

The United States of India

The Record of a First-Hand Study

BY EDWARD ALSWORTH ROSS

IN Delhi in a house of lofty rooms overlooking a venerable garden I talked with Mahatma Gandhi, who had just finished his weekly "twenty-four hours of silence." He looked the perfect ascetic, for only lately he had concluded a three weeks' fast in penance for the riots between Hindus and Mohammedans. (Since then, by the way, there have been no riots.) "I doubt," he said, "if the rule of the Moguls or Mahrattas had much effect on the lives of the common people of India. In their seven hundred thousand rural villages they continued to manage their common affairs through the *panchayat* or elected Council of Elders. But this British *raj* is infinitely more penetrating, searching, and oppressive. The people's initiative is stunted as never before. Still, we have no idea of forcing out the British; we hope to gain our end by touching their heart and imagination."

The public men of England have had every opportunity to give us *their* version of what their country is doing in India. Is it not high time that we attend to this ground-swell of Indian Nationalism and learn just what it is that critics of British rule complain of?

Long ago, they assure us, before the

Mohammedan conquests, 1200-1600 A.D., before the break-up of empire and the anarchy of the eighteenth century, every Indian village had its school. Even now, in Burma, thanks to the free schools in the Buddhist monasteries, half of those above five years of age can read and write. But in India, after a century—in some parts much more—of British rule, less than a tenth of those above ten years of age are literate. In the Philippines the proportion is a half. The Americans have had only a quarter of a century for leaving their mark on the Filipinos, yet a tenth of them are in school as against a bare thirtieth of the Indian population.

The difference reflects the contrast between British political ideals and American political ideals. The Americans deliberately set out to prepare their brown wards for self-government by means of the public school. The British, however, harbored no such plan for their Indian subjects. Their ideal has been aristocratic, for the fine democracy that has been growing up in Great Britain since the Reform of 1832 left no mark on policy out in the empire. It has been too busy fighting the battles of the masses at home. So the spirit of the Government of India has been that of the old

noble families of Britain. The arrival of a time when their dark subjects would manage their political affairs was never within the contemplation of the earls and marquises sent out to Hindustan as governors and viceroys. They imagined that on into the dim future, as far as eye could pierce, the peoples of India would be ruled from without. Before 1905 probably no British proconsul dreamed of India's wanting to govern herself. Had the British believed in educating for citizenship, there would be thrice as many literates in India as there actually are. Indeed, in certain native states under enlightened maharajahs, —Travancore, Cochin, and Baroda,— more of the people read and write than in any part of British India. When it is remembered that the chief motive in halting conquest and preserving the native states was that they might serve as dark spots heightening by contrast the brilliancy of the well governed British India all about them, the richness of the joke on the Ruling Race will be appreciated. Yes, the Indian Nationalists may well resent the design of keeping them indefinitely in subjection rather than assisting them to rise and stand on their own feet.

Ever since the Great Mutiny of 1857 the army policy of the Government has reflected mistrust. The proportion of British troops to native is never to fall below one to two and a half; actually it is one to two and a quarter. This requires India to keep 61,000 white troops, although one Tommy costs rather more than four native soldiers. The Indian fighters bear the brunt of holding in check the robber tribes of the Northwest Frontier, but among the garrisons

stationed about India to prevent risings there are nearly as many British as Indians.

Mistrust, too, dictates that Indians shall have nothing to do with the more terrific weapons of modern warfare. They are not admitted to the Air Force, the Tank Corps, the Armored Car Companies, the Royal Horse Artillery, the Field Artillery, the Medium Artillery. They fire only those guns which are trained upon the external enemy. Professors of physics in private universities are confidentially requested by the Government not to teach their students anything about wireless telegraphy.

It seems a bit "thick" that the 137,000 native troops should be officered almost exclusively by British. Until lately the only Indian officers have been uneducated men promoted from the ranks, holding the "viceroy's commission" and never rising above subadar major or ressalidar major. Any smooth-cheeked British second lieutenant outranks them because he holds always the "king's commission." The stock excuse is, "The native troops won't follow a native officer, sir!" Queer, is n't it? Turkish troops fight well when led by Turkish officers; Japanese troops fight well when led by Japanese officers; but we are asked to believe that material for the making of good officers does not exist in India. Either the British do not want young Indians to learn the art of war, or else, as an ex-commander-in-chief remarked to the head of the Hindu University of Benares, they "have to provide for their young men."

