaulay's minute that clinched the discussion which raged eighty years ago between the Sanskritists and the Anglicists. One of the arguments very forcibly urged by him in favour of English education was, that it would diffuse "useful" knowledge instead of a knowledge of false history, false astronomy, false medicine" which are found in company with a "false religion," and which are taught by the Indian classics. I shall not waste words over refuting a charge so groundless against Hinduism and Sanskrit lore. But it is undeniable, that at the time he wrote Europe had begun to make amazing progress in Natural Science and in its application to industry. If useful scientific knowledge

of the West had been imparted to the Indian alumni from the very beginning, the annihilation of Indian industry might possibly have been averted. But instead of that there was substituted one form of literary culture for another. It was not to be expected that men who had spent their lives in reading Shakespeare and Milton, or in racking their brains over the metaphysics of Hume, Reid and Dugald Stewart, in conning the logic of John Stuart Mill, or in committing to memory the barbaric feats of glorified marauders and murderers of Asia and Europe would do more for native industry than those whose mental pabulum consisted of Kalidása and Bhababhuti, the philosophy of Kapila and Sankaráchárya, the logic of Gotama, or such history as is contained in the Mahábhárata, the Rámáyana and the Purànas. Natural science is the only branch of knowledge in which the western world has made wonderfully rapid strides in recent times, and it was precisely the subject which, until recently, was practically excluded from the curriculum of the Indian youths, except in a subordinate way in the case of the students of Medicine.

High education, like elementary education, has not only not averted the economic crisis brought on by the decadence of indigenous industry, but has furthered it and has enhanced its stringency. India made considerable industrial progress in pre-Mahomedan times, and during the Mahomedan period also our indigenous manufactures were in a very flourishing condition. In fact, even as late as the beginning of the last century, India did not export her food-grains, but her manufactures, such as cotton and silk manufactures, indigo and sugar, besides spices, saltpetre, etc.* How is it that she has been reduced from the economically sound position of exporter of manufactures and non-exporter of food-grains to the as economically unsound position of exporter of food-grains and importer of manu-

* The following are the component parts of the amount of sales by the E. I. Company in England reduced to an annual average, on the seventeen years ending in 1808-09 :—

Piece-goods	...	...	£ 1,539,478.
Organzine Silk	...	...	„ 13,443.
Pepper	...	...	„ 195,461.
Saltpetre	...	...	„ 180,066.
Sugar and Indigo	...	...	„ 272,442.
Coffee	...	...	„ 6,624.

factures on a colossal scale, from the proud position of industrial independence to the humiliating one of industrial servitude? There were various causes which led to this sad and disastrous change.

They were partly political.

"It was stated in evidence (1813)", says H. H. Wilson, "that the cotton and silk goods of India up to that period could be sold for a profit in the British market at a price from 50 to 60 per cent. lower than those fabricated in England. It consequently became necessary to protect the latter by duties of 70 and 80 per cent. on their value or by positive prohibition. Had this not been the case, had not such prohibitory duties and decrees existed, the mills of Paisley and Manchester would have been stopped in their outset, and could scarcely have been again set in motion, even by the power of steam. They were created by the sacrifice of Indian manufactures. Had India been independent, she would have retaliated, would have imposed prohibitive duties upon British goods, and would thus have preserved her own productive industry from annihilation. This act of self-defence was not permitted her; she was at the mercy of the stranger. British goods were forced upon her without paying any duty, and the foreign manufacturer employed the arm of political injustice to keep down and ultimately strangle a competitor with whom he could not have contended on equal terms."*

* Mr. H. St. George Tucker, a Director of the Honourable East India Company wrote in 1823:—

"What is the commerce which we have adopted in this country with relation to India? The silk manufactures and

Economic causes which I have discussed elsewhere* were also partly responsible for the decadence of indigenous industry. But these causes, whether political or economic, would not have the effect they have had unless they were aided by one as momentous or probably even more so—the change in our ideas, ideals, tastes and habits under the influence of the western environment of which education on western lines is one of the most salient features. What we have said in the previous chapter about the influence of elementary education on the economic condition of our country applies still more forcibly to high education. Macaulay's prediction, that English education

its piece-goods made of silk and cotton intermixed have long since been excluded altogether from our markets; and of late, partly in consequence of the operation of a duty of 67 per cent. but chiefly from the effect of superior machinery, the cotton fabrics, which hitherto continued to be the staple of India, have not only been displaced in this country, but we actually export our cotton manufactures to supply a part of our Asian possession. India is thus reduced from the state of a manufacturing country to that of an agricultural country."

* *History of Hindu Civilization under British Rule*, vol. I, pp. vii, lxx—xxxi. *Essays and Lectures*, pp. 9—11, etc.

would train up a "class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect," has been amply fulfilled, as it was bound to be. Consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, voluntarily or involuntarily, the Neo-Indian imbibes the material ideals of western civilization, and the western view of its immense superiority over Hindu civilization and pursues the western path of progress and reform. He is generally so obsessed by the western idea of decency and of "rise" in the standard of living as the essential perquisite of advancement, that in a climate where air-bath is exceedingly pleasant and beneficial to health, he covers himself up *cap-a-pie* so as to stop all passage for the ingress of air. He would endure any torture and suffer any inconvenience rather than be seen in public (especially before Europeans) in the barbaric costume of his countrymen.* Even when habited

* I was once having a pleasure trip on the Hooghly in a launch with a much esteemed Neo-Indian friend. There was in our company a brother of his who happened to be clad in *dhooti* and we were having a chat on the deck when the yacht of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal was descried

in his national *dhooti*, he must needs have all or nearly all the appendages of western costume—shirt, coat, socks, etc. As a consequence of the diffusion of the taste for clothing after the European fashion, the imports of apparel and of cotton and woollen manufactures generally have vastly increased and have, of late, been going up by “leaps and bounds.” Within thirty years between 1881 and 1909, the value of imported apparel has risen from about Rs. 79,56,360 to Rs. 3,13,24,483, that of cotton manufactures (piece-goods, shawls and handkerchiefs) from about Rs. 21,29,80,370 to Rs. 39,41,94,946 and that of woollen goods from about Rs. 1,07,63,880 to Rs. 3,07,08,570.* The figures are highly

approaching us. My friend who was well known to that high official was so very nervous about being seen by that august personage in intimate association with one in native garb that he asked his brother to go down in the cabin. Yet he was a sincere patriot and did his best to do good to his country according to his lights. I could largely multiply similar instances of pro-western prepossession from my experience.

* The increase would be much more striking if compared with earlier years. In 1857-58, the value of imported cotton goods was only about Rs. 4, 78, 26, 980.

significant. They show that while the population of India between 1881 and 1911 increased by only about 17·4 per cent.* the aggregate value of the imports of apparel and of cotton and woollen manufactures rose from Rs. 23,17,10,610 to Rs. 45,62,27,999, that is to say, nearly doubled.

Thus this phenomenal increase in the imports of apparel, etc., is due in a very small measure to the increase of population. It is, therefore, attributable chiefly to the maudlin rage for "rise" in the standard of living on the western pattern, for the spread of which new India as we have seen before, is so largely responsible. The mischief which it has done and is doing is incalculable. By substituting foreign for native manufactures it has facilitated the ruin of indigenous industry, and by draining the country of its potential capital, it is seriously impeding the resuscitation of that industry. Further, as the mass of the people everywhere heedlessly follow the prevailing fashion, it is impelling the

* The increase was as follows: 1881-91, 9·6 per cent., 1891-01, 1·4 per cent., 1901-11, 6·4 per cent.

great majority of them to sacrifice substance to shadow, thus jeopardising the health of the body as well as of the mind.

Clothing is the chief item of the drain. But there are numberless other items also which swell the drain substantially. As we have said before there has of late been considerable abatement of the drink-evil among the upper classes. But the consumption of spirituous liquors is still very high and is on the increase. In twelve years between 1898-99 and 1910-11, the imports of liquors rose from 4,830,362 gallons valued at Rs. 1,64,82,143 to 6,432,738 gallons valued at Rs. 1,89,95,111. A good portion of this rise is no doubt ascribable to the increased European population. But there can hardly be any doubt that new India is also partly responsible for it, and that the Demon of Drink is still claiming many victims from classes who have always been noted for their abstinence. The last generation hardly knew what a cigarette is. In 1911, however, nearly half a crore worth of that article was imported.* The demand for foreign boots

* Cigarette-smoking is increasing among students. Some

and shoes has been expanding enormously. The imports more than doubled between 1900 and 1909, rising from 7 lakhs of pairs to some 16 lakhs of pairs. The Neo-Indian has developed a great taste for western diet and for western glassware etc., and for his ailments he has frequent recourse to patent medicines from abroad. Between 1901-02 and 1910-11, the value of imported provisions rose from Rs. 1,98,46,721 to Rs. 3,02,93,770, that of glass and glassware from Rs. 94,43,749 to Rs. 1,51,92,052, and that of drugs, medicines and narcotics from Rs. 1,07,98,728 to Rs. 1,51,92,052. In new India the piano and the harmonium have largely superseded indigenous musical instruments though these are better suited to Indian music, and there are imported annually some thirty-four lakhs of rupees worth of musical instruments. Indigenous toys no longer delight our children, and our young men no longer find pleasure in native games and athletic exercises, and over thirty

time ago it formed the subject of interpellations in the Madras Legislative Council, and the public bodies in Madras represented to the Local Government the necessity of legislating against juvenile smoking.

lakhs of rupees worth of toys and requisites for games are obtained from abroad. A taste for foreign perfumery and soap has been spreading, and in 1908 there were imported some forty-five lakhs worth of these articles. Houses must be furnished and decorated in European style to the extent of one's means. Taking meals at the table with all its paraphernalia is largely superseding the simpler practice of eating in a squatting posture. The fashion of giving various imported trinkets and futilities as presents on such occasion as birthdays and weddings is yearly gaining ground. There is no doubt that the increasing European population is to some extent responsible for the increasing consumption of these and various other foreign articles. But there is also no doubt that my countrymen themselves are to a much larger extent responsible for it. Making allowance for the profits of Indian dealers in foreign goods, the net annual drain from India on account of her progress on the path of western civilization will probably not fall far short of thirty-five crores of rupees. New India has been

resounding with the cry of India's impoverishment due to the drain on account of Home charges, etc., for the last half century. That it is an important cause there is no doubt, and is admitted even by some impartial Englishmen. But it is a cause the removal of which does not lie within the ken of practical politics, and may, for all practical purposes, be regarded as unavoidable. One seldom hears, however, of the equally impoverishing drain which is due to the sinister influence of new India. That is a cause of impoverishment which it rests with the Indians themselves to remove, at least to a great extent, if they only make up their minds to do so.

The infatuation of new India for the material developments of Western civilization is intensifying and accelerating the economic crisis which, if the present conditions continue, is inevitable in the near future, and the shadow of which may already be seen by those who have eyes to see. Our present social structure is gradually assuming the form of an inverted pyramid, and cannot endure very long. We have already adverted to the appalling condition

of the agricultural, the artisan and the labouring classes who constitute about eighty per cent. of our population, and form the base of the structure. At the top, we have a microscopic minority of well-to-do chiefs, zamindars, bankers, professional men, high-placed Government officials, wholesale merchants, and a few captains of industry—chiefly in Western India. Between the two we have the much larger middle class people who affect high education and are composed of the great majority of professional men, servants of the state and of private concerns, etc. Their economic condition is quite as pitiable as that of the lower classes, and in some respects even more so. What with the rise of prices of bare necessities to the famine level of former generations, and the dissemination of a taste for a multitude of things which are not only not necessary, but in some cases, are positively noxious, their cost of living has immensely increased, but not the means to meet the increased cost, at least in anything like the same proportion. People generally are but little guided in their mode of living by philosophy.

Fashion rules them. Even the most rational men are found among her most irrational votaries. With most people whether savage or highly civilized, the ornamental precedes the useful. The desire for show appears to be innate in all classes in all parts of the world; and the Indians are no exception to the rule. Formerly, however, the gratification of this desire was determined by the indigenous standard of comfort and luxury which was well adapted to their material condition. But the adoption of the standard of comfort and luxury of an immensely richer community at the present day is fraught with grave peril. In the West that standard has been perpetually rising, so that the luxuries of one generation become the necessities of the next. I have elsewhere dwelt upon the evil consequences* of this continuous rise. But from the point of view of purely material progress, the rise has done a deal of good. The multiplication of wants in the West has been partly the cause, and partly the natural outcome of the monumental accumulation of wealth, and

* *Epochs of Civilization*, pp. 208—313.

of the wonderful progress in mechanical invention which have gone on there concomitantly during the last three quarters of a century. In India, however, the diffusion of a taste for the material developments of the West without the previous accumulation of wealth or the preparation of mechanical talent and the development of industrial qualities as in the West, cannot imply progress either present or prospective. With the great majority of our people it means considerable embarrassment and possible ruin—the sacrifice of substance to shadow. Incomes which at one time would have been regarded as opulence are now hardly deemed to be bare competence. The candle burns at both ends. The resources of the middle class are exhausted on the one hand by the excessive rise in the price of necessaries, and on the other by the increasing complexity of living which is enlarging their wants. While milk and the various preparations of milk which form the principal articles of nutrition in Hindu diet have become so very dear that the great majority of our middle class people cannot afford to get them

in sufficient quantity for bare subsistence, they have to spend comparatively large amounts upon the gratification of the new tastes which have sprung up for clothing, shoes, stockings, etc., and for amusements, such as theatrical performances, circuses, cinemas, etc., which have superseded the much less expensive indigenous amusements. Economical housekeeping suited to Indian conditions, which Indian housewives, though generally illiterate, so highly excelled in, is becoming a vanishing art in middle class Hindu household in new India.* To add to the tragedy of the

* Complaints like the following (culled from an influential Indian newspaper) are becoming very common in new India : "The new generation of Bengalee wives of middle classes is getting more luxurious than their predecessors. They will not cook ; they will not wash utensils or clothes—these are the work of menials ! But their mothers and mothers-in-law did all this.....Now even a clerk of thirty or forty rupees worth must provide a cook and at least one servant, otherwise his wife will make his life intolerable.....With our growing poverty we are increasing our artificial necessities. In our case, the candle is being burnt at both ends. Here is a remarkable fact. Five or six decades ago, though our mothers and wives did all domestic duties practically without the help of servants, they were more healthy and robust than the present generation of Bengali women ; they did not die in childbirth or require the services of midwives at accouchment as their daughters and grand-daughters do."

situation, the increasing intensity of the struggle for existence impels the middle class gentry to work harder than ever before, but upon diet far less nutritious, and in surroundings far less salubrious than what they were accustomed to in days gone by. The learned professions are getting congested to an appalling extent. Between 1901 and 1911, the number of lawyers rose from 251,608 to 294,486, and that of physicians and surgeons from 521,851 to 613,794. The congestion is already so great that it would probably be no exaggeration to say that not more than thirty per cent. make some sort of living. There are a few, no doubt, probably not more than five or at most ten per cent., especially in the profession of law who make a huge pile. The glamour of their success and the extreme paucity of openings for Indian youths drive such a large number of them to the professions, only to earn a precarious livelihood and end their days as disappointed and discontented failures. The annually increasing multitude of penurious candidates for the various services show how very crowded they are

becoming.* The services are expanding, no doubt, but the expansion can not possibly keep pace with the expansion of high education, or can at best afford mere pittance which, under present conditions, hardly enable the great majority to keep body and soul together. The economic problem has already become acute among the middle class gentry in those parts of India where high education has made the greatest progress, and threatens to develop into a crisis in the near future. The "political" dacoities which have of late been committed by English educated youths are not altogether political, and there can be hardly any doubt that they are at least largely due to economic causes.

The Neo-Indian reader will probably exclaim: "But such is the case in the West also, where high education has spread much more largely than in India." It is quite true, that the advance which education has made in India cannot be compared to the advance it has made

* The number of persons who earn their living by instruction rose from 489,955 in 1901, to 649,912 in 1911, and of those who live by letters and arts and sciences from 779,652 to 918,511.

in the West. But, in the first place, commerce and industry afford openings there which are absent in India. Then again, the educated Westerners are in a position to exploit the whole world, but the educated Indians are not. A good many of the Western Powers have colonies, dependencies, or "spheres of influence" which serve as outlets for the employment of those who cannot find anything to do at home. Any one who may lay any claim to Occidental descent is free to enter India and "develop" her resources as he likes. But stringent regulations restrict the admission of the Indian even into British colonies. Even in his own country, there are large departments of the State service which are absolutely closed to him. There are others, entry into the higher grades of which, though theoretically open, is practically barred. In 1913, there were 1294 Indian Civil Servants of whom only 56 were Indians, that is about $4\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. It appears, that in 1912, in the Indian Educational Service there were 211 appointments of which only 3 were held by Indians, and that since 1897, only two members of the Provincial Educational

Service had been promoted to the Indian Educational Service. Yet the Indian Educational Service is the one Service which the Indian who has received high education, not unoften completed in England, may not unreasonably aspire to enter. The high hopes engendered by Burke, Mill and Bright, and by the Western shibboleths of "Liberty, equality, and fraternity" he finds after a time to be delusive, and he is heart-broken.

What with the severe strain of passing University Examinations, and the still more severe strain of finding out a career, the unhygienic surroundings of urban life, the stringency of the vastly increased struggle for existence, the average Neo-Indian becomes a physical and a mental wreck. "A healthy mind in a healthy body" is rare in new India. With a view to arrest the physical degeneration of the Parsis, an honorary staff of 35 doctors including 8 lady doctors, under the auspices of the Zoroastrian conference lately examined a large number of school children. The result of the examination of 1265 children showed that there were 194 cases of enlarged

spleen, the effect of malaria, while there were 391 cases of defective eyesight. The proportion of children suffering from ear, throat and nose diseases is very large, being about 50 per cent., but the percentage of children with bad teeth is the largest, some 896 being found suffering from such teeth. This is in the case of a community, in which Western Education has made the greatest advance, among men as well as women, and which is materially better off than any other community. I have but little doubt that an examination of the children of other classes, even when they are well-to-do, in new India would reveal similar results.

It may be observed incidentally, that it is very difficult to reconcile this fact with the accepted creed of the social reformers of new India, for among these classes the evils they complain of, such as child marriage and caste restrictions, which are supposed to be prejudicial to the well-being of our people have to a great extent disappeared.

The catalogue of ailments instead of being abridged expands with age. Hardy vigorous

young men of nerve, muscle and stamina, and hearty old men are as rare in new India as they were common in old India. Neurosis, dyspepsia, diabetes, tuberculosis, and weakness of the heart, are the special complaints of new India; and they are all complaints which are attributable to worry, anxiety, overwork, unsuitable food, and urban life. "An educated youth in India, instead of being in a better position to maintain his health by virtue of his knowledge and education, breaks down far too early and does not enjoy life even to that extent which an ordinary illiterate workman does. Those who have made a special study of the subject are of opinion that more than 50 per cent of our educated youths are potentially tuberculous and die before their time. Others, who escape, contract diabetes before they are forty, and are carried off before they are sixty."* With shattered nerves, impaired digestion, and weak heart, with hopes raised only to be balked, and aspirations created only to be smothered, with incomes which

* Lieut-Col. Kanta Prasad, *Health and Mortality amongst Educated Indians*, p. 4.

even where high, hardly enable him to meet both ends meet, discontented, disappointed, disaffected, miserable, the recipient of high education in those parts of India where it has made the greatest progress, is generally sucked into the outwardly attractive, vast whirlpool of Western Civilization only to be drowned.

CHAPTER IV.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND THE ECONOMIC PROBLEM.

When the writer published a pamphlet in 1886* advocating the establishment of Technological Institutes and the partial substitution of higher scientific and Technical Education for the almost exclusively literary education which then obtained in our Colleges the response he met with was not at all adequate to the importance of the subject. The professions and the services had not yet become too congested to absorb the great majority of the graduates and undergraduates turned out by the Universities. Since then, however, especially within the last decade, both the government and the people have waked up to a sense of the gravity of our economic situa-

* *Scientific and Technical Education in Bengal* reprinted in *Essays and Lectures on the Industrial Development of India and other Indian subjects.*

tion, and there are springing up various institutions for scientific research and for technical education maintained by the state and by the munificence of public-spirited individuals. Scores of our youngmen are also annually going to Europe, America and Japan for technical training.

