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GREATER INDIA

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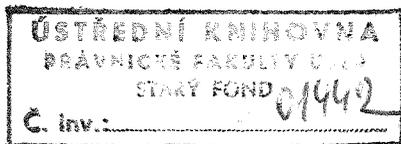


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movement in Bengal, circa 1905—1910.

## CONTENTS

	PAGE.
Our Swadeshi Samaj ....	1
The Way to get it Done ....	34
The One Nationalist Party ....	56
East and West in Greater India ....	79

# GREATER INDIA

## OUR SWADESHI SAMAJ

Date of Original 1904—5.

**I**N our country the king has made wars, defended his territory and administered his laws, but the social organisation has attended to everything else, from the supply of water to the supply of knowledge, so simply and naturally that the repeated floods of new sovereignty, which swept over the land with the advent of each new era, did not reduce us to brutes by destroying our *dharma*, nor scatter us into vagabondage by breaking up our social structure. The kings incessantly battled against one another, but in our murmuring bamboo groves, amidst the shade of our mango orchards, temples were being raised, rest-houses for wayfarers established, and water-reservoirs excavated; the village school-master taught his simple lore, higher philosophy was not lacking in the *tols*, and the village meeting-places were resonant with

the chanting of the Ramayana and the singing of *kirtans*. The social life did not depend upon outside aid, nor did outside aggression perceptibly mar its serene beauty.

It is a trivial matter that we should be deploring the scarcity of water to-day. The root of it is the thing, above all things, which should cause us the deepest misgiving,—the fact that our mind is no longer in our own social system, that our whole attention is directed outwards.

If a river, which has always flowed by the side of some village, deserts it and betakes its current elsewhere, then the village loses its water, its fruits, its health and its commerce. Its gardens become wildernesses, and the tangled growths which lodge in the cracks of its decayed prosperity become the haunt of bat and owl.

The current of man's mind is of no less importance than a river. This current of old had kept pure and joyful the cloistered shade of Bengal's villages,—but now the mind of Bengal has been distracted and turned away from its village homesteads. That is why its temples are in ruins, for there are none to

repair them; its pools are insanitary, for there are none to clear out the slime; the dwellings of its wealthy ones are deserted and no joyful festivity resounds therein. So now it is the Government which must give us water, Government which must give us health, and for our very education we must cringe at the door of Government. The tree which used to bear its own blossoms now stretches its withered branches upwards, petitioning for a rain of flowers from on high. What if its prayer be granted,—of what avail to it would be such make-believe bloom?

The state is the sovereign power in England. The old-time *raja-shakti* in our country was different. In England the state is mainly responsible for the well-being of the people, but in India this was so only to a limited extent. Not that the king had not to maintain and reward the sages who gave free education to the people in religion and science,—but that was only in part. The real responsibility lay on the house-holder. If the king stopped his grants, or even if the land was kingless, these primary activities of the community would not suffer any serious check.

Not that the king did not provide water-reservoirs for the people, but no more than what all wealthy men considered it their duty to do. The neglect of the king could not dry up the water resources of the country.

In England every one is at liberty to pursue his self-interest, his personal comforts and amusements. They are not burdened with communal duties. All the greater cares rest on the state. In our country it was the king who was comparatively free, and on the people was cast the burden of their civic obligations. The king warred and hunted,—whether he spent his time attending to matters of state, or to his personal pleasures, was a matter for which he might be accountable to *dharma*, but on which the people did not leave their communal welfare to depend. The responsibility for this was divided in a wonderfully adaptive way among the members of the community themselves.

For this reason, what we understand as *dharma* permeated the whole social fabric; each one had to practise the discipline of self-restraint, each one had to conform to *dharma*.

This shows that the seat of life of different civilisations is differently placed in the body politic. Where the responsibility for the welfare of the people lies, there beats the heart of the nation; and, if a blow should fall thereon, the whole nation is wounded unto death. In England the overthrow of the state would mean destruction for the nation. But disaster can only overtake our country when its social body, its *Samaj*, is crippled. That is why we have never staked our all to resist a change of sovereignty, but have clung with might and main to the freedom of our *Samaj*. It is, I say, because all good works depend in England upon the state, and in India upon the social organisation, that in England to save the state is to save the country, and for India to live is to preserve her social institutions.