Of late, qualified Indian cadets, in number up to ten a year, may receive the "king's commission." Inasmuch as the vacancies among the

4000 white officers commanding Indian soldiers run about 160 a year, at this rate the officer corps will be Indianized when the Greek kalends arrive. The Indian Legislative Assembly votes that a fourth of these vacancies should be thrown open to Indians; but so far its recommendation is unheeded.

There is resentment, too, that an Indian youth who wishes to learn how to defend his country has to spend two years at the War College at Sandhurst in England. The patriots demand that a war college be set up in India to train officers for the Indian Army. They remark with bitterness that when they ask for self-government they are met with, "But you are n't able to defend yourselves." When they reply, "Very well, give us an opportunity to learn the art of defending ourselves," that opportunity is withheld. They infer that it is the policy of their British masters to treat them as a subject people and that all the fine talk about the British Empire having become the "British-Indian Commonwealth of Free Nations" is eye-wash for the onlooking world. So far as India can see, she is still "dependency" rather than "equal partner."

Critics point out that the Indian Army, which eats up two thirds of the income of the Central Government, is far bigger than India needs. It is used as a handy reservoir to draw upon when England suddenly needs force "out there"—fighting men in Burma, Tibet, China, Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Hedjaz. In fact a third of it is there for imperial purposes, not India's security; but it is India that must foot the bill. Whether this charge is true or not is more than we inexperienced outsiders can settle.

§ 2

A candid English professor of political economy in a mission college confessed to me:

"India once had very flourishing industries, ship-building and a great carrying-trade. All these were destroyed long ago by the harsh, discriminating policy of the British, and only in our time has an Indian-owned cotton manufacture sprung up. So India came to be an exporter of agricultural produce and an importer of manufactured goods; hence, there was nothing for the people to live by save agriculture. The result has been a continual subdivision of the soil, the growth of peasant indebtedness, and the phenomena of overpopulation. How frightfully overpopulated Japan would be had she been restrained from fostering her manufacturing industries by tariffs and otherwise!"

The trade policy of Parliament and, to a less extent, of its *alter ego*, the Government of India, has been consistently directed to giving British industries the upper hand over their Indian competitors. In the old days no duties were imposed on English goods imported into India, while Indian imports into England were made to pay a high duty. The Government of India was not allowed to levy an export duty on raw materials which the English manufacturer was interested in. By a shrewd use of export duties India's exports to countries other than Britain were forced to flow through Britain and leave a profit with her. Indian products were taxed on crossing frontiers between Indian states, while British goods were exempt from inland transit duties.

In the teeth of England's commercial ascendancy the United States, Germany, and Japan have built up their industries by a thoroughgoing use of trade restrictions and protective tariff. India's nascent industries were equally in need of shelter, but, no! the purest free-trade doctrine was applied to them. Manchester raged at any duties on her cotton piece-goods imported into India and hypocritically professed fear of "an increase in the cost of articles of clothing to the poorest of the population of India." Between 1875 and 1882 she succeeded in clearing away all such duties, so that the Government of India was the only one in the world which raised no revenue from imports. When, thirty years ago, fiscal necessity obliged that Government to reimpose a general import duty of 5 per cent., the Lancashire manufacturers were so jealous of the bit of protection which thus would come to Indian cotton-mills that they sought and actually obtained the imposition of a "countervailing excise duty" on the product of Indian mills. At a time when other countries were levying duties of 40 or 50 per cent. on foreign goods to protect their infant industries, Indian industries might not enjoy the petty shelter of a 5 per cent. revenue tariff. Such ruthless treatment of India's infant industries was bitterly resented, and not long ago the Legislative Assembly at Delhi by a large majority asked for repeal of the excise. The Fiscal Commission of 1922, composed of eminent economists and business men of both races, declared:

"The existing Cotton Excise Duty should, in view of its history and associations, be unreservedly condemned, and the Government of India should

frankly express their desire to clean the slate."

But still it functions!

There are other policies which sacrifice Indian industrial interests. India's gold reserve and other large balances are kept in England and lent to English business men when they might be kept in India and lent to Indian business men. In vain have Indian economists urged the setting up of a state bank. Nor has India an industrial bank such as has benefited German and Japanese industries. Little has been done for industrial education, higher or lower. Save in Bengal and Mysore no attention has been paid to teaching the manual arts and the handicrafts in the government elementary schools. In the fourteen universities the liberal-arts colleges are well cared for, but there is no decent engineering college in India.

Valuable mineral deposits have been leased to foreigners, while Indians have not been incited to exploit their own resources. Only now is a school of mines being established. A British economist in India gives it as his opinion that the Government has come into such relations of dependence and assistance with the steamship lines plying between India and Great Britain that there is now no chance for Indian shipping. He justifies the Nationalists in feeling that the cards are stacked against Indian enterprise.