The result so far has been far from satisfactory, and, in respect of employment, the recipients of technical education are not much better off than the recipients of ordinary high education. The condition of those who have been trained abroad in Europe and America is especially pitiable, in that their style of living has become more expensive, approximating as it does to the Western standard. There are but few large industries in the hands of the Indians which can absorb them; and the Europeans who mostly own them naturally prefer their own kith and kin. The most disconcerting feature of the situation is, that there does not appear to be any prospect of indigenous industrial enterprise ever attaining anything like the magnitude of such enterprise in the West. Perhaps, it is too early

yet to judge of the results of a movement which began in right earnest not more than a decade ago. But I am constrained to sound a note of warning and to try to dispel an illusion, all the more, because of the share, however humble, I have had in the Technical Education movement, and because, I confess, I have been under the illusion myself.

The illusion is, that with the progress of technical education and with persistent endeavour, India will gradually become studded with factories after the manner of the flourishing countries of Europe owned and managed by Indians. That such a consummation, even if desirable, is not practicable is shown by the following considerations.

First. Want of Capital. One of the essential conditions of industrial development on modern methods is capital. Concentration of capital is the most striking feature of Western industry. The introduction of labour-saving machinery has effected a revolution in the industrial world. The success of an industry now depends upon the scale and the quality of machinery used in it. No

industry on a small scale can be sufficiently remunerative under present conditions. The more gigantic the operations and the more extensive the employment of machinery, or in other words, the larger the capital, the more assured will the success of an industry be. And there are some industries like cotton manufacture, iron smelting, &c., which can not even be started successfully without a large capital. The competition in them is so keen, and the margin of profit so small, that they cannot be remunerative unless they are run on an enormous scale with the most improved machinery and on the most approved methods. This is much to be regretted. Capitalism, which leads to Mammonism, is probably the greatest curse of modern civilisation, and the western philosophers have not been slow to condemn its manifest and manifold evils, though being born and bred in their midst they do not see them quite so plainly as we Asiatics do from a distance. But all the same, capitalism is increasing at a tremendously rapid pace just like its associate, militarism, the evils of which are quite as plain and as vehemently denounced.

This fact, then, the necessity of large capital, must be impressed upon the enterprising youth of India. We can hardly realise without straining our imagination the gigantic industrial investments of the West. It would probably be no exaggeration to say, that the hoarded wealth of all the wealthy potentates of Hindusthan would barely make up the capital employed by a single great Trust of America.

India is no longer the "Pagoda tree" she was once considered to be. But she is still credited with a vast amount of hoarded wealth which the Indians are constantly blamed by Europeans for not utilising for industrial purposes. A high authority estimated it sometime back at three hundred millions. Assuming this estimate to be correct, and assuming the whole of it to be available for industrial investments, it would still be less than a sixth of the amount invested in manufacturing industries alone in the United States of America.* But a little consideration will show

* The capital employed in the manufacturing industries of the United States in 1900 was, in round figures, about £2,000,000,000.

that only a small fraction of this reputed hoard can be available for such investments. There is in India a population of some 315,000,000 souls, including the Native States which presumably have had their share of the hoards. At least half of this number, the poorer proletariat, are destitute of savings of any description, nearly a fifth at least of the population, according to the estimate of Sir William Hunter, living on the brink of starvation. Of the other half, all but two millions,* that is about 155,500,000, consisting of the higher class proletariat and the poor middle class may not unreasonably be credited with five-sixths of the hoard which would give them an average of £1-12s., Rs. 24, per head, or Rs. 120 for a family of five. Certainly not an extravagant amount for the ornaments of the women-folk, which in India, besides being a social necessity, serve also as provision for a rainy day.

* The number of income-tax assesses with annual income of Rs. 1,000 and above of British India amounted only to 277,822, including Europeans. Agricultural incomes are exempted from income-tax. Including such incomes, two millions of people with annual incomes of Rs. 1,000 and above for the whole of India (with Native States) is likely to be rather an over estimate.

Not much can be reasonably expected out of this amount for industrial development on a large scale.

The balance, £50,000,000, of the supposed hoard may be equally divided between two very unequal sections of the community which comprise the remaining two millions of our population—the upper middle class and the aristocracy. The numerical strength of the former composed of the smaller chiefs and landholders, the higher class servants of the state and of private firms, the thriving professional men, merchants &c., may be put down at 1,990,000, which would give them an average of £12-10s. per head, or about Rs. 1,000 for a family of five. The greater portion of this amount has, I have but little doubt, been used up in ornaments, which it has long been customary in India for fathers of this class give to their daughters on the occasion of their marriage, and which are prized by Indian ladies not only for the gratification of the feminine weakness for show (of which they have their share) but also as a stand-by for evil times, ornaments being pledged with money-lenders

just as watches, chains, and clothes are in the West. The remaining 10,000 of the population, whom we have supposed responsible for a moiety of the balance, that is £25,000,000 comprises the wealthier chiefs, zamindars, bankers and merchants. The predilection for show is much more pronounced in this than in any other section of the community, and it is doubtful if it will ever be so deeply permeated by the influence of occidental Industrialism, and by a conviction of the paramount necessity of indigenous industrial development as to invest any considerable portion of the wealth locked up in cash or ornaments and various other articles of gold and silver in industrial and commercial concerns. Even, if by any revolution in their deep-rooted ideas, habits, and customs—not at all a likely contingency—they resolved to set all their hoards free for industrial ventures, they would go but a very small way to build up an industrial fabric such as has been raised even by the poorest country of the West.

The figures I have given above are all entirely conjectural, but they are based upon experience

derived from close contact with all sections of our people in various parts of India and Burma. They would, the writer trusts, dissipate the wrong notion of the enormous possibilities of the hoarded wealth of India, and show how baseless are the hopes raised thereon. So immense is the economic disparity between India and the nations who exploit her, that it is absolutely impossible for her to compete with them successfully in the sphere of industry. Sir Robert Giffen in his address to the British Association in 1903 observed :

“How vast must be the economic gulf separating the people of the United Kingdom and the self-governing Colonies from India and the parts of the empire occupied by subject races, when we find that forty-two millions of people in the United Kingdom consume in food and drink alone an amount equal to the whole income of three hundred millions of people in India.”

The highest official estimate which has been made of the annual average income per head of an Indian does not exceed £2, whereas the average annual income per head of the population

of Great Britain is not less than £42! In the Titanic War which is now raging in Europe, England alone is spending in a month more than the total Annual revenue of India! The daily war bill of the belligerent powers is estimated to be not less than £10,000,000, half of the total annual land revenue of India. In the face of such monumental poverty, it would be futile to expect India to vanquish her adversaries in industrial warfare. In a country where capital is so scarce that an interest of nine to fifteen per cent is the usual return for the safest possible investment, is it any wonder that it should not be forthcoming for enterprises which are attended with so much risk that fully half of them fail to yield any return where not attended with positive loss, and the other half barely pay a dividend of five per cent in the average? Yet even the remote prospect of such a dividend, and that too in distant countries would be enough to tempt Western millionaires and multimillionaires, so overburdened are they with capital, and so strongly are they impelled by a burning desire to augment it.

Secondly. Wide as is the economic gulf between India and the nations that exploit her industrially, there are cogent reasons to conclude, that the gulf has been annually becoming wider and wider during the last century. I shall on this point cite the testimony of high officials of the Government as they are not likely to be biased by Indian prepossessions.

Mr. Montgomery Martin writing in 1838 at a time when the drain* was considerably less than what it is now, says :

“The annual drain of £3,000,000 on British India has amounted in thirty years at 12 per cent, the usual Indian rate, compound interest, to the enormous sum of £ 723,900,000 sterling! So constant and accumulating a drain, even in England, would soon impoverish her. How severe, then, must be its effects on India where the wages of a labourer is from two pence to three pence a day” :

Mr. Frederick John Shore of the Bengal Civil Service writing in 1837 says: “The English Government has effected

* *The History, Antiquities, Topography and Statistics of Eastern India*, by M. Martin (London, 1838) Vol I Introduction p. xi.

the impoverishment of the country and people to an extent almost unparalleled." Mr. Saville Marriot, who was for sometime one of the Commissioners of Revenue in the Deccan and afterwards a member of Council, says speaking of the drain about 1845 when it was considerably less than it is now : "It will be difficult to satisfy the mind that any country could bear such a drain upon its resources without sustaining any serious injury. And the writer [Mr. Marriot] entertains the fullest conviction that investigation would effectually establish the truth of the proposition as applicable to India. He has himself most painfully witnessed it in those parts of the country with which he was connected, and he has every reason to believe, that the same evil exists, with but slight modification, throughout our eastern empire." Again : "Most of the evils of our rule in India arise directly from, or may be traced to, the heavy tribute which that country pays to England."*

"It must be remembered" says Sir G. Campbell "that we give neither our services nor our capital for nothing. Much of this is paid for by remittances to Empire. The public remittances are now £16,000,009 per annum, and it is estimated that the private remittances would be almost as much more if the flow of British capital to India were stopped, and the transactions showed only sums received in England. As it is, the continual addition of fresh capital invested in India about balances. The private remittances, and the balance of trade show only about the same amount as the public drawings, to be depleted from India—that is, about £16,900,000 per annum. This is what is sometimes called the "tribute" paid to England. Well, it is not tribute, but it is paid for civil and military services, loans, railways, industrial investments, and all the rest; and the result is that a large part of the increased production is not retained by the Indian peasant."*

* *The British Empire*, p. 70.

If to this drain due to Home Charges, etc., we add the equally, if not still more exhausting drain which we have referred to in the last chapter, the conclusion that India is getting poorer becomes irresistible; and this conclusion is confirmed by the increasing frequency of famines, increasing mortality, etc.* It could not be otherwise, as of the two sources of our wealth, agriculture is practically stationary and other industries are either extinct or decadent.

Thirdly. India can never expect to adopt the methods of spoliation and exploitation which have added to the wealth of her industrial rivals, even if she be ever disposed to do so. She refrained from having recourse to such methods even when she had the power to do so.† Her

* The death-rate for the whole of British India increased from 29·4 per 1,000 of population to 32 during the decade 1901 to 1911. The following figures show the death-rate between 1880, and 1891: 1880, 20·98; 1881, 24·05; 1882, 23·93; 1883, 23·17; 1884, 26·44; 1885, 26·12; 1886, 25·34; 1887, 28·35; 1888, 25·74; 1889, 27·98; 1890, 29·99; 1891, 28·09. The increase is all the more significant, as during the decade 1883 to 1892, there were no cases of widespread failure of crops.

† *Epochs of Civilization*, pp. 207—208.

latest commercial rivals have been Germany and Japan, and they have both adopted

..... "The simple plan

That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can."

The Germans are represented by Cramb* as asking—"Are we to acquiesce in England's possession of one-fifth of the globe, with no title-deeds, no claim, except priority in robbery?" The Neo-Indian often points to the recent wonderful industrial transformation of Japan which has enabled her to capture the market which Germany owing to the War has lost in India, and asks why should not India be similarly transformed? But he forgets the impetus which the acquisition of Formosa, the southern half of Saghalien, and of Korea, and the military authority and political influence which she has established in Manchuria, have given to her industrial development. It may be safely predicted, that these unrighteous methods of Imperial expansion will ultimately land her in ruin, and her lot is by no means to be envied.

* *Germany and England*, p. 106.

But for the present, there can be no doubt that they have largely contributed to her industrial and commercial prosperity.

Fourthly. The political condition of India is such that her Government can do but little to help the development of indigenous enterprises though now it is strongly actuated by a sincere desire to do so. "In the great industrial conflict of the world," says Sir H. J. S. Cotton, "England is engaged in a life struggle against American and continental competition, and against competition also with her colonies, and our own capitalists are keenly conscious of the fact that they are more and more dependent on their success in exploiting the vast population and natural resources of India to their own benefit. The Government of Lord Curzon has identified itself with this policy; and whatever may be possible in other directions of fiscal enterprise, this at least is certain, that, having regard to the economic revolution through which India has passed, no attempt can be made to encourage Indian industries, or the investment of Indian capital by means of protective legislation with-

out a complete reversal of British policy and the sacrifice of the profits and aspirations of British capitalists.”*

One of the essential conditions of modern industrial development in its early stage is protection. It would be as irrational to demand the first attempts by one of the poorest, and so far as mechanical progress is concerned, one of the most backward peoples of the world to compete freely with the wealthiest peoples of the globe with a century of mechanical progress at their back, as it would be to expect a weak starveling to run a race successfully with an able-bodied athlete who has had the start of a league. In fact, industries require to be nursed, and even indulgently treated, just as children have to be; and as in the one case, so in the other, free and unrestricted competition would result in death. In the West, with all its wealth and mechanical advancement, protection in some shape or other is found in every country except England. Even in England, her industries had to be protected and nurtured for a long time before they were

* *New India* (revised edition) pages 112—113.

enabled to withstand the competition of the world; and as old age is second childhood, the adoption of some form of protection may be found necessary there in no very remote future for successful competition with younger and more vigorous rivals. But even should England ever have recourse to such a policy at home, it is highly improbable that she will ever extend it to this country as that would seriously clash with her self-interest as it is usually understood. The attitude of the Government in this respect was made quite clear in 1895, when low cotton duties were reimposed. Highly moderate as they are they could not be imposed without a countervailing excise on indigenous cotton manufactures of such standards as are likely to compete with those of Manchester, and without an assurance to Lancashire that they would be repealed as soon as the financial position of India became satisfactory. "Though that will not be before the Greek Calends," observes Mr. S. S. Thorburn, who, like Sir H. J. S. Cotton, occupied a highly responsible position under the Government of India, in a lecture delivered before the Fabian

Society sometime ago, "we shall probably a few years hence, if not sooner, see strong pressure put upon the Secretary of State for India to insist once more upon the abolition of the duties. If so, there will again be serious risk that the interests of India may be subordinated to the electioneering manœuvring of one or both of the parties bidding for power in England." Not only is there no possibility of the Government ever protecting Indian industries against Western, or at least English, competition, but they are even occasionally hampered to some extent. To give an instance from Mr. Thorburn's lecture to which I have just referred :

"Some years ago," says Mr. Thorburn "the cotton spinning and certain other industries in this country, having discovered I suppose, that Indians worked on Sundays, had their consciences awakened to the habitual desecration of the Sabbath out there. It was contended that as Sunday was a holy day in England, it should at least be a compulsory holiday for factory hands in India. The agitation had considerable support. In due course, the Secretary for India sent a despatch to the Government of India, drawing attention to the sin of Sabbath-breaking in India, and calling on him *qua* factory hands, to conform to the rule in England, or give reason for not doing so. Amongst others, I was consulted for and against compulsory closing on Sundays. I suggested, that as Indians were mostly Hindus and Mahomedans, and invariably absta-

ined from work on their own holidays, were Sundays also added, it would hardly be worth while to keep factories open at all, as the working days in the year would be reduced to something like two hundred in all. I hinted—no doubt indiscreetly as we should not judge others—that probably the cotton spinners of England had initiated the Sunday closing movement for India more from business than from religious or sympathetic motives.”

Even if the Government of India despite British political influences, determined to inaugurate a policy of protection for Indian industries, it is the Europeans who, under existing conditions, would mainly take advantage of it, to enlarge the scope of their industrial ventures in India. And industrial expansion with foreign capital and under foreign management would benefit the people of India but little, and would go but a very small way to solve the highly involved and complicated economic problem with which they are confronted at the present day.

Fifthly—The ethical ideals of the Indians are adverse to industrial development on a large scale in as much as they discourage greed and disassociate industry (except agriculture) from culture.* It is true that those ideals are being

* *Epochs of Civilization*, pp. 14—16. *The Root Cause of the Great War*, pp. 14—15.

superseded by Western ideals of material development in India, but they still influence large sections of our community to a great extent, and thus the chief motive impulse which impels people to acquire wealth has much less force in India than in the West.

Sixthly—Weak development of industrial qualities. The Aryans of northern and western Europe were not so favoured by their physical environment as their brethren who migrated to India. Throughout the last epoch of civilization they were engaged in a keen struggle for bare existence and were but little above the savage level. Their climate and their soil were adverse to economic progress, and their energies were exhausted in overcoming natural obstacles. They had little time left for introspection and contemplation. Nature loomed large before them because they had constantly to contend against her forces. The effort made by them to obtain mastery over her has left its impress upon their national character which exhibits qualities requisite for sustained action in a superlative degree. They are eminently active,

energetic, self-reliant, persevering, enterprising and resolute. These qualities have greatly helped them in the development of their civilization of which industrialism is the most characteristic feature. Wealth being the indispensable condition of their progress, its acquisition engages them in endless commercial and industrial pursuits, and nature and man in all quarters of the globe have been made to minister to their ever increasing wants.

Just as the physical environment of the North-West of Europe has favoured the development of combativeness and activity, so the physical environment of India has favoured the development of peacefulness and quietism. The Indo-Aryans, as they spread from the Punjab along the valley of the Ganges, must have found the struggle for existence a comparatively easy one. A fertile soil, with but little attention, yielded them abundant harvests. Edible fruits, roots, and herbs were plentiful in a wild state; so much so, that one, if he was so minded, could live upon them. The heat of the climate rendered much clothing unnecessary, if not

actually unpleasant during the greater portion of the year. The shelter of a tree or of a rude hut was often sufficient, sometimes highly pleasant, more so than the shelter of a brick or stone-built house. The animal wants of their nature being thus easily satisfied, the Hindu early began to devote his attention to spiritual culture, to the great problems of life and death. All nature conspired to make him thoughtful, idealistic, and inactive (according to the western standard of activity). His virtues as well as his vices are characterised by passivity. He is a model of patience and peacefulness. When he persecutes, he persecutes indirectly and passively, rather than directly and actively. His worst form of persecution is excommunication, which means, that he will not eat, drink, or have any other social connection with the party excommunicated. He has far more of the gentler qualities developed by a spiritual and quietistic disposition but far less of the industrial and militant qualities of the European.

The influence of the British rule has been not to counteract but rather to aid and strengthen the

action of the physical causes, which, as we have just seen, has been prejudicial to the development of industrial qualities. Self-reliance is one of the most important of these qualities. But the Indian has much less of it now than his forbears even in the early days of the British rule. A paternal Government treats him as if he were a child, and treated as such it is no wonder that he often remains one. If a man, though healthy, be repeatedly told that he is not, at least be treated as such, ten to one he will come in time to believe that there is really something wrong with him. Even so, the Indian systematically treated as if were unfit, is apt to lose his faith in his capacity. The circumstances under which he is placed tend to make him morbidly timid and diffident. As is well-observed by Major Evans Bell, "the natives of India, of every caste, and creed are men of like powers and passions with ourselves; and in obedience to the universal law—as true in social science as in physiology—the healthy development of their civilization cannot proceed without space and range for the exercise of all their faculties. Too much cons-

traint, too much assistance, however benevolently intended, will but distort the phenomena of progress, disturb its steady course, and drive the streams into dangerous channel.”*

New India has become so very invertebrate and imbecile, that it constantly invokes the help of Government even in matters like industrial development in which a Government, especially an alien government, can do but little permanent good, oblivious of the obvious sociological fact, that a nation has to work out its own salvation, and that for progress to be abiding, the impulse must come from within. In the words of Herbert Spencer—

“Considering the State-agency as though it were something more than a mere cluster of men (a few clever, many ordinary, and some decidedly stupid), we ascribe to it marvellous powers of doing multitudinous things which men otherwise clustered are unable to do. We petition it to procure for us in some way which we do not doubt it can find, benefits of all orders; and pray it with unfaltering faith to secure us from every fresh evil. Time after time our hopes are balked. The good is not obtained, or some thing bad comes with it; the evil is not cured, or some other evil as great or greater is produced. Our journals, daily and weekly, general and local, perpetually find failures to dilate upon; now blaming and now ridiculing first this department and then that, and yet,

* *Retrospects and Prospects of Indian Policy*, p. vi.

though the rectification of blunders, administrative and legislative, is a main part of public business, though the time of the Legislature is chiefly occupied in amending and again amending, until after the many mischiefs implied by these needs for amendments, there often comes at last repeal; yet from day to day, increasing numbers of wishes are expressed for legal repressions and state management. After endless comments on the confusion and apathy and delay of Government offices other Government offices are advocated. After ceaseless ridicule of red-tape, the petition is for more red-tape. Daily we castigate the political idol with a hundred pens, and daily pray to it with a thousand tongues."

This is what the greatest British thinker says in regard to the British Government in Britain—a Government which has been slowly evolved in course of centuries and which is strictly national being officered entirely by Britons who are supposed to be in complete touch with the sentiments, ideals and aspirations of the people. I need hardly point out that the observations apply with hundredfold emphasis to our case.

Seventhly. The lateness of the Technical Education Movement. If this movement had commenced even three decades ago when I pleaded for it, there would have been a greater chance of success. Within that time, the Westerners and the Japanese have gone so far ahead of us industrially, and have been so firmly establishing

themselves in the markets of India that it has been yearly becoming more and more difficult for our countrymen to compete with them on equal terms. This difficulty is considerably enhanced by the fact, that the young men who receive technical education do not enjoy the opportunities which the Westerners have of completing it by practical training in large works.

Eighthly. Inadequate commercial training especially in Bengal. Service and profession (especially the legal profession) having hitherto been the goal of the ambition of our young men, even of those who belong to the commercial castes, there is a great dearth of business men in the educated community, which either from patriotic motive or in consequence of economic pressure has of late begun to betake to industrial ventures on Western methods. We often have, as a result, men devoid of commercial training and experience managing concerns the success of which depends largely upon such training and experience.

Some one or other of the causes mentioned above, or several or all of them combined account

for the dearth of indigenouse enterprise and for the failure of a large number of recent industrial ventures. The number of joint-stock companies in British India and the Mysore state, in whose hands lie nearly all our large industries, increased from 886 in 1886 to 2,304 in 1911, and the paid-up capital during that period rose from Rs. 21,38,04,420 to Rs. 64,04,96,826. I doubt if even a quarter of this capital can be credited to Indian shareholders. With the exception of the cotton-industry of the Bombay Presidency and of the recently-started iron industry at Sakchi the growth of all the other large industries is due almost entirely to Western enterprise. Between 1881 and 1911, the output of coal rose from 1,015,210 tons to 6,635,727 tons, and that of petroleum between 1895 and 1911, from about thirteen million gallons to nearly two hundred twenty-six million gallons. Between 1880 and 1908, the number of jute mills rose from 22 to 50, of paper mills from 1 to 8, of sugar factories from 8 to 23 and of woollen mills from 2 to 6. Indigenouse enterprise has had but little to do with this expansion of Indian industries. And when one

ponders the formidable difficulties mentioned above, this would be no matter for surprise. Indigenous enterprise has had to content itself chiefly with such small ventures as perfumery, scented oils, syrups, hosiery, soap, patent medicines, pencils, steel trunks, cigarettes, biscuits etc. The utility of several of them is highly problematical, and several others may not unreasonably be relegated to the category of futilities or superfluities. There is not much to choose between some of them and imported articles of a similar character, especially when we consider that they are largely made up of foreign ingredients. They equally eat into our reserve which should go towards the production of more substantial things, things which we cannot absolutely do without, and it would probably be no exaggeration to say that, under existing conditions, *Swadeshism* of this description is an economic blunder and a social menace.

Our people have been reduced to such a pass that the help of the Government is constantly invoked in the press and on the platform to resuscitate our decadent industries by pioneering

the more promising among them. It is like the delusion of a drowning man who catches at a straw to save himself. Agriculture is the largest industry of the country and Government has been pioneering it for over three decades through a large number of demonstration and experimental farms. There are fairly well-manned departments of agriculture, imperial and local, with chemical, entomological, mycological, bacteriological and various other experts. Government has also in a sense been pioneering another important branch of industry, mining, through its Geological Survey Department. But whatever benefit there has been from this pioneering has been derived chiefly by Westerners not by Indians, because the former are more enterprising, which is mainly due to the fact of their being immensely wealthier. The only industry in which Indians have made a mark is the cotton industry of the Bombay Presidency; and that industry was developed without any help whatever from Government long before the days of Directors of Industries and other high functionaries watching over the industrial development of India.

Want of adequate capital is the most formidable obstacle in the way of the industrial development of India on modern lines. The recent collapse of a multitude of *Swadeshi* ventures is primarily attributable to this cause. As I am writing this, I find the following paragraph in one of the most influential Indian newspapers (the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*):

“While inspecting the comb factory at Jessore, Lord Carmichael was pleased to express his highest satisfaction at the beautiful articles turned out by that factory. His Excellency went so far as to declare that he and Lady Carmichael daily use combs manufactured there. But is His Excellency aware that for only a lakh of rupees it is languishing and not showing any progress?” This is what the manager of the factory, an Indian gentleman who has received his technical training abroad writes, to the paper:—

“I need hardly impress upon you the necessity of keeping such an institution going. The dressing combs manufactured by us have found their way into the remotest corners of India and outside so far as Australia, New Zealand, Burma

and Ceylon. For want of stock, or in other words, for want of proper funds, we cannot supply the orders that are pouring in from all sides. If we get only a lakh of rupees just now, we can take up the manufacture of celluloid sufficient to meet our own demands."

"Is it asking of the Government of Bengal too much," urges the *Patrika*, to "accommodate the factory with a loan of a lakh which can be recovered from it in due course? May we also appeal to our wealthy classes to invest their money in this industry? Indeed, the factory has great possibilities before it: and it will be something like a calamity if it be allowed to collapse for want of funds."

Here is an apparently flourishing industry, in the enjoyment of the patronage of His Excellency the Governor of Bengal languishing for want of a lakh of rupees! and the help of the Government has to be invoked for it! Cases like this could be largely multiplied from my own experience. They illustrate to what a condition of utter imbecility our people have been reduced.

There is not the remotest chance of India ever becoming an industrial country in the modern sense. Nor is it desirable. I have elsewhere dealt with the incalculable mischief which Industrialism has done and is doing in the West.* Militarism, endless conflict between capital and labour, substitution of urban for rural life and the consequent demoralisation of the people working in mills and factories (who in not a few cases are little better than slaves) and the spoliation of the weaker peoples of the world are some of the numerous evils for which Western Industrialism is responsible.

India had an almost ideal industrial organisation which until a century ago enabled her to maintain her industrial supremacy. Traces of it may still be seen in outlying parts which have not yet been invaded by Western Civilization, and there are villages for which the following picture drawn by Sir George Birdwood would still be true to life :

"Outside the entrance of the single village street, on an exposed rise of ground, the hereditary potter sits by his wheel

* *Epochs of Civilization*, pp. 300—313; *The Root Cause of the Great War*, pp. 31—36. *Essays and Lectures*, Chapter V.

moulding the swift revolving clay by the natural curves of his hands. At the back of the houses, which form the low irregular street, there are two or three looms at work in blue, and scarlet and gold, the frames hanging between the acacia trees, the yellow flowers of which drop fast on the webs as they are being woven. In the street the brass and copper-smiths are hammering away at their pots and pans, and further down, in the verandah of the rich man's house, is the jeweller working rupees and gold mohars into fair jewellery, gold and silver earrings, and round tires like the moon, bracelets, and chaplets, and nose-rings, and tinkling ornaments for the feet, taking his designs from the fruits and flowers around him, or from the traditional forms represented in the paintings and carvings of the great temple, which rises over the groves of mangoes and palms at the end of the street above the lotus-covered village tank. At half past three or four in the afternoon the whole street is lighted up by the moving robes of the women going down to draw water from tank; each with two or three water jars on her head; and so while they are going and returning in single file, the scene glows like Titian's canvas, and moves like the stately procession of the Parathenaic frieze. Later, the men drive in the mild grey kine from the moaning plain, the looms are folded up, the coppersmiths are silent, the elders gather in the gate, the lights begin to glimmer in the fast-falling darkness, the feasting and the music are heard on every side, and late into the night the songs are sung from the Ramayana or Mahabharata. The next morning with sunrise, after the simple ablutions and adorations performed in the open air before the houses, the same day begins again. This is the daily life going on all over Western India in the village communities of the Dekhan, among a people happy in their simple manners and frugal way of life, and in the culture derived from the grand epics of the religion in which they live, and move, and have their daily being, and in which the highest expression of their liter-

ature, art and civilization has been stereotyped for three thousand years."

Alas! idyllic life of this description is passing away. We may sigh for it, but, under present conditions, it is impossible to restore it in its entirety. As Sir George Birdwood himself observes :

"But of late years these handicraftsmen for the sake of whose works the whole world has been ceaselessly pouring its bullion for three thousand years into India, and who for all the marvellous tissue and embroidery they have wrought have polluted no rivers, deformed no pleasing prospects, nor poisoned any air ; whose skill and individuality the training of countless generations has developed to the highest perfection, these hereditary craftsmen are being everywhere gathered from their democratic village communities in hundreds and thousands into the colossal mills of Bombay, to drudge in gangs for tempting wages, at manufacturing piece-goods in competition with Manchester, in the production of which they are no more intellectually and morally concerned than the grinder of the barrel-organ in the tunes turned out from it."

To a certain extent, this is inevitable. If it were possible to revive our industries entirely on the old methods, I would be the last man to advocate technical education on modern lines as I have done for the last three decades. It would however be as reasonable to expect our weavers and our smelters with the handloom and the primitive furnace alone to compete

successfully with the cotton manufacturers and iron-smelters of the West, under existing conditions, as it would be to expect people armed only with muzzle-loaders to successfully defend themselves against enemies armed with nothing less destructive than long-range, quickfiring rifles. In regard to Art industries, such as painting, architecture, embroidery, wood and ivory carving, damascene work, etc., our artisans have but little to learn from the West. In fact, a pish imitation of Western styles has hitherto served only to vulgarise our artistic tastes. But so far as such industries as cotton-manufacture, smelting and manufacture of metals like iron, copper and tin, and mining coal, gold, etc., are concerned, though something may be done by improved manual methods, they must to a large extent be supplemented by labour-saving machinery and appliances. This may be called the Positive Method of regenerating our decaying industries. Technical education on Western lines is indispensable for this method. But such education is valueless unless industries spring up to absorb the men who receive it. We have, however, seen

how formidable a difficulty scarcity of capital is in the way of indigenous enterprise.

So far as I can see this difficulty can be overcome only by setting our face against the so-called "rise" in the standard of living after the European fashion. I shall call this the Negative Method of regenerating our industries. The adoption of this method would serve a double purpose. It would by saving annually the thirty-five crores or so at present spent upon imported articles furnish the capital for indigenous ventures, and would, at the same time, save a good number of our industries from extinction. The two methods must work hand in hand; one would be quite ineffective without the other. The agriculturist and the craftsman will never be able to improve agriculture and craft if their resources be frittered away upon brummagem fineries and shoddy superfluities, instead of being husbanded for cultivation and improved appliances. Industries can not be developed on the positive method without large capital, and capital will not accumulate if it be wasted upon things which contribute neither to physical nor to

moral efficiency. Modern Western culture with its highly developed system of scientific and technical education is as indispensable for the positive method, as ancient Hindu culture with its high ethical and spiritual ideals is for the negative method. In fact, just as the harmonious movement of a star is effected by the centrifugal and centripetal forces acting upon it, so the restoration of the harmony of our social organisation would depend upon the proper balancing of the forces of Western culture and Hindu culture which are acting upon it now in opposite directions.

I am fully alive to the difficulties of putting the negative method into practice. But I am not sure if they are more serious than those which beset the path of the positive method. Indeed, from my experience of indigenous ventures, especially on this side of India, during the last thirty years, I do not know if it would not be easier to check the phenomenal expansion of our textile requirements by reverting to the indigenous standard of decency and comfort than to extend the cotton-mill industry to cope

with the perpetually increasing demand created by the exotic standard; to restrict our tinctorial requirements to indigenous dyes than to start factories for coaltar dyes; to go back to the days of *gur* and coarse sugar, and of slipper and sandals than to start large sugar factories and tanneries; to be satisfied with our metal plates and vessels than to develop China and glass works; to check the growing rage for socks and stockings, than to start hosiery factories. All that is needed is, that we should be guided by the ideals of our ancient culture. The maintenance of the supremacy of that culture is the essential prerequisite of the success of the Negative Method.

The industrial future of India depends entirely upon ourselves. Government can do but little. Instead of giving vent to futile whining complaints about the threatened flood of foreign imports from Japan or any other country, and catching at straws to save himself, it would be much better and much more manly for the drowning Indian to exert himself and strive his utmost to reach the high and firm ethical ground of his ancestors. Once there, he can serenely contem-

plate the idle beating of the foaming flood, and take such steps as would effectively stay its encroachment and prevent its ravages in future.

CHAPTER V.

THE ILLUSION OF ETHICAL PROGRESS.

The Neo-Indian reader who has had the patience to follow me so far will probably exclaim, "But look at the social and moral regeneration which has been effected by the Western environment, especially by Western education. In new India, deeprooted prejudices and superstitions are becoming obsolescent, the adamantine bonds of caste have been loosened, women are being emancipated, such evil customs, as early marriage and prohibition of widow-marriage are being done away with, and the idea of equality is spreading far and wide."

One of the illusions of the present age which new India shares with the Western World is, that vast moral blessings flow from the diffusion of education as commonly understood. There have been thoughtful men in the West who have

tried to dispel this illusion, but their efforts so far have been unavailing. The observations of Herbert Spencer on this point are so very apposite that hardly any explanation is needed to quote them in full.

“We have no evidence that education as commonly understood is a preventive of crime. Those perpetually reiterated newspaper paragraphs, in which the ratios of instructed to uninstructed convicts are so triumphantly stated, prove just nothing.....So far, indeed, from proving that morality is increased by education, the facts prove, if anything, the reverse.....It has been shown from Government returns—‘that the number of juvenile offenders in the Metropolis has been steadily increasing every year since the institution of the Ragged School Union; and that whereas the number of criminals who *cannot* read and write has decreased from 24,856 (in 1844) to 22,968 (in 1848), or no less than 1,888 in that period—the number of those who *can* read and write imperfectly has increased from 33,337 to 36,229 or 2,892 in the same time. Another contributor to the series of articles on ‘Labour and the Poor’ from which the above statement is quoted remarks that the mining population (in the North) are exceedingly low in point of education and intelligence; and yet they contradict the theories generally entertained upon the connexion of ignorance with crime by presenting the least criminal section of the population of England.’ And speaking of the women employed in the iron works and collieries throughout South Wales, he says—‘their ignorance is absolutely awful: yet the returns show in them a singular immunity from crime’..... The fact is, that scarcely any connexion exists between morality and the discipline of ordinary teaching. Mere

culture of the (intellect and education as usually conducted amounts to little more is hardly at all operative upon conduct). Creeds pasted upon the mind, good principles learnt by rote, lessons in right and wrong, will not eradicate vicious propensities, though people in spite of their experience as parents and citizens persist in hoping they will. Intellect is not a power, but an instrument—not a thing which itself moves and works, but a thing which is moved and worked by forces behind it. To say that men are ruled by reason is as irrational as to say that men are ruled by their eyes. Reason is an eye—the eye through which the desires see their way to gratification. And educating it only makes it a better eye—gives it a vision more accurate and more comprehensive—does not at all alter the desires subserved by it.....Probably some will urge that enlightening men enables them to discern the penalties which naturally attach to wrongdoing; and in a certain sense this is true. But it is only superficially true. Though they may learn that the grosser crimes commonly bring retribution in one shape or other, they will not learn that the subtler ones do. Their sins will merely be made more Machiavellian. If, as Coleridge says, 'a knave is a fool with a circumbendibus,' then by instructing the knave, you do but make the circumbendibus a wider one. Did much knowledge and piercing intelligence suffice to make men good, then Bacon should have been honest, and Napoleon should have been justIt is indeed, strange that with the facts of daily life before them in the street, in the counting house, and in the family, thinking men should still expect education to cure crime."*

The advanced nations of Europe are far ahead of India in respect of education; they are

* *Social Statics*—Chapter on *National Education*.

also far ahead in respect of crimes. The late W. W. Hunter, who was at the time Director-General of Statistics to the Government of India observed in 1882 :

“ There was now only about one third of the crime in Bengal that there was in England. While for each million persons in England and Wales there were 870 criminals, in Bengal, where the Police was very completely organised, there were 300 convicts in jail for each million ; and while in England and Wales there were 340 women in jail for each million of the female population, in Bengal there were less than 20 women in jail for each million of the female population.”

In spite of the phenomenal spread of education in England, crime has been increasing apace at a greater rate than the increase of the population. A. Russel Wallace thus summarises the criminal statistics for the thirty years from 1860 to 1889 :—

Years	Prison population	In Reformatories and Industrial schools	Total
1860—63	... 127,630	... 6,834	... 134,524
1870—79	... 154,154	... 17,394	... 171,539
1880—89	... 170,827	... 25,505	... 196,332

"Here we have," observes Dr. Wallace "an increase in the average of the first and last ten-year periods amounting to 46 per cent. while the increase of population in the twenty years from 1865 to 1885 is a little less than 30 per cent."*

In the introduction to a Blue-book upon statistics relating to crime in 1909, Mr. H. B. Simpson of the Home Office says :

"The high figure for crime which was a marked feature in the statistics of 1908 is again apparent in the 1909 figures. In 1908, the total number of persons tried for indictable offences was 68,116, a larger number than in any previous year for which figures are available. In 1909, though not so large as in 1908, it was 67,149, which is considerably larger than in any year before 1908. For the five years 1894—98, the annual average was 52,208 ; for 1899—1903, it was 55,018 ; for 1904—08, it was 62,000 ; and for 1909 it was 67,149."†

* The *Wonderful Century*, p. 362.

† In regard to the Middlesex sessions, Mr. Montague Sharp says:

"It was mentioned to him recently that it is an extraordinary thing that many educated men were being convicted of these offences. He had looked through the calendars from February, 1910 to November, 1911, and he found that out of 200 cases of house-breaking and burglary no less than 83 per cent. were men who were classified as of good education,whereas, in regard to larceny, out of 250 cases 69 per cent. were of the third and fourth classes of education. Therefore it was shown that men engaged in nefarious

In India, Burma is easily the first in point of literacy both among males and females, there being 376 literate males per mille, and 61 literate females per mille. It also beats all other provinces in point of crime, the number of criminals per 10,000 of population in 1912 being 87, while the same number in the educationally backward provinces, Bihar and Orissa, Assam, and Central Provinces and Berar, is 19 and 28 respectively.

It is a trite observation, that there are many things which are good up to a certain point, but becomes the contrary beyond it. The struggle for animal existence is just one of these. In moderation, it tends to evoke latent faculties and develops them, and keeps one in good trim, physically, mentally, and morally. In excess, its effect is just the reverse. We have already seen how the current system of education in this country in conjunction with the other factors of the Western environment has inordinately

crimes were not of the illiterate class—the old Bill Sikes character—but were men who were certainly educated, and many of whom had received their education at the expense of the community.”

intensified the struggle for existence, how immensely the wants of our people have increased, while the means to satisfy them has not increased, at least in anything like the same proportion, if it has not actually decreased. Moral deterioration is the inevitable consequence of such a state of things. I have mixed with all classes of our people in various parts of India ; and I have generally found those who keep to the simple habits of their ancestors far more honest, straightforward, truthful and benevolent, than their brethren who have become more or less "civilized." The wants of the latter having increased out of all proportion to their means, they are driven to live upon their wits and to resort to crooked, if not positively dishonest means of livelihood. The same cause which leads to moral degeneration among the lower classes operates to the same end among the upper. Cases of educated people who are impelled by the exigencies of their economic situation to explore the dark alleys and byways of money-making are becoming increasingly frequent ; and there is a distinct tendency towards

the lowering of the ethical standard of the learned professions.

Simplicity of living is as marked a characteristic of old India, as complexity of living after the Western fashion is that of new India. Here is a description by Sir Thomas Munro of the mode of living of a high functionary of his day, a description which still to some extent applies to people who do not affect Western culture :

" His (the Minister of State's) dwelling is little better than a shed. The walls are naked, and the mudfloor, for the sake of coolness, is every morning sprinkled with a mixture of water and cowdung. He has no furniture in it. He distributes food to whoever wants it; but he gives no grand dinners to his friends. He throws aside his upper garment, and with nothing but a cloth round his loins, he sits down half naked, and eats his meal alone, upon the bare earth, and under the open sky."