That the English rule India solely with benevolent intent will do to tell children; on the other hand, only cheap cynics see the English as mere exploiters. The guiding conception of the relations of the two peoples has been that of a *partnership*. Britain's idea is to produce a benefit by selling to the Indians at a price fixed by her-

self a necessity of life which she is adept at producing, viz., law and order; by hooking up Indian public revenue with British administrative capacity and engineering skill so as to produce profitable public works; by fructifying India's undeveloped natural resources with British technical knowledge; by bringing together in manufacturing enterprises Indian labor and British capital.

In this partnership, to be sure, Britain has the say, India being a sleeping, not to say a comatose, partner. The English have decided what enterprises shall be undertaken and have fixed the terms on which their trained ability, experience, or capital shall work with Indian revenues, natural resources, or labor. It has been theirs to settle how the fruits from their domination or investments in India shall be shared. Naturally, they have seen to it that their share is a goodly one.

Bitter polemic rages over the question whether the lot of the Indian people has been bettered under British rule. The Nationalists picture an overtaxed people sinking into an ever deeper poverty. But the evidence is conflicting, and even the professional economists of both races are in doubt as to the underlying trend. Even if there has been no improvement in the material condition of the masses, it does not follow that the British have hogged the economic benefits from railways, irrigation, mines, and plantations. The Nationalists are excessively loath to recognize the cardinal fact that in the last forty years the Indians *have added a fifth to their numbers*. Here, perhaps, is where most of India's dividends from her partnership with Britain have gone. Instead of living better, she has chosen to

plow back her share in order to rear therefrom fifty million more human beings. If she prefers excess of progeny to comfort, that is her affair; but let us not hold the British responsible for Indian poverty without first taking into account the fantastic Indian birth-rate.

Be that as it may, Britain's gain from her dominion over India certainly foots up a tidy sum. Her banking-houses doing business in India net fifty million dollars a year in financial commissions. On their Indian business British shipping concerns collect one hundred and forty millions of dollars. The British capital lent to the Government of India or invested in Indian railways, tramways, canals, mines, mills, plantations, and trade runs well above three billion dollars, the annual return from which can hardly be less than one hundred and eighty million dollars. It is impossible to learn just how many British hold civil or military places under the Government or follow a business or profession in India, but the number cannot be less than 15,000. These men probably have twice the income they could command in England.

Thus, the viceroy costs \$270,000 a year without allowing for his personal staff and household charges, which bring the total well above \$400,000. A member of his council gets more than twice the pay of a member of our cabinet. The commander-in-chief draws a salary of \$32,000. The pay of the governor of a province ranges from \$22,000 to \$42,000. A member of the governor's council has a salary of \$21,000. High Court judges are paid \$16,000; political residents of the first class, the same; of the second class, \$11,000. The number of offi-

cials with salaries of from \$9000 to \$15,000 runs up into the hundreds. Every retiring civil servant gets a liberal pension.

With half an eye one can see that Britain will lose heavily when India ceases to be her close preserve. A self-governing India will not favor her as Canada or New Zealand does. Mining concessions will no longer be given exclusively to British companies. Non-British capital will be made welcome, while a National Government will not sacrifice everything to the regularity of returns to foreign capital. Continental and Yankee capital will shoulder its way into the banking and carrying trade of India. Two thirds of the government posts held by the British will be turned over to Indians, while the remainder, following the historic example of Japan, will go to experts of various nationalities. Since at least a quarter of a billion dollars of annual income is at stake, we may be sure that the governing class in Great Britain will cling to their control over India and relinquish it only in order to avoid catastrophe.

Such are the chief counts in the indictment of British rule. As set-off should be listed such substantial blessings as security, justice, honest and capable administration, impartiality between races, castes, and classes, economic advance, and the introduction of the science and culture of the West. Even the ideals of liberty and representative government to which the Indians appeal when they arraign alien rule have entered the Indian mind by the study of the political masterpieces of Milton and Burke in the high schools and colleges the British set up in India. Casting up the account one sees justification

for vigorous protest on the part of the Indians, but not for burning indignation. Wherefore, then, bomb outrages, conspiracies to assassinate British officials and (in 1922) 40,000 political offenders in jail or deported? After copious converse with the Nationalists I could see no sins of contemporary British rule big and black enough to account for the intensity of their feelings. Really their indictment is a rationalization of feelings which have their roots elsewhere.