The average Neo-Indian, like the average Westerner would look upon this sort of simplicity as an index of barbarism. If he is in such affluent circumstances as the Minister of State

depicted above, he would live as much like an European as he possibly can. His furniture, decoration, apparel, mode of living, equipage, etc., would all be in European style. If he has not actually acquired a taste for the arts, amusements, games, etc., of the West, he would simulate it to the best of his ability, and would spend as much of his time in the West, as he possibly can.

We have already seen how simple living was fostered by the system of indigenous elementary education. It was also inculcated among the higher-class students by the rigorous discipline of the Brahmacharya. They were required to forswear the use of all luxuries, such as meat, scents, shoes, etc., and renounce lust, anger, greed, gambling, idle gossip, scandal, falsehood, casting lustful eyes on females, and doing injury to others. The simple life of their preceptors who boarded and taught them without any remuneration served as a noble example to them. As a consequence of its simple living and high ethical ideals, Hindu society was as free from greed as it is possible for any civilized society to be. "I was very soon attracted," says J. Rout-

edge, "by the fact, that while wealth is the chief means of distinguishing man in England, it has no such exclusive power in India. There are few sights more pitiable than the devotee. His whole life is to outside beholders one of misery. But what is he honoured for? Not wealth, for he is often wretchedly poor. He is honoured for his presumed piety, for his devotion to the Creator. He has subdued the flesh with its affections and lusts, has brought the body into subjection to the spirit; has risen above time and lives in eternity."*

All this is changed in new India. The worship of Mammon, the presiding divinity of Western Civilization, is fast spreading there. As in the West, cash payment is becoming in new India, "the sole nexus between man and man." The diffusion of the idea of contract which is supposed by the Westerner to connote the progress of civilization is gradually dissolving the bond of amity which bound the Indian Society. Even marriage which in old India is a sacrament, is becoming a matter of contract in new India.

* *English Rule and Native Opinion in India*, p. 275.

Froude's description of the commercial morality of England applies to new India also :

“ From the great houses in the City of London to the village grocer, the commercial life of England has been saturated with fraud. So deep has it gone that a strictly honest tradesman can hardly hold his ground against competition. You can no longer trust that any article you try is the thing which it pretends to be. We have false weights, false measures, cheating and shoddy everywhere.

We Londoners are poisoned in the water which we drink, poisoned in the gas with which we light our houses, we are poisoned in our bread, poisoned in our milk and butter, poisoned in our beer, poisoned in the remedies for which, when these horrible compounds have produced their consequence, we in our simplicity apply to our druggists, while the druggists are in turn cheated by the swindling rogues that supply their medicines ”

Apart from the questionable, dishonourable or dishonest means of livelihood to which increasing numbers of Neo-Indians are being driven

by the enhanced stringency of the struggle for existence entailed by Mammon worship, there is another way in which it is threatening the very existence of our society. I have elsewhere dwelt upon the immense survival-value to a civilization of the virtue of benevolence.* The survival of Hindu and Chinese civilizations is mainly attributable to the remarkable development of this virtue; and the extinction of Greek civilization is mainly due to its imperfect development. The insistence with which Indian sages inculcated it shows the depth of their knowledge and wisdom.

Gautama Buddha preached :—

“ Never in the world does hatred
cease by hatred ;

Hatred ceases by love ; this is
always its nature.”

“ Let us live happily then, not
hating those who hate us !

Let us live free from hatred among
men who hate us.”

* *Epochs of Civilization*, Chapter III.

These Buddhist precepts are echoed in the literature of the Brahmanic Hindus and of the Jainas. No virtue is enjoined more forcibly in such works as the *Bhagavat-gita* than that of altruism:

लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपश्यन् कर्तुमर्हसि ।

"Thou shouldst perform action having an eye to the welfare of humanity." III, 20.

कुर्याद्विहांसस्तथासक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् ।

"The wise act without attachment, desiring the welfare of the world." III, 25.

लभन्ते ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृषयः क्षीणकल्मषाः ।

द्विन्द्वैधा यतात्मानः सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥

"Rishis, their sins destroyed, their duality removed, their selves controlled, intent upon the welfare of all beings, obtain the peace of the Eternal." V, 25.

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।

ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥

"The self harmonised by yoga, seeth the self abiding in all beings, all beings in the self everywhere he seeth the same." VI, 29.

“अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।

* * * *

भद्रं भक्ताः समे प्रियः ॥

“He who beareth no ill-will to any being, and is friendly and compassionate.....he my devotee, is dear to Me.” XII, 13, 14.

Verses like the following occur in such popular works as Chanakya slokas :—

पापेऽपःपापः परुषेऽपाभिधत्ते प्रियाणि यः ।

द्वैत्रीद्वान्तःकरणस्तस्य स्वर्गद्वैव हि ॥

He who is friendly even to an enemy and speaks gently to those who revile and whose heart is full of compassionate tenderness attaineth heaven in this world.

आत्मनः प्रतिकूलानि न परेषां समाचारेत् ॥

Do not do unto others what you do not wish them to do unto you.

निर्गुं श्रेष्ठपि सत्त्वेषु दयां कुर्वन्ति साधवः ।

Good men are compassionate even towards those who are undeserving.

न तृष्णायाः बरोद्याधिनं च धर्मो दया समः ।

There is no disease worse than desire, and no religion greater than compassion.

धनानि जीविनं चैव पारथं प्राञ्ज उत्सृजेत् ।

The wise man devotes his wealth and his life to the good of others.

In order that the mass of the people might conform their practice to a principle so vital for national existence as benevolence, it was enjoined by the ancient sages in the daily practices of the Hindus so as to make it engrained in the normal Hindu constitution.

The *Bhutayajna* is performed by the daily offering of food to all living beings including insects, moths, and other small creatures, and the *Manushya Yajna* by the daily feeding of a stranger. Not a twig is to be cut for such purpose as a tooth-brush without a propitiatory hymn to the Divinity of the Forest. Yajnavalkya lays down the following rule for the householder :

“Children, the married girls, the old, the pregnant, the distressed, the unmarried girls, and guests and the servants are to be fed, and the man and his wife are to eat of the remaining food.”

Self-sacrificing benevolence is often carried to an extent which looked at from the Western

view-point would be considered idiotic, superstitious, or even repulsive (as in the case of bed-bugs among certain sections of our community). I had for sometime had occasion to camp in the State of a Vaishnava chief in Kathiawar. My camp swarmed with ants. But the servants of the Chief in attendance on me would not only not injure them, but would feed them with sugar, etc. Plague happened to break out in the State at the time, and I asked the Chief if it would not be advisable to kill the rats in his capital as a preventive measure. He said, however, that his people would rather die than take such a cruel step.

It is this selfless benevolence which has led to a most remarkable development in the Hindu of such qualities as charity, hospitality, sobriety, forgiveness and mercy. The well-to-do Hindu of orthodox type generally spends but little upon his own luxuries. The greater portion of his savings is devoted to such works as temples, tanks, wells and rest-houses which benefit the public. His house is a miniature hotel where all sorts of people find board and lodging. As head of the

joint family, he lives and earns as much for himself and his own family (in the restricted Western sense) as for others more distantly or scarcely related to him. His ceremonial observances and entertainments are so ordered as to benefit all sections of the community. The Brahman has, no doubt, precedence over the other castes and gets the lion's share of the gifts; and at the present day he seldom fulfils the conditions which of yore entitled him to such gifts. But Brahman or Sudra, or even Mahomedan, each has a prescriptive right in any entertainment that may take place in his neighbourhood. Whatever be the occasion, whether it be a wedding, or a Puja, or a Sraddha, all ranks of the community from the highest to the lowest, from the richest to the poorest, have their share in it, almost as a matter of right. Guests come in by the hundred, and they have all to be attended to according to their social status. With regard to amusements they are also open to the public. The most popular form of amusement in Bengal is what is called *Yatra*, or popular dramatic performance. The entire expense of the

Yatra is borne by the party in whose house it is held. Sometimes also it is got up by subscription. But in either case it is open to the public ; there is no admission fee. In Hindu society the entertainers are seldom entertained. All their time and energies are exhausted in looking after their numerous and heterogenous guests. The pleasure they derive is the pleasure of having done their duty towards the society in which they live. And one of the greatest hardships, of excommunication, the worst social punishment which the Hindu dreads, is the deprivation of the pleasure of feeding others.

Selfishness is seen in its worst forms in the struggles for the acquisition of wealth. Such institutions as caste and the joint-family system have, by minimising these struggles, checked the growth of selfishness. No institution analogous to the workhouse of England, and no law analogous to the Poor Law of England has ever been needed in India. Except during famines, private charity has always been sufficient to relieve local distress. The Hindus have always admitted foreigners into the heart of their country,

and behaved towards them with an unsuspecting liberality which, in many cases, proved highly detrimental to their own interests.

Warren Hastings spoke of the modern Hindus as "gentle, benevolent, more susceptible of gratitude for kindness shown them than prompted to vengeance for wrongs inflicted, and as exempt from the worst propensities of human passion as any people upon the face of the earth; they are faithful, and affectionate in service and submissive to legal authority..... The precepts of their religion are wonderfully fitted to promote the best ends of society, its peace and good order."

Bishop Heber spoke of them as "decidedly by nature, a mild, pleasing, and intelligent race; sober, parsimonious and, when an object is held out to them, most industrious and persevering," and as "constitutionally kind-hearted, industrious, sober, and peaceable."

"If a good system of agriculture," says Sir Thomas Munro "unrivalled manufacturing skill, a capacity to produce whatever can contribute to either convenience or luxury, schools established in very village for teaching, reading, writing and arithmetic, the general practice of hospitality and charity amongst each other, and above all, a treatment of the female sex full of confidence, respect and delicacy are among the signs which denote a civilised people—then the Hindus are not inferior to the nations of Europe, and if civilisation is to become an article of trade between England and India, I am convinced that England will gain by the import cargo.

James Forbes says in his "Oriental Memoirs":—"I sometimes frequented places where the natives had never seen a European, and were ignorant of everything concerning us: there I beheld manners and customs simple as were those in the patriarchal age; there in the very style of Rebecca and the damsels of Mesopotamia, the Hindu villagers treated me

with that artless hospitality so delightful in the poems of Homer, and other ancient records. On a sultry day, near a Zinore village, having rode faster than my attendants, while waiting their arrival under a tamarind tree, a young woman came to the well; I asked for a little water, but neither of us having a drinking vessel, she hastily left me, as I imagined, to bring an earthen cup for the purpose, as I should have polluted a vessel of metal: but as Jael, when Sisera asked for water, "gave him milk, and brought forth butter in a lordly dish,"—Judges, Ch. V., Ver. 25, so did this village damsel with more sincerity than Heber's wife, bring me a pot of milk, and a lump of butter on the delicate leaf of the banana, "the lordly dish" of the Hindus. The former I gladly accepted; on my declining the latter, she immediately made it up into two balls, and gave one to each of the oxen that drew my hackery. Butter is a luxury to these animals, and enables them to bear additional fatigue."

Abbe Dubois says:

"They (the Hindus) will never suffer the needy who have implored their charity to go unassisted. Their hospitality among themselves, it is well-known, has no bounds. Even the humble, the distressed pariah, as long as he has a measure of grain in his possession, will cheerfully share his pay of millet with the weary traveller of his caste who may happen to take shelter in his hut, and in all their wants and distresses the Hindus of all castes will readily assist each other, more effectually than the Europeans would do in the same circumstances. What the European possesses he keeps for himself. What the Hindu possesses he is always disposed to share with those who have nothing. In fact, it might be said that a wealthy Hindu considers himself as the depository or the distributor rather than the proprietor of his fortune, so greatly prone is he to acts of charity and benevolence; and it is chiefly from this cause that those frequent revolutions in the

fortunes of the Hindus and those frequent passages from extreme opulence to extreme poverty arise."

The charge of untruthfulness has been frequently and influentially brought against Indians whether they belong to old or new India, since the time of Macaulay.* The latest and most authoritative pronouncement on the subject was by Lord Curzon in 1905 when in his Convocation address as Chancellor of the Calcutta University, he said:

"I say that the highest ideal of truth is, to a large extent, a Western conception. Undoubtedly truth took a high place in the moral codes of the West before it had been similarly honoured in the East."

This statement is absolutely without any foundation whatever. The Greeks were so highly impressed by the truthfulness of the Indians that Arrian said: "No Indian was ever known to tell an untruth." Strabo observed: "The Hindus are

* It would be easy to point out from the writings of Macaulay himself how very biassed he was in his accusations. From his own accounts, it is difficult to tell whether Umichand and Nandakumar have less regard for truth and honesty than Clive and Warren Hastings.

so honest as neither to require locks to their doors, nor writings to bind their agreement." I may say from my own experience that such is, to a great extent, the case in outlying parts away from law courts and police stations.

Coming to more recent times, there is overwhelming testimony to the truthfulness of the Indians. Idrisi in his geography (written in the 11th Century A.D.) says :

"The Indians are naturally inclined to justice and never depart from it in their action. Their good faith, honesty, and fidelity to their engagements are well known, and they are so famous for these qualities that people flock to their country from every side."*

Marco Polo (13th Century) observed: "You must know that these Brahmins are the best merchants in the world and the most truthful, for they would not tell a lie for anything on earth." † Abul Fazl, the accomplished author of the *Ain-i-Akbari* notes: "The Hindus are admirers of truth and of unbounded fidelity in all dealings."

Coming to the British period, Colonel Sleeman assures us that "falsehood or lying between members of the same village is almost unknown." He adds, "I have had before me hundreds of

* *Elliot's History of India*, vol. I, p. 88.

† *Marco Polo*, ed H. Yule, vol. II, p. 350.

cases in which a man's property, liberty and life has depended upon his telling a lie, and he has refused to tell it." "It was love of truth," notes Max Muller, "that struck all the people who came in contact with India, as the prominent feature in the national character of its inhabitants. No one ever accused them of falsehood. There must surely be some ground for this, for it is not a remark that is frequently made by travellers in foreign countries even in our time, that their inhabitants invariably speak the truth. Read the accounts of English travellers in France, and you will find very little said about French honesty and veracity, while French accounts of England are seldom without a fling at *perfidie Albion*."*

Unfortunately, the wide extension of law courts and the immense and unceasing increase in the number of people who subsist upon them, coupled with the inordinate enhancement of the struggle for animal existence effected by the present environment, are exerting a perverting and unwholesome influence upon the morals of

* *India: What can it teach us?* P. 57.

new India. It should be observed however, that even now there is certainly not more of untruthfulness, and possibly there is less of it among the Indians than among the nations of the West. Mr. Chalmers who served as a judge in India as well as in England and at Gibraltar, and was therefore highly competent to pronounce an authoritative opinion on the subject, declared in an article on "Petty Perjury" in the "Law Quarterly Review" (1895), that "truth is more often perverted in an English Country Court than in a North-West *Cutchery*, or even among the motley elements of the population of Gibraltar--Spaniard, Malayese and Barbary Jews," and that "the perjury committed by witnesses in the Birmingham County Court exceeds anything he ever experienced in India." He took note of one hundred cases tried consecutively in that court and found that there was "hard cross-swearing which is not perjury in sixty three," and observes: "after making allowance for hard cross-swearing which is not perjury, there remains a terrible residuum of wilful and corrupt perjury." Mr. Chalmers thus concludes his article:

"In connection with the subject of perjury there is a further amendment in the law which I think will be beneficial. I refer to the abolition of the oath which has no longer any religious sanction for the masses. A County Court witness swallows an oath as easily as oyster, and the administration of the oath becomes an irreverent farce. A cynical friend of mine suggests that, though the religious instinct be dead amongst the people, the sporting instinct is happily very much alive and might be utilised in the case of truth. In the County Court cases he would substitute a shilling bet for the present oath."

Commenting on the article of Mr. Chalmers the London "Daily News" remarked: "We imagine there are other County Court Judges as well as Stipendiary Magistrates ready to give a general confirmation to this indictment of Judge Chalmers, if privily consulted. Perjury, we fear, is regarded as only a venial sin amongst a large section of the people. These lax notions ought promptly to be dissipated, if the administration of justice is not to degenerate into a mere tug-of-war between one forsworn team of witnesses and another."

Mr. Dickenson in his recent work on the "Civilizations of India, China and Japan," says that "to an Englishman, practical efficiency and truth are the chief and indispensable goods. To an Indian, as, in a less degree to other Orientals, all these things are indifferent." In regard to this statement the Rev. C. F. Andrews writes in the *Modern Review* (April, 1915)—

"I have lived in India many more years than Mr. Dickenson has lived months, and I have travelled much in

other lands; I can affirm without hesitation that I have never found a more essentially truth-loving people than Indians. The search for Truth, for Reality, without regard to this world, or to life itself, is in my opinion India's strongest national characteristic. And the greatest of all wonders is, that this love for the Truth has survived century after century of subjection. And Honesty goes along with truth. Greed for money (which, we are told in the Bible is a root of all evil) has not yet eaten its way into the Indian heart. There is a reverence for simplicity and poverty still current in India to-day which makes dishonesty scarcely even a felt temptation among myriads of the common people. Furthermore, the whole vast fabric of the Indian family life would be quite unworkable without a basis of truth and honesty on which to build it up. Practical efficiency, indeed, may be lacking (though hardly in the Western Province) and there is much of this side of Indian character which is annoying to the Englishman with his own English ways; that, however, is a minor matter. But truth and honesty are not minor matters at all; and to discredit them on hearsay, as Mr. Lowes Dickenson has done, is a very serious thing, an offence for which forgiveness is difficult."

The influence of Western contact is causing a marked diminution of the altruistic, and an equally marked enhancement of the egoistic spirit. There is now much more of selfishness than of selflessness much more of self-assertion than of self-effacement. The Neo-Indians do not generally perceive the necessity of social and socio-religious observances and entertainments from which they cannot derive more unalloyed

and direct pleasure than what satisfied their ancestors. The guest house which formed such a conspicuous feature of every village of any size is now becoming obsolescent. The joint-family system is yielding to the disruptive influence of Western civilization. An increased sense of self-interest has struck a deadly blow to that system which recognised a claim to maintenance for relations to the remotest degree of consanguinity. In the new society the poor have not that recognised position which they had in the old. The occasional feasts to which they used to be treated, and the gifts which they used to receive on such occasion as the *Sraddha* are getting few and far between. The amusements to which they used to look forward of old are going out of fashion. The good feeling which subsisted between the different classes of our community is being gradually weakened, and their harmonious relations are being seriously disturbed. We have, instead increased keenness of strife and competition and increased jealousy and bitterness. Our people are gradually ignoring responsibilities

beyond the narrow family circle consisting only of wife and children, and are ceasing to recognise the claims of remoter relations, let alone strangers, and the absence of amity, and of hospitality and individual charity is now becoming as pronounced a feature of our community as their existence was in days gone by.

As a set-off against the diminution of individual charity and individual service we are having corporate charity and corporate service to an extent we never had before. Philanthropy now is more discriminating, and distance being shortened by steam and electricity, public spirit has a much wider range. Suffering even in Europe or America stirs up a thrill of sympathy in the hearts of the benevolent among us. Such institutions as charitable societies, school for the deaf and the dumb, asylums for orphans, and refuges for the distressed are a new feature in our community. It should be noted, however, that being confined to large towns they do not reach the mass of the people, and consequently fail to promote and foster the good-will which should subsist among all classes of the community. Then, again, the

sentiment of benevolence is not strengthened by organised charity to the extent it is by individual charity. For, in the former case, the golden rule of charity,—“ Let not your left hand know what your right hand giveth”—cannot be followed, and there come into play such motives as vanity and desire for fame. Besides, in corporate charity, the altruistic sentiment is strengthened in only a few noble-minded individuals who run the organisations, the great majority of the donors and subscribers begin more or less apathetic.

The gospel of equality is not a new one for India. It has been preached by our reformers for two thousand years and a half. What they fought for, however, was spiritual equality, and they always had in view the exalted ethical and spiritual ideals which had been attained during the highest stage of our civilisation. They endeavoured to remove the barriers of caste only so far as they stood in the way of the ethical and spiritual uplift of the lower classes. The higher castes, especially the highest, with commendable self-abnegation left the money-making occupations to the lower ones. So it was only the

spiritual disabilities of the latter which weighed upon the conscience of the more sensitive nature among the former, and they preached their gospel of salvation to high and low alike. As a result of the levelling movements which they initiated and led, we have had such large sects as the Buddhists, the Vaishnava followers of Chaitanya, the Kabirpanthis, the Satnamis, etc., and a large number of universally respected saints and reformers, from among the lower castes including penitent prostitutes, tailors, gardeners, potters, goldsmiths and even the Mahars of Western India. The first great Tamil composition, the *Kural* of Tiruvalluver which enforces the doctrines of the Samkhya philosophy is ascribed to a Pariah poet. To his sister also are ascribed many highly popular compositions of great moral excellence in Southern India. The first Marathi poet of fame was Namadeva who was a tailor by caste. Tukaram, whose spiritual poems record the high water-mark of Marathi poetry began life as a petty shop-keeper. In Bengal a large number of the Vaishnava poets belong to low castes.

The modern gospel of equality differs markedly from the old, inasmuch as its objective is almost exclusively material. Its chief, if not the sole aim, is to secure equality of opportunity to all classes in the struggle for animal existence. The increased sense of equality and individuality under Western influence being divorced from our old ethical and spiritual ideals, and having chiefly material betterment and sensual enjoyment for its goal, is slowly sapping the foundations of Hindu society and Hindu family by loosening the bonds of benevolence and reverence which bound them together. As in the West, the gladiatorial view of life is permeating all classes of our society. The "religion of amity" which made for concord and happiness is on the wane; and the "religion of enmity" which leads to discord and misery is gradually spreading. The manner in which the "elevation" of the proletariat is now being effected, while it is failing to develop the natural resources of the country, is tending only to swell the ranks of penurious aspirants for Government service and of hungry candidates for the learned professions. There is thus caused

not only immensely increased struggle for existence, and consequent ill-feeling, discord and misery, but also not infrequent recourse to dubious, if not positively iniquitous, methods of earning one's livelihood. The net result of the elevatory movement is not so much to level up the lower classes as to level down the upper ones, not so much to make the lower classes as a whole better than before as to make them and the upper classes also as a whole worse than before.

The increased sense of individuality developed under Western influence has certainly led to considerable mental expansion which is reflected in the growing vernacular literatures. But on the other hand, unrestrained by concomitant spiritual and ethical development, it has caused a distinct diminution of the sentiment of veneration for age and wisdom which has hitherto formed the centripetal force in the Hindu family, and has, to a large extent, been subversive of discipline. It is this veneration and the daily religious and socio-religious services and ceremonies which have hitherto maintained discipline in the Hindu family and cemented it together.

Their gradual extinction is tending to seriously disturb the harmony and happiness of the family among those who have advanced most on the Western path. The complaint is becoming general, that children no longer obey their parents as they should, and that filial affection can no longer be reckoned as a valuable asset of the family.

Benevolence and the associated virtues, simplicity of living, charity, etc., are the cornerstones of our civilization. The influence of the Western environment is tending to weaken them seriously, if not to destroy them, and thus threatens to jeopardize its very existence. The moral regeneration of new India is, therefore, an illusion.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ILLUSION OF SOCIAL PROGRESS.

We are often apt to be unconsciously deceived by words and phrases especially when they are ingrained in the mind at a time of life when it is highly receptive; and language instead of being the servant of thought becomes its master. "Progress" is a conspicuous example of the class of words to which we refer. There is no word which is more commonly used, and there is none the real meaning of which is so little understood. People generally consider running with the most powerful and apparently prosperous crowd as constituting "progress," without any consideration of the goal the path is likely to lead to. As a corrective to this tendency, which is specially noticeable in an age when people ordinarily are too busy to give much time to thought, it is desir-

able to have a standard by which "progress" may be readily measured and judged. The test we propose for social or any other progress is the same as what was suggested for intellectual progress: no social movement should be called progressive unless it is conducive directly or indirectly to the material or moral welfare of society, the former in subordination to the latter. If this test be applied, it would be found that the importance of some of the socio-religious and social reforms of new India has been grossly exaggerated, and that of others is of an altogether illussory character.

From the dawn of human history, the mass of the people have always been more or less superstitious, have always been guided more or less by forms and formulas everywhere, even in societies which claim to be most highly civilised. It cannot be otherwise, and it will never be otherwise, unless there is a revolution in the mental constitution of man, of which there is no sign as yet. Life is so short, and the path of knowledge is so long and so arduous, that real enlightenment must always

be the prerogative of the few. Compulsory education, or no compulsory education, the "man in the street" is always more or less ignorant, and casts off one superstition only to take up another. If he ceases to believe in the efficacy of charms and relics, of pilgrimages and ablutions, of *mantras* and *Yajnas* to secure his salvation, he forthwith begins to entertain a belief, no less superstitious, in the efficacy of steam and electricity and of other material developments as a cure for the ills of life. If he ceases to pay homage to stocks and stones as symbols of Divinity, he ceases to believe in a heavenly power altogether, or worse still, transfers his allegiance to some mundane power with fiendish propensities. He pulls down old gods and goddesses, such as Siva, Vishnu, Kali or Odin, only to install new ones in their place, such as Wealth, War, Pleasure or Father-land. If rationalistic influences have shaken his belief in creation by the fiat of an Almighty Being, he has either ceased to believe in such a Being, or worse still, pays superstitious homage to a new deity denominated Evolution, and zealously

propagates the cult of "Might is right," of "Each for himself and Devil take the hindmost." If he casts off a superstitious belief in the gospel of Duty and Renunciation, he instantly begins to entertain a no less superstitious and much more harmful belief in the gospel of Right and Enjoyment.

The credulous temperament which gives rise to superstitions still exists among highly cultured people, even in Europe, where education has made such vast and rapid strides. The following passage from a late Professor of History in England may be cited as an example :

"And now, gentlemen, was this vast campaign [of Teutons against Romans] fought without a general? If Trafalgar could not be won without the mind of a Nelson, or Waterloo without the mind of a Wellington, was there no one mind to lead those innumerable armies on whose success depended the future of the whole human race? Did no one marshall them in that impregnable convex front, from the Euxine to the North Sea? No one guide them to the two great strategic centres of the Black Forest and Trieste? No one cause them, blind barbarians, without maps or Science, follow those rules of war without which victory in a protracted struggle is impossible; and by the pressure of the Huns behind, force on their flagging myriads to an enterprise which their simplicity fancied at first beyond the powers of mortal men? Believe it who will; but I cannot. I may be told, that they gravitated into their places

as stones and mud do. Be it so But while I believe that not a stone or a handful of mud gravitates into its place without the will of God ; that it was ordained, ages since, into what particular spot each grain of gold should be washed down from an Australian quartz reef, that a certain man might find it at a certain moment and crisis of his life ;—if I be superstitious enough (as thank God, I am) to hold that creed, shall I not believe that, though this war had no general upon earth, it may have had a general in heaven ? and that in spite of all their sins, the hosts of our forefathers were the hosts of God.*

Superstitious idolators like the mass of the Hindus have no doubt their gods who delight in warfare, but they generally have some conception, however faint, of a Supreme Divine Power above them all who is incapable of directing homicidal strategic operations in the consummate manner God is presented to do by this erudite Christian savant. The literature concerning the current war teems with illustrations of a similar belief among the belligerents—a belief which is quite as degrading as, if not more so than that of the polytheists who believe in a special god of war subordinate to the Supreme Deity. The story of the angels in the retreat from Mons now

* Quoted by Herbert Spencer in his *Study of Sociology*, p. 28.

(June, 1915) going the round of the English papers illustrates another form of superstition which is prevalent among cultured people.

"Congregationalists are proud of Dr. Horton who controls their interests in the famous colony of culture on the heights of Hampstead. It is reported in the *Manchester Daily Dispatch* (June 18) that Dr. Horton has been thrilling a northern audience, at Broughton Congregational Chapel (another centre of cultured Nonconformists), with a story of a real contemporary "miracle," which sweeps aside all those sceptical arguments about the War like so many houses of cards. God is there, it seems. He is watching over the British troops in a way which makes our lengthy casualty lists seem superfluously long; but he is there. Let me quote Dr. Horton's words as they are reported in the *Daily Dispatch*, which purports to give the passage literally;—

"There is a story—repeated by so many witnesses that if anything can be established by contemporary evidence it is established—of the retreat from Mons. A section of the line was in imminent peril and it seemed as if it must inevitably be borne down and cut off. Our men saw a company of angels interpose between them and the German cavalry, and the horses of the Germans stampeded. Evidently the animal beheld what our men beheld. The German soldiers endeavoured to bring the horses back to the line, but they fled. It was the salvation of our men. It appears that this story is circulating throughout orthodox England."

Instances like these could be multiplied almost indefinitely.

That the great majority of the Hindus, like the great majority of any other community have always been superstitious, and are still superstitious, is a fact about which there can be no question whatever. The sages and seers of ancient India, profound practical Sociologists that they were, fully recognising it, directed the superstitious tendencies of their community in such a way as was best calculated to maintain the equilibrium of Hindu civilisation and save Hindu society from dissolution. Knowing full well how very poorly the reasoning faculty is developed among the mass of the people, and how very strong is the disinclination to exercise that faculty even when it is developed, they prescribed rules of conduct so that the people had but little need to exercise that faculty in various matters of vital importance to them individually and socially. Important hygienic economic, sociological and ethical principles, the fruits of centuries of culture and experience, were conveyed to them in the form of cut and dry rules, breaches of which were represented to be tantamount to sins. In the earlier stage

of their civilisation, the Indo-Aryans were as addicted to drinking and flesh-food, and had as much social freedom as any other people in a similar stage of civilisation. Early marriage did not prevail among them, women did not live in seclusion, and the remarriage of widows was not under a ban. As the Hindus progressed in civilization, and their ethical standard was raised, there was started a reform movement of a highly puritanic and comprehensive character. Intoxicating drinks were interdicted. Gautama Buddha said: "The householder who delights in the law should not indulge in intoxicating drinks, should not cause others to drink, should not sanction the acts of those who drink, knowing that it results in insanity." Lawgivers like Manu placed the drinking of spirituous liquors in the category of the most heinous sins, and prescribed the most awful penances for them. Dancing and singing, which were associated with drinking, fell into disrepute. Gambling which, like drinking, was a fruitful source of crime and misery was anathematised.

Restrictions upon food and drink were also

the result of the earnest reformatory movement. The bill of fare of the earlier Vedic period was a very comprehensive one; it included beef and other articles forbidden at the present day. Its gradual contraction as regards animal food was partly due to the tenderness for all life inculcated by a sublime standard of altruistic morality, and partly to economic, hygienic and æsthetic considerations. An agricultural people like the Indo-Aryans could not have been long in being deeply impressed with the immense usefulness of the cow. They must also have found out the unsuitability of beef as an article of food in a hot climate like that of India. That hygienic and æsthetic considerations must have weighed with the Aryan law-givers in their interdiction of domestic pigs and domestic fowls is proved by the fact that the flesh of wild pigs and of wild fowls is permitted.

A high standard of chastity was established. It was for the maintenance of this standard, that the males among the Dvijas were subjected to a rigorous course of discipline, restrictions were

imposed upon the freedom of females, and early marriage was enjoined.

In course of time through blind following and various other causes, some of the restrictions were carried to extreme and undesirable lengths. The Hindu sages for instance, impressed upon their community the desirability of early marriage, but they were well acquainted with the evils of infant marriage. Ignorant imitators are always the most zealous and thoroughgoing; and infant-marriage is much more prevalent among Hinduised aborigines than among the higher castes.

"The statistics of marriage," observes Sir E. A. Gait "show that while the Hindus as a body are more addicted to infant marriage than any other religious community, the high castes are far less prone to it than the low. Thus in Bengal, the castes with the largest proportion of child wives are the Pod, Dom, Chasi Kaibartta, Bagdi, and Muchi, the proportion per thousand girls aged 0—5 who are married ranging from 43 in the first mentioned caste to 9 in the last two. The Brahmans, on the other hand have only 3 girls per mille who are married at that age, and the Baidyas and Kayasthas only 2. The same difference is to be seen in the proportion of girls who are married between the ages of 5 and 12."*

Thus the present marriage reform movement

is the result of a reaction against the abuse of a custom which arose in conformity to a standard of chastity highly favourable to social purity, physical as well as moral. The same remark would apply to the reformatory movement for female emancipation, for remarriage of widows, and for greater freedom in matters of food and drink. They cannot be invested with the importance which is usually claimed for them. In fact, whether they are in the direction of progress or not will depend upon the length to which they are carried. This would be apparent when we consider the fact that the reforms are in the direction of the freedom at present enjoyed by the great majority of our aborigines and by such people as the Burmese who occupy a much lower place in the scale of civilization than the Hindus. Carried too far they would land us in the condition from which we emerged over two thousand years ago. It is true, that similar freedom is also enjoyed by the higher civilized nations of the West. But they are only passing through experiences probably akin to those of our ancestors about the time of Manu and Gautama Buddha.

Here is a description of the condition of sexual morality in one of the most important centres of Western Civilization. Similar description would apply to various other centres :

“The general deterioration of public morals may be traced to the night-life of the German capital. The decline in the German birth-rate, so distressing to German patriots, is also regarded as one of the results of the unrestrained nightly dissipation.

One means suggested by the Germans to increase the birth-rate is based upon their inordinate love of titles. It is that every child living to be a year old shall raise its parents one step in rank, that the fourth class of the Order of the Crown shall be given to every father with two children, and that three children shall bring the order of the Red Eagle, and so on.

Startling statistics were recently given regarding the increase in divorces, especially in Berlin, which apparently is Germany's Reno.

The percentage of divorces to marriages throughout Germany doubled between 1901 and 1911. During 1912 one marriage in every twenty-five ended in divorce in Prussia. In all Prussian towns the percentage rose to one in eighteen, while in Berlin it rose to one divorce in ten marriages. If the present increase in divorces continues, in 1957 there will be no married persons who have not at sometime been divorced except those who have just wedded.

There are 150,000 children mostly under three years of age orphaned by their parents' divorce, and at the present rate of increase will reach half a million within a few years.

The growth of luxury, increasing immorality and night-life are claimed as the principal contributing causes especially in Berlin, though one weekly paper says there is a small

Prussian town where it would be difficult to find one young married woman who is faithful to her husband.

Many of the night resorts in Berlin do not open their doors until 2 o'clock in the morning, and several open after the cabarets and dance halls are closed and continue till day-light. To see men in evening dress returning home at 8 o'clock in the morning is not unusual."

This description recalls the condition of Rome before her downfall, when one Emperor "gave rewards to women who had many children, and prohibited those who were under forty-five years of age and who had no children, from wearing jewels and riding in litters; and another "in view of the general avoidance of legal marriage and resort to concubinage with slaves was compelled to impose penalties upon the unmarried," when "to be childless, and therefore without the natural restraint of a family, was looked upon as a singular felicity."

The most divergent views have been entertained with regard to the influence of the caste system on Hindu civilization. There are a few Western authors like Bluntschli and Abbe Dubois who have extolled it to the skies. "Indian civilisation is the blossom and fruit of the caste-system," says Bluntschli. "I believe caste

division to be in many respects the *chef d'œuvre*, the happiest effort of human legislation. I am persuaded that it is simply and solely due to the distribution of the people into castes that India did not lapse into a state of barbarism, and that she preserved and perfected the arts and sciences of civilisation whilst most other nations of the earth remained in a state of barbarism," opines Abbe Dubois. There is no name which stands higher than that of Comte among the social philosophers of the West, and he inclined strongly towards the principle of caste. According to him, "corresponding to the organs of nutrition and cerebation in the animal body are the temporal and spiritual powers in the body politic. The temporal power consists of governors, directors, and administrators; and its function is to superintend the organisation of industry and carry on the work of practical administration. The spiritual consists of the philosophical priesthood, and its function is to moderate by its moral pressure the exercise of the Temporal Power for the benefit of the community at large." The Hindus

make Duty and Religion to a great extent identical. In fact their term for Religion is *Dharma* which primarily means Duty; the Duty prescribed for each caste. Comte also makes Religion and Duty almost identical. "The substance and crown of Religion," says Frederick Harrison, one of his most distinguished disciples, "is to answer the question, what is my duty in the world, my duty to my fellow-beings, my duty to the world and all that is in it and of itReligion is summed up in Duty."

But the great majority of the Westerners have condemned caste as "the most disastrous and blighting of human institutions"; and the Neo-Indians generally chime in with them though their practice is often at variance with their profession. This condemnation of caste rests upon the modern doctrine of equality, the doctrine, "that all men are born equal," first preached so forcibly and so earnestly by Jean Jacques Rousseau. A doctrine less founded upon facts, or more mischievous in its influence, and more irreconcilable with conduct has never obtained a wider currency. The Hindu doctrine

of equality is much more scientific and consistent. While it recognises the primal equality of all souls as sparks of the One Divine fire, it also recognises the obvious inequality of the physical bodies in which they are encased at birth—an inequality which is accounted for as the result of *Karma*.

Viewing the caste-system, as originally developed, in the light of recent Western developments and movements, we are inclined to think that it does credit to the head no less than to the heart of the Aryan sages of ancient India who conceived and constructed it. It is firmly based upon the principle of heredity and anticipated the modern science of Eugenics. It is a system of organised inequality, but of inequality so adjusted as not to press very severely upon the classes affected by it. The dark-skinned aborigines of India were not made slaves; but they were assigned a well defined position, though that position was the lowest in the society of the Aryan conquerors. The treatment which the Sudras received was no less humane, and infinitely less calculated to produce friction

than the treatment which, at the present day, the "blacks" receive at the hands of the "whites" after a century's war-cry of "liberty, equality, and fraternity," and after so many centuries of the altruistic influence of Christianity.

The Brahmans, as a class, did not seek material aggrandisement; government, trade, in short, every occupation calculated to further material interests they left to the lower classes, and thus they effectually secured themselves against the desire of encroachment. What they sought to restrict within the two highest classes, and especially within their own class, was spiritual and intellectual advancement; and that is of a nature which does not usually excite the jealousy of the mass of the people.

Caste has held together the heterogeneous elements of which Hindu society is composed. Without it the Hindus might possibly have risen even higher than they did; but, without it, they would have been sure to sink much lower than they have done; and would in all probability have been wiped off altogether as a

distinct entity. The Brahmans have handed down the culture and wisdom of their ancestors from generation to generation. The surviving representatives of the Khatriyas are still found to possess to some extent the martial qualities of their ancestors. The artisans and cultivators have for untold centuries maintained their hereditary skill and workmanship. "But for the Caste system," observes Mr. E. B. Havell, "the traditional artistic culture, which gives the present generation of Indians such a splendid foundation to build upon, would long ago have disappeared entirely." Caste secured an ideal condition of harmony in the society. The forces making for material development were effectively controlled and equipoised by those which lead to ethical and spiritual development. While Caste secured the advantages of division of work, and of the hereditary transmission of intelligence and manipulative skill, it restricted competition within well defined limits and thus minimised the manifold evils of excessively hard struggle for existence.

It is unquestionable, however, that in course

of time, the caste system became largely overlaid by a thick crust of prejudice and superstition owing to the peculiar attitude of Hinduism towards Hindu society and other causes.

In one sense, Hinduism is a very ancient religion; in another, it is not. Though professedly based upon the Vedas, it is no more like the Vedic religion than man is like the protoplasmic germ out of which he is supposed to have been evolved. It has grown during four thousand years to be what it is at present. It is not the creed of the Vedas, nor of the Brahmanas, nor of the Upanishads, nor of the Puranas; it is neither pantheism, nor monotheism, nor Vaishnavism, nor Saktism; yet it is all these. The keynote of Hinduism is struck by Srikrishna in the Bhagavadgita:—

“However men approach Me, even so do I welcome them, for the path men take from every side is Mine.”