§ 3

India played a loyal part in the World War, giving myriads of soldiers and half a billion dollars to help England out of a hole. From the high-spirited Punjab in the Northwest some 400,000 men had gone to the war. Naturally, after peace came, the Indians looked for some sign of appreciation of what they had endured in a quarrel not their own. But the bureaucrats were guilty of the amazing folly of bringing in, early in 1919, the repressive Rowlatt Bills designed to clothe the executive with considerable powers not subject to judicial review. The idea of making permanent the oppressive powers exercised during the war was intolerable. Mr. Gandhi organized a passive resistance movement, and agitation against the odious bills became general. In the city of Amritsar the secret deporting of two popular leaders of this agitation caused an excited crowd to approach the deputy commissioner's bungalow to learn what he had done with them. There was a clash with the police, bloodshed, and a sudden unpremeditated outbreak of mob fury in which five English were done to death.

The next day at noon General Dyer

made proclamation that no public meeting would be allowed. Only a small fraction of the people could have heard the notice, but when, four hours later, the general heard that a public meeting was in progress in the Jalian-wala Bagh, a large open space girt with buildings, he went there with fifty men and, without giving a warning to disperse, opened fire upon a crowd of 15,000 unarmed persons listening to a speech along Gandhi lines in support of resolutions condemning the mob outrages of the previous afternoon. Dyer continued firing until his ammunition was exhausted, then marched his troop away, leaving behind him about 400 dead and 1200 wounded.

During the subsequent months of martial law the things that were done to humiliate and terrorize the people were worthy of Prussianism in its flower. Because some students were in the mobs, a thousand students from seven colleges were required for many days to walk sixteen miles a day in the Indian sun. The street in which an Englishwoman had been beaten by the mob was closed to Indians save those who would crawl, and the residents on this street could get to or from their houses only on all fours. Vicarious floggings were many, while armored cars roared about the country shooting offhand into villages and knots of unarmed people. Airplanes bombed or machine-gunned at random without knowing whether the groups massacred were rioters or wedding parties.

These atrocities stand out of line with the British record in India and should be laid to war hysteria. Although O'Dwyer, Governor of the Punjab, and Dyer have been officially

exonerated, the British Government curse them for having undone the work of generations of faithful Indian civil servants. They cowed the Punjab, but they set India ablaze and let loose forces which in 1921 nearly stalled the governmental machine. Only as the gray dust of time settles over the blood-stains will the Indians realize how very untypical the Punjab atrocities were.

Another root of bitterness is purely psychological; viz., the galling sense of inferiority begotten by the overbearing ways of some of the British. You come upon no end of cases. An American Y. man told me of traveling second-class with two British Tommies. While they were getting refreshments an Indian professor came into the compartment with his luggage. When the Tommies returned they ordered him out, and when he stood his ground they kicked his baggage out on the platform. The rest of his life that professor will be virulently anti-British. "Only yesterday," the American went on, "I saw two Tommies in the door of a second-class compartment bar entrance to a fine-looking Indian with a ticket. Although such a compartment seats nine persons, they intended to keep it all to themselves!"

A young Indian recounted how years ago he saw a British official try to turn an Indian lady traveling with her maid out of her reserved first-class compartment in the middle of the night. He wanted it for himself! Only the threatening attitude of the native crowd caused him to desist. This young man has met with like cases scores of times. An American bishop told me how, accompanied by an Indian gentleman, he called upon a

British official as a committee. The official invited the bishop to be seated but let the Indian stand throughout the interview.

An American said of Madras: "The feeling cannot improve here until there is a change of front on the part of the British. They should come down off their high horse and carry on in the spirit of the Reforms."

A rajah very conservative in his politics remarked, "The passion to be rid of British rule comes from the fact that there is not a single Indian who has not several times in his life been insulted or aggrieved by some British official; and they are becoming ever more sensitive to such treatment." This bears out Lionel Curtis, father of "Dyarchy," who, after citing Lord Morley's "India is a country where bad manners are a crime," adds: "Amongst educated Indians with whom I am acquainted there are some who are, as I feel, definitely and finally embittered against the British connection. In every instance this bitterness had its roots in some rankling memory of insult at the hands of a European."

I asked an Indian university student, "What practical difference would *Swaraj* (Home Rule) make?" He replied: "Now, if an Indian has been waiting a long time to see a British official and a European comes in, the latter will be taken in to the official first. With *Swaraj* this would at once disappear."

The British bar Indians from their clubs. In Bombay the Yacht Club boasts that no Asiatic save an independent sovereign, the amir of Afghanistan, has ever entered its precincts. In Madras no Indian can be taken into the Madras Club. An English

editor justified to me this practice by the necessity of keeping our race pure. He forgot that the male club affords no opportunity for the sexes to meet.

The leader of the Swarajist party is the Hon. Motilal Nehru of Allahabad, a highly cultivated Kashmiri Brahman. A few years ago he was at the head of the bar and took no interest in politics. His admirers among the High Court judges sought and gained his consent to let them put up his name for membership in the Allahabad Club. Certain young British thought fit to blackball him on racial grounds, and from that day he gave up his practice, threw himself into politics on the side of the Extremists, and now is more of a thorn in the bureaucrats' flesh than any other man in India save Gandhi.

Since the Amritsar massacre and the non-coöperation movement the temper of the Indians has greatly changed. Said an American Y. secretary: "The Indians are the most forgiving people on earth. I have never seen an Indian do a discourteous thing, even under extreme provocation. But since Gandhi inspired self-respect in them, they assert themselves in going after a seat in a car or a place at the ticket-window. They say, 'We've never been treated with courtesy; why should we be courteous?'"

Half a thousand miles away another American testified: "Ten years ago the Indians stepped back from the ticket-window when the European approached. Now he takes his place in the line, and if he does n't look sharp the Indian will push in front of him. Formerly the Indian shunned a railway compartment occupied by a European if he could possibly squeeze in elsewhere; now he glories in coming

right in. Formerly when an Indian gentleman gave a big garden-party he would invite all the prominent Europeans in the place, and they would receive most of the attention. Now few of them will be invited, and they will not be keen on coming because they will be made to feel that they play second fiddle."

A British Y. secretary testifies to the change which has come over the spirit of his countrymen:

"Back in 1915 when I would ask an Englishman for a contribution to our work, he would promise so much for this and so much for that, then add, 'But not one anna for the damned natives.' The British have quit talking of 'the damned natives.' The new self-assertiveness and truculence of these natives has rather awed them. They no longer feel themselves so firm in the saddle. It has dawned upon them that they must keep in favor with these same natives; for what are ninety thousand Britishers among three hundred millions? Many read the handwriting on the wall and believe that the days of our *raj* are numbered."

§ 4

As time passes the British super-caste capping the hierarchy of Indian society does not approach the people; rather it recedes. In the old days when India was six months from England by sail round the cape, a double lustrum might elapse before the official revisited his country. So he made friends in his field of labor, and some of them were Indians. He lived with a native woman, begot "Anglo-Indians," identified himself with the country, and became, perhaps, an ardent student of India's great past. For

these giants of eld—such as Sir Alfred Lyall, Sir Edwin Arnold, Sir William Wedderburn—the educated Indians feel a warm affection.

But now, thanks to steam and the Suez Canal, London is only sixteen days from Bombay. Many officials run home every other year, while some find an annual round trip by the P. & O. cheaper than a vacation in the hills. With his English family and frequent visits home, the ordinary D.C.'s ties with native life and thought become slight and slack. He pities himself as an "exile," keeps in closest touch with England, and never hobnobs with Indians. After office he hies him to the club, warms up on the tennis-court, then, stretched on the lounge-chair, swaps anti-native myths with confrères until it is time to drive home and dress for a dinner at which bright men with a university degree will circulate their racial prejudices as self-evident truth.

Once at a dinner after patient listening to rash paradoxes I broke out:

"Gentlemen, you can't imagine how queer what you are saying sounds. It is as if you should argue: 'The water is rough; now is a good time to rock the boat'; 'The ice is thin; therefore let us stamp on it.'"

Their cure for Indian disaffection was "firmness," which, being interpreted, means, "Yield nothing and shoot to kill."

"So you think human nature works that way?" I queried.

"Ah, but these are Orientals and Orientals crave a master. The sterner you are with them, the more they will love you!"

The fact is these isolated British, mingling too much with one another, become the prey of the most dangerous

delusions, for there is nothing you will not believe if it is what everybody you meet is saying. Constant access to the native mind would save them, but that is just the thing the average bureaucrat lacks. On the strength of a few formal or official contacts he imagines he understands native character. "Egad, sir, I have been among these beggars *twenty years*, and I *know!*"

Really the natives he meets wear masks. When a crisis arrives and the masks are dropped he gets stunning surprises. No one who sees what hallucinations infest official circles will retain any faith in that darling maxim of the brass-bound Imperialists, "Trust the man on the spot." Often the judgment of this warped, atrabiliar, bedeviled man on the spot is worth considerably less than nothing at all.