“Hinduism cannot be called a homogeneous religion in the sense that Judaism and Zoroastrianism can be among the older, or Christianity and Mahomedanism among the more recent religions. The catholicity and eclecticism of Hinduism have been of immense advantage to it. If it had shewn

less toleration, less adaptability to its environment, it would probably not have survived so long. But, there is a remarkable unity underlying the diversity of the forms of faith comprised under Hinduism. Though there are numerous Saiva, Vaishnava and other sects, the number of sectaries is comparatively insignificant. The majority of the Hindu population accept the whole system of the Hindu mythology. Preference for any particular deity does not preclude the worship of the other deities. Sectarianism, that is strict adherence to one divinity or one faith, is quite unusual. The usual practice is for one and the same Hindu to pay his homage to Vishnu, Siva, and the various deities of the Vaishnava and Saiva pantheons. The same Hindu will often in one round of pilgrimage visit temples dedicated to Shiva, Krishna, and Devi. The same Hindu will often in the course of one year celebrate the worship of these and various other divinities; and if he is philosophically disposed, he will with Bhartrihari exclaim: 'One God, Siva or Vishnu.'*

Hinduism has never been guided by the protective spirit in purely spiritual and intellectual matters. It has never been wedded to such dogmatic views about man and nature as to make any departure therefrom punishable as heresy, as was the case in Europe until quite recently. The most antagonistic creeds have existed in India, from the remotest time, without scarcely ever giving rise to persecution worth

* *A History of Hindu Civilization during British Rule.*
Vol. I, p. 43.

the name. There is scarcely any form of faith, from agnosticism, monotheism and pantheism to idolatry and fetishism, that Hinduism does not comprise. There is still a good deal of misconception about that religion. All Hindus are generally considered by Europeans to be gross idolators and fetishists. The fact is, however, that the cultured among them, including even those that have not received the light of English education, are in reality generally pantheists or monotheists. But whatever their religious belief, the attitude of the Hindus towards other religions is one of philosophic toleration.

One of the most important causes of the stability of Hinduism is this toleration which implies adaptability to environment. Mahomedanism made but few converts except among the Hinduised aborigines. Nor has Christianity been more successful than Mahomedanism. The Hindu converts to Christianity form a comparatively insignificant fraction of the total population; and they mostly belong to the lowest ranks of society. But few Hindus of the higher castes now embrace Christianity. The fact is, to

quench his spiritual thirst, the Hindu has no need to search for springs outside his religion. So far as their religious tenets are concerned, the reformers of the present day, like their predecessors, draw their inspiration from the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Vedanta system of philosophy. There is no religion in the world which permits so much freedom of religious conviction, and the literature of which is so many-sided as Hinduism. Educated Hindus, whether they seek for salvation in Knowledge, Faith, or Love, can find light or guidance in some part or other of the rich and varied literature of their ancestors.

The only recent sects in which Western influence is at all traceable are the Arya Samaj and the Brahmo Samaj. Though their attitude towards orthodox Hinduism in the beginning was rather uncompromising and iconoclastic, it is gradually becoming more and more amicable; and they both draw their inspiration from the Hindu Sastras, the Arya Samajists from the Vedas and the Brahmos from the Upanishads and the Vedanta philosophy. "The Vedas,"

writes Swami Dayananda Saraswati, the founder of the Arya Samaj, "are revealed by God. I regard them as self-evident truth, admitting of no doubt, and depending on the authority of no other book, being represented in Nature, the Kingdom of God." The Arya Samaj holds weekly meetings at which prayers and hymns are chanted on the Samaveda system.

But Hinduism has been as intolerant and illiberal in matters of social conduct as it has been tolerant and liberal in matters of religious belief. And the efforts of the reformers of old India from the remotest antiquity to the present day have been directed mainly against the evil consequences of this despotic sway of Hinduism in social matters especially in regard to caste. In so far as the reformatory movements of new India are also directed against that sway so as to restore to Hindu society the comparatively greater freedom which it enjoyed when it attained the highest stage of civilization some two thousand years ago, they are undoubtedly beneficial, but are not new and are devoid of the great importance usually claimed for them. But

in so far as they are carried on in a radical manner so as to bring Hindu society into line with the Western they are as unquestionably detrimental. It is well, for instance, that the discipline of the Brahmacharya should be enforced on students irrespective of caste as is done at Gurukula, the largest educational institution maintained by the Arya Samaj. But the "uplift" movement of new India which aims at elevating the lower classes on an entirely material basis by educating them so that they may compete with the upper for the various services and for the learned professions, and may have an "equality of opportunity" in the struggle for animal existence as in the West is fraught with grave danger to Hindu society. Child marriage is undoubtedly an evil, and it is well that the marriageable age of both boys and girls should be gradually raised. But to do away with the sacramental idea of marriage and make it a matter of contract, or to defer marriage till very late in life after the Western fashion as is being done in the most progressive sections of Neo-Indian Society cannot do any good to Hindu

society but, on the contrary, may do it considerable harm. It is one thing to loosen the fetters of the strict *purda* of the higher class Indian female, which has come into vogue in some parts of India, and quite a different thing to emancipate her so as to convert her to the "new woman" of the West. The remedies in such cases are worse than the diseases—whether from the economic or the moral point of view.

Spiritual development has ever been with us the goal of culture. It is to be attained by the path of *Jnana* by the highly intellectual few, and by the path of *Karma* or of *Bhakti* by the rest of the community. Even agnostics, like the followers of the Sankhya philosophy, have for their goal the salvation of the soul. Gross materialism which ignores the existence of a soul altogether is confined only to a very small, almost negligible, number of extreme rationalists such as the Charvakas. Under the insidious influence of the Western environment, however, such materialism is becoming much more widespread than ever before. Hinduism enjoins certain daily practices which are performed at

intervals from early morning till the time of retirement and which are designed for self-culture. No matter what his special creed may be, whether he be polytheist, monotheist, pantheist, or even agnostic, the orthodox Hindu has to devote some time every day to meditation and contemplation with a view to spiritual development. The posture in which it is performed and the regulation of the breath which accompanies it promote at the same time physical well-being and concentration of mind. Then there are practices like the *Bhuta* and *Manushya Yajans* and the various *Bratas* (especially for women) which are designed to promote altruistic and spiritual culture. Under the stress and strain of increasingly strenuous struggle for existence at the present day, and the material tendencies of the Western environment, all these practices are falling into desuetude. The Neo-Hindus have little time or inclination for spiritual development, so engrossed are they in their material pursuits. Even among the Brahmans there are but few who can afford time for it. Following the Western example, the Neo-Hindus think far

less of the inner than of the outer life. Those who can afford among them are exchanging a life of self-denial and of plain and simple living for one of self-indulgence and of complicated and luxurious living. Such agencies and institutions as the *Yatra*, the *Panchali* and the *Kathakata*, in Bengal, which served to propagate the high ethical and spiritual ideals of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata among the people, are becoming obsolete. The theatres, circuses, &c., by which they are being replaced, do not serve the same purpose. The rigorous discipline of the *Brahmacharya*, to which students were subjected in the indigenous system of high education, has not been replaced by any discipline of a similar character in the English system of education.

Ethical development on a purely rationalistic basis is possible only for the really enlightened few. In the case of the mass of the people it should, to be enduring, have a spiritual basis, although it may have a large admixture of what may be called superstition. As the continuance of the life of Hindu civilization

largely depends upon the maintenance of its ethical ideals, it is highly questionable how far the abolition of the practices and institutions just briefly referred to and of sundry others analogous to them, however superstitious some of them may be considered to be, constitutes progress; and when we bear in mind, that many of them were not only conducive to ethical and spiritual culture, but also, to a great extent, promoted physical and intellectual culture, served disciplinary purposes, and protected indigenous industry, the progress becomes largely delusive. The thick wall of prejudice and superstition which surrounds Hindu Society gets continually overgrown with thick, rank jungle and adventitious excrescences and their clearance from time to time is, no doubt, highly beneficial. But the axe and spade-work has to be done slowly and cautiously lest the entire wall should come down. Already the breaches which have been made in it have, along with a little light, let in a flood of ideas and agencies, which, unless its course is arrested, threatens to submerge Hindu society and wipe it out of existence. Better

prejudices and superstitions about food, drink and apparel, however irrational they may appear to be, than any amount of so-called civilization and enlightenment which foster the drink-habit and flood the country with foreign manufacture to the detriment of indigenous industry and of the economic condition of the community. Better the worship of graven images which promotes tranquillity, reverence and humility, than that of ungraven fetishes which engenders greed, disquiet, and disrespect for superiors. Better *Bratas*, *Mantras*, *Tapa* and *Japa* which inculcate benevolence and a high sense of duty than the shibbolethes and formulas of an immature civilization which breed discord and an undue sense of right.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ILLUSION OF POLITICAL PROGRESS.

The foundation of the British empire in India was laid just about the time when Europe was on the verge of a revolution, one of the most important, politically, intellectually, and socially, which the world has ever seen. It was during the last half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century that modern Europe sprung up with its democratic governments, its natural science, its steam engine and electric telegraph, and its innumerable labour-saving appliances. It would probably be no exaggeration to say, that the Europe of the present century is more different from the Europe of the eighteenth, than the Europe of the eighteenth was from the Europe of the first century. The Congress of Vienna did its best to restore to Europe the political arrangements which had

existed before the rise of Napoleon. But the Powers did not see, or they ignored the new political forces which had come into existence towards the close of the eighteenth century ; and the political equilibrium which they thought they had established did not endure very long. The interest of the political history of Europe for sometime after the Vienna Congress was centred in the struggles of the people for liberty and self-government.

The wave of liberalism which passed through Europe affected even the British administration of India, though, of course, to a very small extent. The Government of the East India Company had until the close of the eighteenth century been a despotism with scarcely any mitigating features to compensate for the loss of the manifold advantages of a native rule. All that the Company had till then cared for was money ; all that their servants in India had till then striven for was to secure a dividend for their masters, and to secure as much as they could for themselves either in the shape of gain, or, perhaps, also of fame. But since then, especially since 1832, the year

in which the Reform Bill crowned the cause of democracy in England, the British-Indian administration has been pervaded, to however small an extent, by the spirit of modern Europe. Since then, the benefit of India has generally been urged, at least by English statesmen, as the main object of the retention of India;* and though in practice that object has not often been kept in view, its theoretical recognition bespeaks the liberal spirit of modern Europe. It is this spirit which, notwithstanding the frequent advocacy of narrow-minded views of coercion and repression by influential organs of the Anglo-Indian world has kept Anglo-Indian bureaucracy from sinking into unmitigated absolutism.

It was in 1833 that a statute was passed which provided that no native of India, "nor

* Mr. Gladstone said on one occasion: "The question is not whether we are justified in the acquisition or not [of India]; the question is not whether our hands were clean or not in that acquisition; the question is what obligations we have contracted towards the nearly 200 millions of people under our rule in India, and towards the God who cares for that people as much as for us." *Essays political, social, and religious; India*, by R. Congreve, 1874, pp. 78-79.

any natural-born subject of His Majesty resident therein, shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office, or employment under the said Government."

It was in the same liberal spirit that the Court of Directors issued their despatch of the 10th December, 1834 :—

"It is fitting that this important enactment should be understood in order that its full spirit and intention may be transfused through our whole system of administration.

" The meaning of the enactment we take to be that, there shall be no governing caste in British India ; that, whatever other tests of qualification may be adopted, distinctions of race or religion shall not be of the number ; that no subject of the King, whether of Indian, or British, or mixed descent, shall be excluded either from the posts usually conferred on our Uucovenanted Servants in India, or from the Covenanted Service itself; provided he be otherwise eligible, consistently with the rules and agreeably to the conditions observed and enacted in the one case and in the other. . . .

* Certain offices are appropriated to them (the Natives), from certain others they are debarred ; not because these latter belong to the Covenanted Service, and the former do not belong to it, but professedly on the ground that the average amount of Native qualifications can be presumed only to rise to a certain limit. It is this line of demarcation which the present enactment obliterates, or rather, for which it substitutes another, wholly irrespective of the distinction

of races. Fitness is henceforth to be the criterion of eligibility."

The administrative policy of the Government had hitherto been to exclude Indians from all responsible posts. In the executive department, the only Indian officer entrusted with any power was the Police Daroga with a salary of twenty-five rupees a month. In the judicial department the highest officer was the Munsiff who could try civil cases involving only petty amounts. While European judges could in the ordinary course of promotion rise up to two thousand and five hundred rupees a month, the Munsiff had no pay whatever, but was left to get what he could by a small commission on the value of suits. The fatal effects of this unjust and short-sighted policy soon made themselves apparent. In the words of Trevelyan, "the wheels of Government soon became clogged; more than half the business of the country remained unperformed; and at last, it became necessary to abandon a plan, which, after a fair trial had completely broken down."* If was left to Lord

* Trevelyan, *Education of the People of India* p. 156.

William Bentinck one of the few liberal-minded and large-hearted statesmen that India has seen, to carry out the principles of the despatch of 1834; and for the first time in the History of British Rule, Indians were appointed to posts of any responsibility.

The noble sentiments of the despatch of 1834 have been reiterated over and over in official documents of which the most authoritative is the proclamation issued by Her Gracious Majesty the Queen in 1858 when she assumed the direct Government of British India :

“ We hold ourselves bound to the Natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our other subjects ; and those obligations, by the blessing of Almighty God, we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil. . . .

“ And it is our further will that, so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our Service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability, and intergity, duly to discharge.”

A great deal has been done to give effect to these liberal principles. But, a great deal more still remains to be done. Until 1853, appointments to the Convenanted services of the East India Company were made by the Directors by nomination. In that year, the Convenanted Civil and Army Medical Services were thrown open to public competition in England, to which all British subjects were to be eligible. This was certainly a gain for the people of India who had hitherto been entirely excluded from those services. But, the gain was small considering their poverty and other circumstances which stood in the way of their sending their boys to a distant country on the mere chance of a competitive examination; and a great meeting was held in Calcutta in 1853 at which one of the speakers said:

“True it may be said that as the competition is to be “unlimited,” the natives may send their children to England to pass through Haileybury or Addiscombe to qualify them for one or other of the branches of the Service, but am I to be told that with the mere chance of obtaining appointments, natives are to send their children to England, without their

families around them, without their friends to guide them, to be left there in the midst of strangers?"*

English education first initiated the Indian into a historical literature which showed how the people had come to be a great political power among several of the most civilized nations of the West; how they had wrested important privileges from unwilling tyrants; how they had risen against despots, deposed them, nay even executed them and established republican forms of government. It is true they had long been familiar with representative government; but it was strictly of a local character. The jurisdiction of the village or caste *punchayet* never extended far beyond the limits of the village. It was with English education, that the Indians imbibed the idea of a national representative government. They came to know that the sovereign of the great British Empire could not get a single penny unless the representatives of the people voted it; that the great Englishmen, who in India set up or deposed, rewarded or punished kings ruling over large

* *Speeches of Ramgopal Ghose*, p. 8.

territories were accountable for their deeds to those representatives, and that one of those magnates had actually been arraigned before a tribunal of justice for his misdeeds in India. They had known of emperors summarily punishing erring governors; but the idea of the people or their representatives having any voice in such matters was quite new to them. The growth of democracy in the West was quite a revelation to them; and it made a powerful impression. Hitherto politics had among the Hindus been almost entirely disassociated from culture; the literary men had scarcely ever been known to take part in political movements or concern themselves about the political rights of the people. There were authors who advocated the equality of man in religion, and who denounced social disabilities; but equality in political matters and representative form of government were new ideas introduced by English education, and they made a deep impression upon the Hindu intellect. Soon after the establishment of English schools, there grew up men like Harish Chandra Mukherji and Ramgopal

Ghose* who ably advocated the cause of the people and agitated for their rights. Writing as early as 1838, twenty years after the establishment of the first English school in Bengal, Sir C. Trevelyan recognised in the educated youth of that province a strong desire for representative form of Government. Some of his observations in this connection are so suggestive and are made in such a sympathetic spirit that they may be aptly quoted here. Coming from the North-Western Province to Bengal, he was struck by the remarkable difference in the political attitude of the better class people in the two provinces. In the former, where English education had scarcely penetrated yet, the people had no other idea of political

* Harish Chandra Mukherji was born in 1824. He was the editor of the *Hindoo Patriot* newspaper from 1853 until his death in 1861. He warmly advocated the cause of the ryots oppressed by the Indigo planters. He was prosecuted by the planters for the charges he had brought against them in his journal. The planters got a decree, and his house was attached and auctioned off.

Ramgopal Ghose was born in 1815. He took a very prominent part in the politics of his day. His speech on the Charter Act of 1858 was spoken of by the *Times* as a "masterpiece of oratory." He died in 1868.

betterment than the absolute expulsion of the English; in Bengal, on the other hand, where English education had already made some progress, some form of representative national assembly was held up as the ideal. "No doubt, both the schemes of national improvement (the sudden and absolute expulsion of the English, and the gradual formation of national representative assembly)," says Trevelyan, "suppose the termination of the English rule; but while that event is the beginning of the one, it is only the conclusion of the other. In one, the sudden and violent overthrow of our Government is a necessary preliminary: in the other, a long continuance of our administration, and the gradual withdrawal of it as the people become fit to govern themselves, are equally indispensable."*

With the progress of English education, the idea of representative government has taken deep root into the Hindu mind. It has been fostered not only by the spirit of English literature with its Milton, Burke and Mill, but also by

* Trevelyan, *On the Education of the people of India*, (London, 1838), p. 200.

the living sympathy of a few noble-minded Britons,* who have cordially helped or guided the political aspirations of educated Hindus. Political Associations have sprung up in various parts of India, some of the more notable among which are the British Indian Association and the Indian Association in Bengal, the Bombay Presidency Association and the Puna Sarvajanik Sabha in Bombay, and the Mahajana Sabha in Madras. The oldest of these, the British Indian Association of Calcutta, came into existence in the year 1851. From its foundation it has counted among its members, the pick of the landed aristocracy of Bengal. Kristodas Pal, one of the greatest journalists that India has produced, was its Secretary from 1879 to 1884. The Indian Association of Calcutta was established in 1876. The Puna Sarvajanik Sabha was started in

* Among these mention may be made of George Thompson, Allan O. Hume and Sir William Wedderburn. George Thompson, a distinguished orator, came to India in 1833. It was with his active co-operation that the Landholders' Association (which was afterwards converted into the British Indian Association) was established. The active part taken by Mr. Hume and Sir William Wedderburn in the National Congress is well known to need any mention here.

1870 with the object of affording "facilities to the people for knowing the real intentions and objects of Government as also adequate means for securing their rights by making timely representations to Government of the real circumstances in which they are placed." These provincial political movements were centralised in 1885 by the National Congress which brought the political aspirations of new India to a focus.

All this political activity is quite natural. It is but natural that when one suffers from what he considers to be wrongs he should give as emphatic an expression to them as is possible. That such expression has done a certain amount of good is also unquestionable. Apart from the useful social purpose served by the National Congress by bringing together a fair number of the representatives of the educated community from all parts of India and enabling them to mix together and interchange their ideas, authoritative pronouncements on current political subjects by such a representative assembly have probably some effect. But its importance and usefulness have

been greatly over-estimated, and the belief that it will ever lead to anything like the "system of Government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British Empire" is altogether illusory. Further, even if such a vision were realised, it is very doubtful whether the realisation, under existing conditions, would do much good, if any, to India. Until recently what little of redundant energy there is in new India, found its vent solely in political activity. The men who, in the estimation of new India, are building up an Indian "nation" are, almost without exception, men who are distinguished for such activity. To be able to make eloquent speeches on political platforms has hitherto been the highest aspiration of the average Neo-Indian outside Government service. The consequence is, an amount of energy has been expended upon politics which is altogether disproportionate to its import in national life, and incommensurate with the results obtained. Not only so: a portion of the energy has been directed to dangerous paths, dangerous alike to those who pursue

them and to the entire community. No doubt in these respects, new India follows the example of the Western world but, as in a multitude of other cases, follows it quite blindly.

The thinkers of the West are generally in agreement with the sages of India in subordinating political to other forms of individual or social activity. They know very well—

“How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which kings or laws can cause or cure.”

Socrates considered himself to be “too upright a man to be safe” in politics:—

“Forms of government” says Herbert Spencer “are valuable only where they are products of national *character*. No cunningly devised political arrangements will of themselves do anything. No amount of knowledge respecting the uses of such arrangements will suffice.....In proof I might enumerate the illustrations that lie scattered through the modern histories of Greece, of South America, of Mexico. Or I might dwell on the lesson.....presented us in France, where the political cycle shows us again and again that new Democracy is but old Despotism differently spelt, where now, as heretofore, we have *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*, conspicuous on the public buildings, and now, as heretofore, have for interpretations of these words the extremest party-hatreds, vituperations, and actual assaults in the Assembly, wholesale arrests of men unfriendly to those in power, forbiddings of public meetings, and suppressions of journals; and where

now, as heretofore, writers professing to be ardent advocates of political freedom, rejoice in those acts which shackle and gag their antagonists. But, I will take instead, a case more nearly allied to our own.