At first the visitor assesses Home Rule in terms of efficiency. Would an Indian Government handle defense, irrigation, railways, telegraphs, forests, famines, and epidemics as well as they are now handled? Surely not. Well, then—

Presently one sees deeper, begins to notice how alien rule saps character. I recalled the high head, squared shoulders, and eye-flash of the Japanese as they pass foreigners in their streets. "We are masters here," their bearing says. Here in India, not so. In our presence most Indians, even the educated, act as if unsure of themselves. They have been sat upon so often! Not, of course, the Swarajists, who have broken with the British; they are sturdy in manner, even defiant. But many others are unmanned by the consciousness that, no matter how able, patriotic, or right they may be, it is always the foreigner who

decides. As you note that characteristic droop of the shoulders, that too deferential air, you feel it unnatural that the will which reigns here originates sixty-five hundred miles away.

The Nationalists warn that alien rule is emasculating Indian character, for the British are coming to be more masterful, the Indians more subject. A century ago treaties would be made between British officials and native potentates as equals. But gradually the Indians are sinking into a common subjection. The native princes are but gorgeous puppets who would never dream of lifting a finger against the real lords of the land. The civil population is disarmed as never before. "I doubt," exclaimed an indignant bishop, "if any people should be as helpless as these people have been made." Thanks to the Arms Act, the authorities know the location of every firearm in native hands. While there is nothing for Indians to fight with but sticks and stones, they are menaced with the most terrible engines—tanks, armored cars, machine-guns, airplanes, and aerial bombs. Moreover, thanks to the wireless-masts at every fort, the heads of police and troops all over India communicate as if they sat in one room. No wonder Mohammed Ali said to me with a wry smile:

"With the Mahatma (Mr. Gandhi) non-violence is an article of faith; with me it is a matter of policy."

A noble English educator, who has devoted himself to the Nationalist cause, testified: "The clutch of this Government is all-pervasive. You cannot dream how it really is. A few political crimes by youthful hotheads will bring under suspicion every social worker in Bengal. The police will get

him or he will be blackmailed. Indians cannot find a place where they can take their own initiative and work out their own salvation. Spies dog one everywhere. I have caught them with their hands in my desk. This is one of the best governments in the world; many officials fairly work their heads off; yet it does n't fit."

Said an Indian professor of economics, "Year by year we are losing in initiative."

"How can that be?" I asked, "for this British dominion has been here a long time."

"The bureaucratic machine constantly touches our lives at more and more points, so that the sphere of matters open to us to settle for ourselves is ever narrower. Unless our bright, ambitious young men pursuing higher studies can look forward to controlling some sections of this huge machine, they will lose initiative and become more and more emasculated."

The Swarajists insist India is ripe for self-government now, but the sociologist shakes his head. India is two thirds as big as the United States and has near thrice our population. Not only is there great diversity of race, but 147 tongues are in use. Ten languages boast from ten to a hundred million speakers apiece, while four others have from five to ten million speakers each. The bulk of the people do not think of themselves as Indians, but as Mahrattas, Bengalis, Punjabis, Madrasis, Rajputs. The modern sentiment of Indian nationality is of recent origin, and it is doubtful if one man in five feels it. At present there is a common aspiration to be rid of foreign rule; but, were that effected, the latent oppositions would become active and threaten the social

peace. India has been fitly characterized as "marching in uneven stages through all the centuries from the fifth to the twentieth." There are, say, half a million with the equivalent of a high school or university education; but then there are tracts "where it would be fantasy to dream of representative institutions." Like those ocean depths to which sunlight and air never penetrate, there are in India "soundless deeps through which the cry of the press and the platform never rings."

The Mohammedans are outnumbered three to one by the Hindus but have not forgotten that once they were the masters. Mr. Gandhi characterizes the former as bullies, the latter as cowards. Frequently the antipathy between the communities has flared up—crimson! Lajpat Rai said to me at Lahore, "These bloody Hindu-Moslem riots furnish the British with an argument we hardly know how to reply to." They are so unaccountable that many suspect the hand of England, the *tertium gaudens*, is behind them. Not that the secret service incites Mohammedans to sacrifice a cow in public or the Hindus to make triumphant music while passing a mosque, but that the man who eggs on the excited crowd in a religious procession to resent a hurled brickbat by attacking a temple is probably in the pay of the police. The Punjab and Bengal have a majority of Mohammedans, and, unless their feeling undergoes a wonderful change, it is possible that these great provinces would elect to remain outside an Indian Union just as North Ireland remains outside the Irish Free State.

The Hindus still are split by caste, that foe of patriotism and fellow-

citizenship. There are sixty-seven main castes, none with less than two thirds of a million members. As for the sub-caste—that group of families into whom you can marry, from whom you can take water and food—there are thousands of them! Caste determines one's religious, social, economic, and domestic life from the cradle to the grave. On trains and in city streets, among the college-bred, in reformed and progressive circles, caste no longer counts for much; but out among the people its retreat is that of a glacier. When a British college president declares, "Caste will be here a million million years hence," one must smile; but it will long be a great obstacle to nationhood. Will voters trust a man of another caste to represent them in the legislature? Until they do, the Hindus cannot be said to be in the *civic* stage of social development.

The non-Brahmans, who outnumber the Brahmans ten to one, resent the prevalence of the latter in the public services and the liberal professions, so that in South India they have insisted upon special representation in the legislature. This concession may yet make no end of trouble. Then there are fifty-five millions—a fourth of all Hindus—below caste, the impure or "untouchables," who dread lest a caste-controlled government should legalize the disabilities they are under. The British of course will never do this.

With such a make-up of population it would not be surprising if, instead of coöperating politically, the discordant elements presently reached for one another's throat—which would quickly bring back personal rule of the familiar Oriental type. When I compare the confusion in China since the Manchu emperor was set aside in 1911

with the rosy hopes the revolutionary leaders confided to me in 1910, I wonder whether *Swaraj* in India might not prove to be as disappointing as the Republic of China is.

The Swarajists point to Japan as a brilliant example of an Oriental people making good politically. They forget that Japan is homogeneous, with a common speech, culture, and history. Then, it inherited an imperial house "descended from the gods." The traditional loyalty to the mikado held things together until the Japanese had gained experience in working representative institutions. Only just now has the franchise been broadened from four million voters to fourteen millions. In India, on the other hand, there is no venerable dynasty to shelter the infant state. The people will have to create their government out of hand and in the open. With only one man in six literate and one in sixty literate in English, is it safe to count on general obedience to the authority of a National Parliament sitting at Delhi? The Indian Moderates believe that but for the British "steel frame" holding discordant elements together, they would fall apart, go to fighting with one another, or be devoured piecemeal by the stronger native states.

I was shocked by the levity with which some Nationalists contemplated the possible recurrence of civil strife. "Oh, no doubt," they would say airily, "rivers of blood will flow, but anything, *anything* rather than this foreign yoke!"

For fifteen miles to the southwest of Delhi the traveler sees the remains of cities, palaces, tombs, and mosques dating from the early centuries of Mohammedan rule. These beautiful edifices have been battered and ruined

in the course of the fighting which ebbed and flowed about them. Returning to the capital one sees rising the immense and splendid Parliament Buildings of Imperial India. Thirty thousand men are rearing them, and it is said that \$125,000,000 of the people's money will be laid out on them. If they are to remain a source of inspiration for generations, like the public buildings of England which has had nearly three centuries of domestic tranquillity, who will begrudge their cost? But what if all this beauty were destined to be smashed to pieces a few years hence in some bootless civil war springing from a premature experiment in self-government?

Thanks to the *pax britannica*, there are at least a hundred millions of people in India who could not live under the old pre-British conditions. Widespread civil disorder would cause them to die like flies. An overpopulated country cannot afford to take political risks any more than an overloaded boat can afford to take a chance on rough water.

§ 5

During the war a group of daring English political thinkers led by Mr. Lionel Curtis, who were trying to convert the British Empire into a partnership, studied the case of India and suggested a plan which came to be known as dyarchy. It formed the basis for the Montagu-Chelmsford Report of 1918, which in turn resulted in the Reforms Act of 1919 under which India has been governed for five years.

The reforms contemplate Home Rule as the goal but propose to arrive at this goal by successive steps. The Delhi Government is made more ac-

cessible to criticism and responsive to public opinion by the creation of an elected Legislative Assembly, to which all measures must be submitted, although the Government of India is not bound by its vote. In the provinces dyarchy is realized by sharing the functions of government, leaving some in the hands of the governor and his helpers, while turning over others to ministers responsible to elective councils representing the Indian people. By expanding the powers of these councils and contracting those of the governors, it should be possible to approach self-government in the degree that Parliament gains confidence in the political capacity of the Indian people.

Among the subjects handed over to Indian control are local government, elementary education, public libraries, public health, agriculture, coöperatives, forests, liquor regulation, endowments, and registration. Reserved to the British officials are such matters as police, courts, jails, prisons, taxation, finance, factory legislation, and industrial welfare.