For less strikingly, and in other ways, but still with sufficient clearness, this same truth is displayed in the United States. I do not refer only to such extreme illustrations of it as were at one time furnished in California; where along with that complete political freedom which some think the sole requisite for social welfare, most men lived in perpetual fear for their lives, where others prided themselves on the notches which marked, on the hilts of their pistols, the numbers of men they had killed. Nor will I dwell on the state of society existing under republican forms in the West, where a white woman is burned to death for marrying a negro, where secret gangs murder in the night men whose conduct they dislike, where mobs stop trains to lynch offending persons contained in them, where the carrying of a revolver is a matter of course, where judges are intimidated and the execution of justice often impracticable. I do but name these as extreme instances of the way in which under institutions that nominally secure men from oppression, they may be intolerably oppressed—unable to alter their opinions and to conduct their private lives as they please.....How security, lessened in this general way, is lessened in more special ways, we see in the bribery of judges, in the financial frauds by which many are robbed without possibility of remedy, in the corruptness of New York administration, which, taxing so heavily, does so little.....While the outside form of free government remains, there has grown up within it a reality which makes government not free. The body of professional politicians, entering public life to get incomes, organising their forces and developing their tactics, have, in fact, come to be a ruling class quite different from that

which the constitution intended to secure ; and a class having interests by no means identical with public interests.”*

Speaking of the influence of Government upon civilization Buckle observes :

“The extent to which the governing class have interfered and the mischiefs which that interference has produced are so remarkable, as to make thoughtful men wonder how civilization could advance in the face of such repeated obstacles. In some of the European countries the obstacles have in fact, proved insuperable, and the national progress is thereby stopped.....The love of exercising power has been found to be so universal, that no class of men who have possessed authority have been able to avoid using it.”

As Flinders Petrie observes, “Government is of great concern, but of little import. Constitutional history is a barren figment compared with the permanent value of Art, Literature, Science or Economics. What man *does* is the essential in each civilization, how he advances in capacities and what he bequeaths to future ages.”†

The comparative futility of political activity is shown by the failure of the Western System of Representative Government which raised such extravagant expectations a century ago.

* *The Study of Sociology*, pp. 276—277.

† *Revolutions of Civilization*, p. 123.

We have already seen how, in the opinion of Herbert Spencer, it has failed in France and the United States. Dr. Jacks, Editor of the Hibbert Journal, who visited America recently observes :

"The professional politics of America are corrupt and debased to an extraordinary degree.....As things now are America is not a self-governing country except in name. The power behind the government is the political machine, which is controlled by the "bosses" and has become a veritable tyranny. The machine is a contrivance of remarkable ingenuity which can only be compared with the inventions of Edison, and its object is simply that of depriving free men of free use of their votes. I came in contact everywhere with men who groan under its tyranny."

In regard to Germany it is now well known to what a farce the Western system of Representative Government has been reduced there, and how even the luminaries of science, literature and philosophy *kow-tow* to a strong-willed autocrat. In Great Britain, Mr. H. G. Wells observes :

"We do not have any Elections any more; we have Rejections. What really happens at a general election is that the party organisation—obscure and secretive conclaves with entirely mysterious funds,—appoint about twelve hundred men to be our rulers, and all that we, we so-called *self-governing* people, are permitted to do is, in a muddled angry way, to strike off the names of about half of these selected gentle-

men."* "It is pathetic, I think," says Mr. Balfour, "to hear that so many of the most earnest men in modern Europe regard the representative system as almost played out—perhaps I am putting that too strongly, but not I think, much too strongly—and as fit now only for Turkey, or China."

Despite the opinions of the greatest Western thinkers about the comparatively insignificant part which the State plays in sound national

* The following extract from a recent issue of an English paper shows how corrupt the system of election in England still is:—

"Sir George Kekewich, formerly Secretary to the Board of Education, at a meeting of the National League for Clean Government last night at Essex Hall said, bribery was part of our parliamentary system and of our public life. He used to represent a beautiful city with plenty of nice people in it, but ten shillings went a long way at an election time. To-day in each constituency there was the party caucus, Liberal and Tory. They did not choose a candidate themselves. They went to the headquarters in London—went shopping in fact. Sometimes they got just the candidate they wanted, but sometimes they bought the goods on order.

The real object was to find out how much money the candidate could give to the various institutions in the constituency. In some places there was enough actual bribery to turn the election. He knew places where there was an actual tariff, "five shillings down, and another five shillings if we win," for Parliamentary elections and half a crown for municipal elections. The Corrupt Practices Act was evaded, and there was a market for honours, £5,000 for a knighthood, £25,000 for a baronetcy, £60,000 for a Peerage. Those were the recognised prices."

development there are special reasons why the State looms so large in the eyes of the Western nations. The most important of these is the abnormal growth of industrialism. Normally industrial and commercial expansion is antagonistic to the military spirit and favours peace and the virtues it fosters. But the abnormal industrial and commercial development of the West has reversed this relation. The relation of modern industrialism to militarism is that of allies, not of enemies. From the industrial applications of the Physical Sciences, there have resulted titanic mills and factories but a very small fraction of the produce of which can be absorbed by Europe. Markets outside Europe must, therefore, be found for it, and markets in Western vocabulary have come to mean dependencies and "spheres of influence." The scramble for such markets in Asia and Africa, have made international jealousies and rivalries in the occident keener than ever before, and is unquestionably the most potent cause of the inordinate militarism of modern Europe. This militarism has necessarily made the State so

influential as to usurp functions which should be normally left to the people to discharge. This overwhelming influence of the regulative agency over the regulated part of the community is gradually making the self-government of the latter a nullity, and however beneficial it may appear to be temporarily, spells ultimate ruin to the nation as a whole. A large portion of the best manhood of the great nations of Europe is now in one way or another forced to be engaged either in making munitions, or in being trained to be "food for powder." A writer in a recent issue of the *North American Review* observes: "What are the millions of French Austrian and Russian (and also Italian and German) boys in the trenches to-day but slaves? What have they ever been but slaves? Taken almost from the cradle and gripped by a system which held them as in a vice to become what? Cogs in a machine, a fighting machine, constructed with ruthless energy and superlative skill to beat down another fighting machine; nothing less, nothing more. Patriotism? Faugh!..... slavery? Compared with theirs ours which we

abolished by war was beneficent and kindly."

The Neo-Indians without probing the special causes which have made the State so supreme in the West, and without considering the deleterious and paralysing tendencies* of the absorption by the state of activities which should

* The following extract from the *New Era* (Nov. 1913) illustrates one aspect of the evil tendencies of a paternal system of Government:—

"No other country in the world has gone so far in paternalism as New Zealand. In no other place has the spirit of regulating every man's business been more zealously fostered. The New Zealand "plan" has for several years been flouted in the face of an older world as the very last work in government.

But alas and alack! That paradise of paternalism is right now in the grip of a universal strike. The labouring man has discovered that his troubles are as great as ever, and the business man knows to his dearly-purchased sorrow that there are ills which no amount of specious Government coddling can cure.

While bluejackets from British warships strive to quell the nation-wide rioting, hunger and distress afflict the land. Here we see the actual result of a real application of the socialistic principles of Government.

Such a lamentable failure of the theory that a Government should do everything and attend to every man's business is an object lesson for all mankind. It is a solid pound of fact which outweighs 10,000 tons of fine-spun theories; the human race cannot be relieved of all its ills by legislation."

normally be exercised by the people, follow the Western crowd and attach a degree of importance to state agency and to politics which is crushing their manhood and is fraught with the gravest peril to their civilization. This is all the more regrettable as old India enjoyed a measure of real self-government which is not to be met with even among the most advanced nations of the West. "Singular," as says Carlyle, "in the case of human swarms, with what perfection of unanimity and quasi-religious conviction the stupidest absurdities can be received as axioms of Euclid, may, as articles of faith which you are not only to believe, unless malignantly insane, but are (if you have any honour or morality) to push into practice, and without delay see done, if your soul would live !"

Lieut.-Col. Mark Wilks says: "Each Hindu township is, and indeed always was, a petty republic by itself.....The whole of India is nothing more than a vast congeries of such republics." "The village communities" says Sir C. Metcalfe, "are little republics having nearly everything they can want within themselves and almost independent of any foreign nation. They seem to last when nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds revolution,

Pathan, Mughal, Maratha, Sikh and English are all masters in turn; but the village communities remain the same. In times of trouble they arm and fortify themselves, a hostile army passes through the country, the village communities collect their cattle within their walls, and let the enemy pass unprovoked. If plunder and devastation be directed against themselves and the force employed be irresistible, they flee to friendly villages at a distance; but when the storm is over they return and resume their occupations.....A generation may pass away, but the succeeding generation will return..... This union of the village communities, each one forming a separate little state itself, has, I conceive, contributed more than any other course to the preservation of the people of India through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered, and is in high degree conducive to their happiness, and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence.”*

The village community system fostered self-reliance and maintained social order. The communities managed their own affairs relating to education, sanitation, public works, police, law &c., in a way which was well suited to their material condition. If new India instead of pursuing the chimera of Western civilization in cities, remained contented with the simple life and the simple joys of the village, and endeavoured to maintain the simple system of

* *Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, 1832, Vol. III, Appendices, p. 33.*

indigenous self-government the social crisis with which India is threatened to-day might have been averted. The pursuit of the Western path of politics has been an important contributory cause of the increasing invertebracy of the average Neo-Indian. He can hardly stir a step in matters relating to sanitation, education, industry and, sometimes, even to social reform, without invoking the help and initiative of the government. Treated as a child, he remains more or less as such throughout life. He bitterly complains of bureaucratic interference, but acts so as to make such interference inevitable. He talks of glibly of self-government, but acts so as to gradually render himself more and more unfit for it. He loudly protests against the increasing employment of high placed Europeans, but acts so as to lead inevitably to such employment. He frequently indulges in platitudes about national progress, but is oblivious of the elementary principles of such progress, that a nation has to work out its own salvation by its own effort, and that the more help it takes from the state

beyond a certain limit, the more helpless it becomes.

The political movement of new India has signally failed to attain its main object—its due share in the administration of the country. The chief cause of the discontent of new India is the exclusive policy of the British Government in India. The main grievance of the articulate community of India ever since the time of Ram-mohan Raya has been its practical exclusion from the higher grades of the Government services.*

* The following extracts from the Proceedings of the House of Commons (1891) will show the nature of the appointments carrying a pay of Rs. 2,500, and more a year held by the Indians in 1886:—

“The proportion of Europeans, Eurasians, and Indians in the covenanted and uncovenanted services [civil?] of India on March 31, 1886 at salaries varying from Rs. 50,000 and more to Rs. 1,000 were as follow: Salaries of Rs. 50,000 and upwards, 26 Europeans, 1 native; Rs. 40,000 to Rs. 50,000, 47 Europeans, 3 natives; Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 40,000, 125 Europeans; Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 30,000, 346 Europeans, 3 Eurasians, 2 natives; Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 20,000, 951 Europeans, 12 Eurasians, 40 natives; Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 10,000, 2058 Europeans, 111 Eurasians, 446 natives; Rs. 2,500 to Rs. 5,000, 1,334 Europeans, 647 Eurasians, 545 natives.

In 1912, the covenanted civil service was composed of 1294 members of whom only 56 are Indians. The following

But in the language of Sir H. J. S. Cotton—

“The Government is irresponsive ; it remains the same, a monopoly of the ruling race, and so far from being any real advance in the direction of popular concessions, a distinct reactionary impulse animates its counsels. There is no diminution of suspicion, distrust, and dislike of the national

table compiled from the report of the Public Service Commission (1886) exhibits the proportion of the higher grade appointments held by the Indians (Hindus, Mahomedans, Parsis, etc.) in some of the minor departments :

Name of Department	Non-domiciled Europeans	Domiciled Europeans	Eurasians	Indians	Remarks
Accounts Department...	25	8	3	6	* “Domiciled Europeans” include Eurasians.
Customs.....	13	60	117	12	
Jails.....	60	15	18	16	
Opium.....	49	13	8	1	
Police.....	315	33	5	17	
Public Works.....	810	119*	—	86	
Salt.....	35	32	16	7	
Survey.....	108	103	38	2	

One swallow, or even a dozen swallows, do not make a summer. And a dozen high posts do not give the Indians anything approaching an effectively substantial share in the administration of the country. The *proportion* of Indians in the higher ranks of the Government services instead of increasing, has, I believe, decreased of late. And what is far worse, the trend of the British policy during the last two or three decades has been to interpose a wide gulf between the provincial and the imperial services in all the important departments, and to practically reserve the latter for Europeans.

movement. The aim and end of the Imperial policy is to knit with closer bonds, the power of the British Empire over India, to proclaim and establish that supremacy through ceremonies of pomp and pageantry and by means of British capital to exploit the country in the economic interests of the British nation. The encouragement of Indian aspirations falls not within its ken.....The great gulf which separates Englishmen from Indians is widening, and the increased bitterness of race feeling is now reflected by Indian as well as by English prejudice."*

India is probably farther off the goal of real self-government now than she was three generations ago, when the ideal of liberty set up by the French Revolution was a living force in Europe; when the progress of the Western industrialism had not yet rendered the possession of Eastern markets an economic necessity of vital importance to the more powerful nations of the West, when they had not yet engaged in a keen competition for the exploitation and spoliation of the weaker peoples of the world; and when steam and electricity had not yet made the Anglo-Indian regard himself as anything more than a bird of passage in India.

The Congressists lay the flattering unction to their soul, that the recent expansion of the

* *New India* (revised edition), pp. 66-67.

legislative councils, which is held by them to be their greatest achievement, will ultimately lead to self-government like what is enjoyed by "the self-governing members of the British Empire," and the Minto-Morley reforms were hailed by them as almost inaugurating a new era for India. Great Britain has not produced a statesman more sincerely liberal than Lord Morley. Even he declared emphatically :

"If I were attempting to set up a Parliamentary System in India, or if it could be said that this chapter of reforms led directly or necessarily up to the establishment of a Parliamentary system in India, I, for one, would have nothing at all to do with it.....If my existence, either officially or corporally, were prolonged twenty times longer than either or them is likely to be, Parliamentary system in India is not the goal to which I for one moment would aspire."

"Is it conceivable" asks Lord Crew "that any time an Indian Empire could exist on the lines of Australia and New Zealand, with no British officials and troops, no tie of creed or of blood replacing those material bonds?" "In India," says Lord Sydenham, "constitution-making is not studied, and I have been sometimes surprised to see colonial self-government advocated as a simple and natural development capable of early realization. I wonder if those who hold these views have any idea of what colonial self-government means."

Just as two and two will make four, and no amount of manipulation will lead to a different

result, so it is impossible to get out of a human aggregate more than what is in it. I have elsewhere dealt with the amount of ethical development which Western society has undergone within the last three centuries.* That development has certainly been most pronounced in England but even in England it has not yet gone far enough to render the altruistic impulse of the community superior to the egoistic. Assuming that colonial self-government would be beneficial to India, the further assumption that it would be given for the asking however insistent, presupposes an amount of credulity, ignorance of human nature and of history in the leaders of the Congress, which would be quite inexplicable but for the fact that men who are pledged to a cause become as a rule purblind in regard to its prospects and defects. Their sanguine expectation† that institutions

* *Epochs of Civilization*, pp. 288—382.

† It should be noted that this illusion is gradually being dispelled. Says one of the Congress leaders (Ambika Charan Majumdar):—

“At the outset, the leaders of Indian public opinion appear to have strongly believed that the real remedy for nearly all

of a more or less academic character, whether denominated "Congress" or "Legislative council" will ultimately lead to substantial self-government is sometimes belauded as "robust optimism." But this "robust optimism" appears to us to be analagous to that of a child who planting the twig of a mango tree in his miniature garden perseveringly waters it, and fondly hopes that it will some day yield delicious mangoes.

However, if notwithstanding the evidence of sociology and history and the emphatic asseveration of responsible statesmen to the contrary, a freak of politics secured colonial

the grievances of the people lay in the Legislative Councils and in that view their energies were largely directed towards the expansion of these Councils on a representative basis. Lord Cross' reforms of 1892, though it would be quite unfair to characterize them as mere lollypops, practically turned out to be very unsubstantial; while, eighteen years after, the very substantial reforms intiated by Lord Morley, also met with a similar fate. Although Lord Morley most gratuitously taunted the Indian public at the time with asking for "the moon," a prayer which they in their senses could never venture to make even to any one who may be supposed to be nearer that orb, yet people are not altogether wanting in this country who only after five years' experiment have come to regard his great reforms of 1910 as no more than mere moon-shine." *The Indian Review*, August, 1915.

self-government to India, it is highly problematical whether, she would at all benefit materially by the change, so long as the mental and moral nature of the average Briton remains unchanged and so long as the disparity of material condition between him and the Indian remains as at present. The chances are, she would be much more inextricably entangled in the toils of Western civilization without any adequate compensating advantage, and the grip of the West would close on her to crush her more effectively. The anti-Indian prejudices and the domineering tendencies of the average Briton are as strong as and probably stronger than ever.

"On almost every railway journey," observes Mr. H. W. Nevinson, "one sees instances of ill-manners that would appear too outrageous for belief at home. But it is the same throughout. In hotels, clubs, bungalows, and official chambers, the people of the country, especially the educated classes, are treated with a habitual contumely more exasperating than savage persecution." "Among women" says Sir H. J. S. Cotton, "who are more rapidly demoralised than men, the abuse of those 'horrid natives' is almost universal. Among men how often do we hear the term 'nigger' applied without any indication of anger or intentional contempt, but as though it were the proper designation of the people of the country! Even with those who are too well informed to use this term, the sentiment that prompts its use is not

wholly set aside.....It is a grave symptom that the official body in India has now succumbed as completely as the non-official to anti-native prejudices.....It is indeed a grave position to which we have drifted, for the change is complete, and the tension acute.* "It does not matter," says the same writer, "whether natives of India, live in English style, or whether they do not, but they are not allowed admission into English society, or into Anglo-Indian clubs.....Even one of my secretaries, a Cambridge graduate and a Barrister-at-law of the Middle Temple, a gentleman of high attainments and marked amiability of character was not allowed access to our station club. It would be easy to multiply such cases.....It is narrated by Lieut.-Col. Graham in his *Life of Sir Syed Mahmood*, on the authority of the late Mr. Justice Mahmood, that when that distinguished Judge, during a visit to Madras, was taken by the then Chief Justice, Sir Charles Turner, to the Madras club, a member promptly came up and told the Chief Justice to Mr. Mahmood's face, that "no native was allowed in the club," and both Sir Charles and Mr. Justice Mahmood had at once to leave the club premises." The "story of the Indian Rajah [who went on a state visit to Agra and travelled in a first class compartment with an English subaltern] who was called upon to unlace the boots and shampoo the weary legs of a British officer, is corroborated by Sir David Barr, the Resident at Hyderabad, and would be incredible if it were not vouched for by such high authority."†

The average bureaucrat, however "sundried" and anti-Indian he may be, and however Imperialistic in his tendencies, is a man of superior culture

* *New India*, pp. 47—51.

† *New India*, pp. 40—41, 61.

to the average Anglo-Indian planter or other non-official; and in extreme cases of injustice he not unoften interposes his authority effectively to remedy it. The way in which he protected the Bengali Ryot* from the oppression of the Indigo-planter is a striking instance of such interposition. That "India must be bled" is a creed as cardinal with the official as with the non-official. But the former has generally the culture to be shocked by unnecessary or grossly unjust bleeding, and possesses the authority to prevent it. While I am writing this, there has emanated from the non-official Anglo-Indian community a suggestion for the flotation of a "national war loan in India"; and it is strongly supported by their organs. "The feeling which obtains very widely, says one of the most influential of them, "is that India is not doing as much as she ought to help England in a conflict in which her own interests are vitally involved." The Finance Minister, however, has given an

* Mr. R. L. Tottenham, the district Magistrate of Nadia, tried to protect the ryots of his district against the aggression of the Indigo planters.

emphatic negative to this suggestion. In the course of a reply to the speech by the Chairman of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce, he said:

"I must in the first place entirely dissent from the statement that India had made no direct monetary contribution towards the cost of carrying on the war. We have made a very considerable contribution towards the cost of carrying on the war. We have made a very considerable contribution by defraying the normal cost of the large Indian expeditionary forces that have been set to fight the battles of the Empire in various continents. It must be remembered that while we still pay for these troops we have for the time no lien on their services, which would be very valuable to us in the present situation.