Unhappily the reforms have not worked as intended. They were well conceived, but in steering his proposals through Parliament Mr. Montagu had to make grave concessions. Then it was left to the Government of India to frame regulations for their working. The officials proceeded to lay down regulations which whittled away much of the power granted to the Indians. Gradually the Indian Moderates who served as ministers for the provincial councils came to realize that the governor had the kernel while they had the shell. Hence those who are for "working the councils for all they are worth" are losing ground, while the Swarajists, who wish to follow a policy of

obstruction until such vital matters as law and order and finance are handed over to Indian control, are every day stronger.

Eminent Indian British recommend pacifying the Nationalists by granting the provinces responsible government. The British would still control the Government of India, and Delhi would manage foreign affairs, relations with the native states, defense, irrigation, railways, posts and telegraphs, currency, public debts, arms, shipping, commerce, opium cultivation, emigration and immigration. Even with full provincial autonomy India would still be a long way from *Swaraj*.

For a country so huge and diverse, the unitary state is unthinkable. What is coming is a "United States of India." Nor will the existing nine provinces make up the future federal system. To give reasonable play to regional peculiarities and interests they will have to be broken up into perhaps two score of states. Then of the 731 native states, comprising more than a fifth of the people of India, most will eventually disappear, but certainly half a score or more will become commonwealths of the Indian Union.

This emerging nation will probably be realized piecemeal. Too much moved to think accurately, both British official and Indian Nationalist misconceive what is most likely to

happen. Both imagine a dramatic moment, the embarkation of the last boat-load of English! The Briton foresees them leaving with the grim remark: "Have it your own way, then. Wish you joy of your *Swaraj*!" knowing that already the Pathans are pouring down from the hills, the Afghans streaming through Khyber Pass, the Ghurkas descending from Nepal, upon a rich and defenseless India, while the princes of the native states seize key positions in their vicinity. On the other hand, the Nationalist pictures the withdrawal of the British as the removal of an incubus. He sees myriads of spies and informers losing their jobs, while hosts of released political prisoners are greeted ecstatically by a people rejoicing in their new-found freedom.

Now, barring a successful Indian revolution at some moment of Britain's extremity, *there will never be a last boat-load of British*. The cork helmets will not leave Delhi until some of the provinces have forgotten what a British official looks like. Even after the reins of power are handed over at Delhi, great numbers of British will be kept on as invaluable experts to serve the new Government. Finally, there will be a British governor-general with his staff, such as Canada has, to serve as symbol of the unity of the British-Indian Commonwealth of Free Nations.

Richard Kane Ponders Education

The Miracle of Transformation of the Young Human Animal

BY IRWIN EDMAN

THE newer novelists, I gather, have discovered that the most important actions in a man's life are not his steps that can be measured in inches, nor the essential furniture of his dwelling, tables and cabinets that can be touched and weighed. The true adventures are those of the spirit, and the authentic materials of life are emotions and ideas. The sophisticated fictionists have even found a technic for following the passionate recessive windings of a man's spirit. I wish I could learn their trick. For now that Richard is so securely settled down, his adventures seem completely those of the imagination. If I seem to report rather than to relive his mind, I can, perhaps, ask forgiveness, on the ground that this is an old-fashioned memoir of a friendship, not an experiment in a new-fashioned novel.

Richard's life since he was eighteen has been fairly intelligible, I think, to most of his friends, in terms of his external career. The inner history of his spirit has been at least indexed by the outer story of his life. As in the case of so many other fair but unspectacular flowers of the middle class, when one has told of his adjustments to jobs, to marriage, to children, and to those social circles which constitute

his world, one has told about all that there is to tell. I have watched Richard closely, and have in him seen the word become flesh. He is more and more bounded by his work, his family, and his commutation schedule. His spirit has not been crushed completely by them; but after twenty-eight, for one in Richard's station, any flights he takes are fairly certain to be flights of the spirit only.

There are friends of Richard's, of course, whose lives have not thus early fallen into the accepted and comfortable pattern. There are members of that college group of his—I have known them—who, in the words of one of them, "have not made the great renunciation." There is Tommy Keenan, who, as Richard predicted, went into a monastery, and found there, out of an innocence he had never lost, a peace that he had always had. There is Stephen Raith, who has at twenty-seven burned himself into spiritual cinders with a phosphorescence of Bohemian decay that with him passes for the divine flame. There is Alfred Delavan, working on some trade publication in Paris, hoping, if he stays long enough in the shadows of St.-Germain-des-Prés, to find what little he has of a soul below his lovely manners. There is David Saunders, who