I said in my Budget speech that we should probably contribute 7 million during 1914-15 and 1915-16 to the Home Government in this war, and as a matter of fact I think we shall probably give more. As I said, too, in my speech on the final Budget debate, India has contributed things far more valuable than money—200,000 trained soldiers and vast supplies of munitions of war of all kinds. I have no sympathy, therefore, with anyone who belittles the part that India is taking in the present conflict. The specific suggestion that India should raise a large national war loan, on which she would presumably, pay the interest, is one on which I could not look with any favour. A considerable amount of money has already been contributed by individuals in India to the last Home war loan, and no doubt the next one will call forth similar contributions. But to start a special Indian loan in India is quite a different matter. In making suggestions of this sort it seems to me that you do not realise the gravity of the present financial situation here."

We may form some conception of what "colonial self-government" in India would be like, if we imagine such non-official Anglo-Indian influence as has resulted in the suggestion of a "National War loan" for India to prevail over the influence of the official Anglo-Indian. To the advantages of immensely greater wealth, of the start of a century in the knowledge and experience of industry and commerce on modern methods, and of the possession of highly developed industrial qualities, the Briton would add the great advantage of doing in the name of the people of India what would be but little conducive to their real well-being. Protective legislation which would have the effect of extending foreign enterprise, and the pioneering of industry, the benefits of which would be mainly derived by foreign capitalists, and extension of education on Western lines, which would westernise India much more completely than at present, would probably be among the earliest measures of the "colonial self-government" in India. The inevitable consequence of such measures would be to enable the British capitalists

to exploit the dumb millions of India much more effectively and much more scientifically, and reduce them to the condition of "drawers of water and hewers of wood" much more extensively than at present. India would have her share of the white man's burden of a vast empire without the white man's compensating advantage of material gain. Verily the struggle of the Indians against the Westerners would, in the words of Macaulay, "be a war of sheep against wolves."

I cannot more fittingly close this brief sketch of the political activity of new India than by quoting the opinion of a highly liberal and sympathetic Englishman :

"I do not mean that the Congress has been useless. It served as a training ground for political knowledge. It afforded a centre for the growing unity* of India, and

* It is very doubtful whether there is substantial growth of unity in India. The cleavage between the Hindus and the Mahomedans has certainly been growing wider. Sir James Meston observed in a recent address in the case of the North-West Province and Oudh :

"From time immemorial Hindus and Mahomedans have lived together at Ajodhya and Fyzabad in peace and amity. As a symbol of this happy unity you see Mahomedans worshipping at Babar's mosque and Hindus paying adoration at

without it, the leaders of Indian reform could hardly have formulated their own programme. But in two avowed objects it has failed; it has had no influence upon the action of the Indian Government, and no influence upon English opinion at home. For twenty two years it was a model of order and constitutional propriety. It passed excellent resolutions, it demanded the redress of acknowledged grievances, in trustful loyalty, it arranged deputations to the representatives of the crown. By the Anglo-Indians its constitutional propriety was called cowardice, its resolutions remained unnoticed, and the representative of the crown refused to receive its deputation. In England outside the half dozen who take some interest in India, no one knew where the Congress met, what language it spoke, what were its demands, or what its object; no one knew and no one cared."*

the shrine of Ram Chandra's birth-place within a few yards of each other and within the same enclosure wall. Cannot these brotherly relations be resumed and maintained? Cannot you, gentlemen, use all your influence to allay the friction and to quench the bitterness which have recently come into existence? Government can do but little in this matter. Its first duty is to maintain the law and to preserve order. It cannot bring your hearts together by force."

Sir James Meston's observations hold good for other parts of India also.

* *H. W. Nevinnson, The New Spirit in India*, pp. 326-327.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ILLUSION OF TRANSITION STATE.

If I have been fortunate enough in securing the adhesion of any Neo-Indian brother to the views expressed in this work so far, he would probably say: "The evils pointed out by you, those attending the current system of education, the reforms on Western lines &c.—are such as are unavoidable in the transition state and must be borne with patience."

That the present social condition of new India is transitional is unquestionable, but the belief which encourages the expectation in the Neo-Indian, that the future it is calculated to lead to will be better than the past, and which alone can fortify him to bear its evils with patience and resignation is altogether illusory. That the society of old India was far from perfect, and that it presented considerable room

for reform would be readily admitted by all who know anything about it, and is evidenced by the rise of an almost uninterrupted succession of reformers in old India down to recent times. The question is not one of reform, but whether reform is to be carried on Indian or Western lines; not of the existence of evils, but whether it would not be wiser "to bear the ills we have than fly to others we know naught of."

Let us first take a glance at the social condition of old India. Agriculture was, as it still is, the chief means of livelihood. Food grains instead of being exported were stored, and unless there was repeated drought, the people ordinarily had enough to eat. In respect of manufactures, India, as a whole, was not behind of any other country, Eastern or Western. Writing about Indian trade a century ago, in 1813, Sir T. Munro says:—

"No nation will take from another what it can furnish cheaper and better itself. In India, almost every article which the inhabitants require is made cheaper and better than in Europe. Among these are all cotton and silk manufactures, leather, paper, domestic utensils of brass and iron, and implements of agriculture. Their coarse woollens though bad, will always keep their ground, from their superior

cheapness. Their finer Camblets (woollen goods) are warmer and more lasting than ours.....Besides the peculiar customs and climate of India, we must look to the superior skill of the Indian workmen. We cannot profitably export to them until our own fabrics excel theirs.....The grand obstacles to our exports are the inability of the Indians to purchase our commodities, and the cheapness and excellence of their own.....They (European adventurers settling in India) could not become manufacturers as the superior skill and frugality of the natives would render all competition with them unavailing.....They would be kept down by the great industrious Indian population, and they would probably dwindle into a race little better than the mixed caste descended from the Portuguese."

Until the beginning of the last century India was one of the wealthiest countries of the world; and what was more important the wealth was fairly evenly distributed. The social structure was brood-based upon the strong foundation of the material prosperity of the mass of the people. The number of people who led a life of a more or less parasitic character was small being mainly confined to the courts of kings and emperors. The village community system conferred real self-government upon the people, and developed their self-reliance and self-respect. They had but little need to have recourse to the State law courts, and were ordinarily, but little affected by

political changes. A large variety of agencies and institutions maintained the ethical and spiritual life of the community, and a spirit of co-operation, helpfulness, selflessness, and benevolence generally pervaded it. It was this ethical and spiritual development which not only enabled the Hindus to present an impenetrable front of opposition to the disintegrating influences of Mahomedan invasion and to maintain the integrity of their civilization notwithstanding the loss of political independence, but, in course of time also captured the Moslem mind and influenced Moslem culture and Moslem administration. The caste-system preserved industries at a high pitch of excellence and prevented class-conflict; and saints and reformers endeavoured to minimise its spiritual inequalities and iniquities by making the path of salvation accessible to all irrespective of caste, creed or colour. It is true that for some centuries Hindu society had been characterised more by order than by progress. But this restriction of mobility within narrow limits was the inevitable consequence of its attainment of the highest

stage of civilization, and was well calculated to secure abiding happiness to its members. No wonder, that Sir Thomas Munro, notwithstanding his Western bias, declared emphatically, a century ago, that "if a good system of agriculture, unrivalled manufacturing skill, a capacity to produce whatever can contribute to either convenience or luxury, schools established in every village for teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic, the general practice of hospitality and charity amongst each other, and above all a treatment of the female sex full of confidence, respect, and delicacy are among the signs which denote a civilised people—then the Hindus are not inferior to the nations of Europe, and if civilization is to become an article of trade between England and India, I am convinced that England will gain by the import cargo."

The present transition state due to the pursuit of the path of Western civilization by new India is obviously expected to lead to that civilization. Its most salient and characteristic feature, however, is its marvellous industrial development;

and we have in a previous chapter* seen, that it would be impossible for Indians ever to attain that degree of development. The wider adoption of Western civilization would for them mean the perpetuation and wider extension of the evils which now weigh upon them. Their animal wants would increase, but their means to satisfy them would decrease. They would be exploited more extensively than at present. The economic crisis with which they are now confronted would become still more acute; and the moral evils which spring from excessive struggle for animal existence would be more wide-spread than at present.

But if by some miracle, the unexpected and the impossible happened, and India were transformed into a Western nation, the change would redound to her temporary glory, but may bring about her ultimate ruin. She would have to exchange a settled and harmonious state which obtained, and still to a large extent obtains in old India, and which secured the tranquillity and beatitude begotten of good will and con-

* *Vide*, Chapter IV.

cord, for a state of "progress" which is achieved not by love, charity, and self-sacrifice but the path of which lies over the misery of countless fellow creatures, and which brings in Sisyphean misery and disquiet engendered by unsatisfied desire, insatiable greed, and perpetual discord. Our vision is so obfuscated by the material grandeur of Western civilization, by the power and opulence of the great Powers, that we are generally unable to visualise the real condition of the mass of the people in the West which is extremely deplorable. "Even the best of modern civilizations," says Huxley, "appears to me to exhibit a condition of mankind which neither embodies any worthy ideal nor even possesses the merit of stability. I do not hesitate to express the opinion that if there is no hope of a large improvement of the condition of the greater part of the human family; if it is true that the increase of knowledge, the winning of a greater dominion over nature which is its consequence, and the wealth which follows upon that dominion, are to make no difference in the extent and the intensity of want with its

concomitant physical and moral degradation amongst the masses of the people, I should hail the advent of some kindly comet which would sweep the whole affair away as a desirable consummation."

Well might Ruskin exclaim referring to the industrial perfection of England: "Alas, if read rightly, these perfectnesses are signs of a slavery in our England a thousand times more bitter and degrading than that of the scourged African or helot Greek. Men may be beaten, chained, tormented, yoked like cattle, slaughtered like summer flies, and yet remain in one sense, and the best sense, free. But to smother their souls within them, to blight and hew into rotting pollards the sucking branches of their human intelligence, to make the flesh and skin into leathern thongs to yoke machinery with—this is to be slave-masters indeed; and there might be more freedom in England, though her feudal lord's lightest words were worth men's lives, and though the blood of the vexed husbandman dropped in the furrows of her fields, than there is while the animation of her multitudes is sent

like fuel to feed the factory smoke, and the strength of them is given daily, to be wasted into the fineness of a web, or racked into the exactness of a line."

Describing the condition of one of the most highly civilized peoples of the West (the Germans) three years ago, Mr. Price Collier, an American writer who lived among them for some years, observes :

"In ten years the percentage of physically efficient men in the rural districts decreased from 60·5 to 58·2 per cent. and the decrease is even more marked in particular provinces. In fact, mortality despite better hygienic conditions, and more education, has not decreased, and, in some districts, has increased: while the birthrate, especially in Prussia and Thuringia has fallen off as well.....Education at one end turning out an unwholesome 'white-collared, black-coated proletariat' as the socialists call them; and industry and commerce which even tempt the farmer to sell what he should keep to eat, at the other are making serious inroads upon the health and well-being of the population."* Mr. Collier thus sums up his observations: "The period of twenty five years during which I have known Germany has developed before my eyes the concomitants of vast and rapid industrial and commercial progress; and they are: a love of luxury, a great increase in gambling, a materialistic tone of mind, a wide-spread increase of immorality, and a tendency to send culture to the mint and to the market place to be stamped, so that it may be readily exchanged for the

* *Germany and the Germans*, (1913), pp. 290—291.

means of soft living."* In regard to the spread of sexual immorality he speaks of the "monstrous percentage of illegitimacy in Berlin, 20 per cent. or one child out of every five, born out of wedlock; 14 per cent. in Bavaria; and 10 per cent. for the whole empire."

The morality of the industrial West is thus depicted by Lecky in his "Map of Life:"

"It is much to be questioned whether the greatest criminals are to be found within the walls of prisons. Dishonesty on a small scale nearly always finds its punishment. Dishonesty on a gigantic scale continually escapes.....In the management of companies, in the great fields of industrial enterprise and speculation, gigantic fortunes are acquired by the ruin of multitudes; and by methods which though they avoid legal penalties are essentially fraudulent. In the majority of cases these crimes are perpetrated by educated men who are in possession of all the necessaries, of most comforts, and of many luxuries of life, and some of the worst of them are powerfully favoured by the conditions of modern civilization. There is no greater scandal or moral evil in our time than the readiness with which public opinion excuses them, and the influence and social position it accords to mere wealth, even when it has been acquired by notorious dishonesty, or when it is expended with absolute selfishness, or in ways that are absolutely demoralising."

The general moral condition of the Western world is thus painted by Marie Corelli :

* The blight is over all. The blight of atheism, infidelity, callousness, and indifference to honourable principle—the blight of moral cowardice, self-indulgence, vanity, and want

* Op. Cit., p. 558

of heart. Without mincing matters, it can be fairly stated, that the aristocratic Jezebel is the fashionable woman of the hour, while the men vie with one another as to who shall best screen her from her amours with themselves. And so far as the sterner sex is concerned the moneyed man is the one most sought after, most tolerated, most appreciated and flattered in that swarm of drones called "society," where each buzzing insect tries to sting the other, or crawl over it in such wise as to be the first to steal whatever honey may be within reach.*

Mr. G. Lowes Dickinson says: "The Western nations have never really been Christian. Their true religion has only become apparent as Christianity has declined. That religion not yet expressed in forms, but implicit in all their conduct—is that the time process is also the real process; that everything material matters very much indeed; and that spiritualism must either recognise the claims of matter, or retire from the conflict." The same writer further observes: "It is not really creditable in the West, to be anything but a man of business, in the widest sense of the term; to live in any way which cannot be shown directly or indirectly to increase the comforts and facilities of life or diminish its detriments..... The pace at which we are living, the competition of every kind, the intensity, the fatigue, the nerve strain, involve a dislocation of the moral equilibrium of life. The East lives, and has always lived at a lower tension; but it has kept a better balance between the active and the contemplative faculties. It is in that balance that I see civilization."†

Speaking of the women in England who have been forced into the "cheating, damning struggle for life," Mrs. Gallichan observes:

* *Free Opinions freely Expressed*, p. 82.

† *Civilisations of India, China and Japan*, pp. 83—84.

“There are, according to the estimate of labour experts, 5,000,000 women industrially employed in England. The important point to consider is that during the last sixty years the women who work are gaining numerically at a greater rate than men are. The average weekly wages paid is seven shillings. Nine-tenths of the sweated work of this country is done by women.....The life-blood of women, that should be given to the race, is being stitched into our ready-made clothes, is washed and ironed into our linen; wrought into the lace and emroideries, the feathers and flowers, the sham furs with which we other women bedeck ourselves; it is poured “into our adulterated foods; it is pasted on our matches and pin-boxes; stuffed into our furniture and mattresses.....The question is not: are our women fit for labour? but this: are the conditions of labour in England fit either for women or for men?”

“The sucking power of the towns” observes Sir H. Rider Haggard, “I consider to be the most serious and vital problem facing civilisation to-day. The supposed advantages of the cities are drawing our people off the land and changing them from solid, steady, dependable men and women to a race of neurotics who will ultimately be unable to cope with the stress of modern conditions. We must at all costs, before it is too late, provide some means of preserving or recreating a class rooted in the land. The trend of people from the land to the cities has always preceded the downfall of nations, and there is no reason for supposing that Nature will alter her rule in this respect.”

Mr. E. B. Havell, a sincere well-wisher of India, advises the Indians :

“None but the ignorant or charlatans will recommend you the paths of Western commercialism as leading to true national prosperity.....Nowhere in India—not even in the

direst time of famine and pestilence—is there such utter depravity, such hopeless physical, moral and spiritual degradation as that which exists in the commercial cities of Europe directly brought about by modern industrial methods.”

Quotations from Western writers could be multiplied almost indefinitely to show how very lamentable the present condition of Western society is, on the whole. Earnest endeavours are no doubt made by philanthropically disposed persons to elevate the mass of the people. But, as John Stuart Mill had to confess, the idea which these people entertain of social reform, “appears to be simply higher wages, and less work, for the sake of more sensual indulgence.” It is undeniable that a large number of the Western working-men are now better lodged, better fed, and better clothed, than they were half a century ago. But the gulf between their material condition and that of their masters is wider than ever. The relative poverty of the Western working-man has increased where his actual poverty has not. Therein lies the secret of the growing discontent and restlessness even among the comparatively well-to-do labouring classes in Europe. The increase of luxury, which

is the inevitable consequence of a commercial civilization like the Western, naturally begins at the top of the social scale. When a desire for it reaches the bottom, as it must do sooner or later, there is heart-burning. With every addition to the wealth and luxury of the upper classes, unless there be a corresponding addition to the wealth and luxury of the lower classes, the latter will be discontented, and will clamour for a rise in their wages and for shorter working hours. After a period of loss and anxiety on the side of the masters, and of misery and barbarity on the side of the working-men, the dispute between them is compromised, but never satisfactorily settled. As the standard of luxury is perpetually rising in the West, the conflict between capital and labour is perpetually recurring, and strikes which sometimes assumes the magnitude of civil wars are becoming more and more frequent. The "religion of enmity" is spreading fast among the multitudes, and the "religion of amity" becoming restricted to the virtuous and the philanthropic few. Just before the War, nearly all the great Powers of Europe were

threatened with civil war in some shape or other. A civilization which is based upon such a slight foundation of benevolence and which is kept up by continuous warfare of class against class, and of state against state cannot last very long. Indeed, the present world-war, may prove to be the beginning of its end. The truth is, the Western mental outlook is much the same now as it was at the time of Alexander the great, when the Brahman Dandin told that potentate : " We honour god, love man, neglect gold and contemn death ; you, on the other hand, fear death, honour gold, hate man, and contemn god. Your mind is filled with vast desires and insatiable avarice and a diabolical thirst for Empire. You are made much like other men, and yet you would obtain by force whatever mankind possesses.....It is desire that is the mother of poverty which you seek to cure without knowing the proper remedy."

In the West, "the wise and the good, who must always be in the minority in every society, however civilized, have not yet acquired the dominant influence which they should have in a

civilization which has advanced in the third stage. There has been considerable expansion of the spirit of freedom, but its aim hitherto has chiefly been to further political and economic activities, and to secure equality of opportunity in the struggle for animal existence. There has been great diffusion of knowledge relating to the macrocosm, but comparatively little of knowledge relating to the microcosm. There is much science but not much philosophy, much learning but not much wisdom. There is increased individuation. That man is an end in himself is fully recognised. But that end with the vast majority is the ignoble one of material satisfaction. The military and predatory spirit is still rampant; material interests still outweigh the spiritual; the outer life is still thought of more than the inner; and egoism still prevails over altruism. The Occidental has conquered the forces of Nature, only to be a slave of the forces which that conquest has created. His marvellous and manifold inventions, instead of lightening the struggle for existence, have tended rather to make it more acute, more prolonged, more wide-

spread and more debasing; instead of facilitating the liberation of the soul have tended rather to tighten its fetters; instead of diminishing human misery have tended rather to increase it.”*

It is unquestionable that there are features of Hindu society which are also lamentable, but not to the extent those of Western society are, and are, besides, such as must always attend an equilibrated condition which is the normal goal of all progress and which inevitably tends to restrict mobility within a narrow range. The present Western social state is really transitional, but whether it would lead to a better or a worse condition it is very difficult to predict. It is the result of the operation of causes over which the Westerners have had but little control, and they have no option but to submit to it in the hope that it may eventuate in the harmonious condition of the highest stage of civilization. They must go on, because for them to go back would be to go back to a lower stage of civilization. But whether by going on they

* *Epochs of Civilization*, pp. 327—328.

will ultimately arrive at the stage where the forces making for material development would be effectively controlled by those leading to ethical development, the stage which ensures the stability of civilization—is still highly problematical.* There is just a bare possibility of the fabric of their civilization, however stupendous and majestic it may appear to be at the present day, giving way like so many other dominantly material civilizations of the past epochs.* For the Hindus, the movement from an equipoised and stable state of civilization, however immobile and apparently humble, to the as yet unequipoised and unstable state of civilization, however mobile and apparently imposing, is not progress but regress, not ascent but descent. At best the step, being from a settled and secure to an unsettled and insecure state, is one of highly questionable prudence.

* *Epochs of Civilization*, Ch. III and Ch. VI, pp. 317—328.

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