Naturally, England is busy keeping the state ever alert, eternally vigilant. And we, having read in her school, have come to the conclusion that the continual poking of Government out of its indifference is the whole duty of the Indian man. We somehow seem to have become incapable of understand-

ing that putting a blister on someone else's body is not a way to cure one's own malady.

We love to argue, and here it may be argued whether or not it is better to centralise the business of public welfare in the hands of a specialised Government rather than leave it loosely spread over every member of the community. What I say is, that this may be a good subject for a debating club, but its discussion cannot lead us anywhere, for in England the state depends on the continued good will of the people, which has been evolved by a natural process. We cannot get to this state by discussion and though it be perfection itself, we must perforce do without it!

The Government in our country—the *Sarkar* has no relations with our social organisation—the *Samaj*; so that whatever we may seek from the former must be paid for out of our freedom. From whichever of its duties our *Samaj* seeks relief by getting it done by the *Sarkar*, to that extent will it be disabled with an incapability which was not of its essence in the past. To-day we are striving, of our own accord, to place in the hands of the *Sarkar* the whole duty of our *Samaj*. So long

many a new sect has arisen in our *Samaj*, each with its own special manners and customs, without protest or penalty from the larger body. Now we are crystallised into rigidity by the Englishman's law, and every departure is compelled to declare itself non-Hindu. The innermost core of our *Samaj*, which we have been carefully guarding within our bosoms, through the ages, is at last exposed to outside aggression. That is the calamity,—not water-scarcity.\*

In the old days those who were decorated by the Imperial power of the Moghuls, and called to share its counsels, did not find their fullest satisfaction in these honours. They gave a higher place to the approval of their own *Samaj*. And for the highest reward, which even Delhi had not in its gift, they had to come and stand at the cottage door of the village of their birth. Acknowledgment as a high-souled member of the community by the meanest there, meant more than the highest Maharajaship conferred by the *Sarkar*. In those days they had learnt to value apprecia-

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\* The original paper was read on the occasion of a Government resolution bearing on water scarcity.

tion by the Motherland in the very depths of their being; and the pomp of the metropolis, or the glories of the imperial audience-chamber never succeeded in drawing their hearts away therefrom. Therefore, there was no water-scarcity then, and all the adjuncts of true human culture were to be found in the life of the village.

To-day, it adds not to our happiness that our countrymen should hail us as blessed, and so does our endeavour fail to be directed towards our country. It has now become necessary for requests and reminders to come to us from the *Sarkar*. There is nothing within us to impel us to take the natural course ourselves for, have we not signed away our birthright to the white man,—are not our very tastes put up for sale in his shops?

I feel I may be misunderstood. I do not mean that each one of us should cling to the soil of his native village, and that there is no need to stir outside it to gain knowledge or recognition. The Bengali cannot but be grateful to the forces of attraction which have drawn him out, roused his faculties, and broadened his mind by widening his sphere of

activity. But the time has come to remind the sons of Bengal that they must not turn topsy-turvy the natural relations of within and without. Men go abroad to earn, and come home to spend. To make the best use of our powers in the outside world, we must keep our heart true within. But, as the last Provincial Conference showed only too clearly, we have now changed all that. We went to confer with our provincial brethren, but our language was foreign. We have learnt to look upon the English-educated man as our next-of-kin, and cannot realise that all our politics are futile if we cannot make one with us the whole community, from the highest to the lowest. We have become used to keeping the great mass of our countrymen outside our deliberations, and so have set up an impassable barrier between them and ourselves. We have, from the very first, spared no effort or artifice to win the heart of England, but have clean forgotten that the heart of our own country is of greater value, and requires at least as much of striving for its conquest.

The ultimate object of political work is to mould the mind of the people into one. It

is only in our unfortunate country that the idea finds place of calling a series of operations designed to capture the mind of the foreigner by the name of political education. If we acknowledge the winning of our own country to be the supreme gain, we must cast aside the foreign methods which we have learnt to consider so necessary in business matters, and bring full into our view the avenues which have always been open, and still are available, as thoroughfares to the heart of the motherland.

Let us try and imagine what we should have done if we really had some message which we wanted to deliver to the country. Instead of getting up a meeting in the English style we should have organised a grand *mela*. There arrangements for play and song and festivity galore would bring crowds hurrying from the most distant places. There we could hold our markets and our exhibitions of home-made goods and agricultural produce. There we could award prizes to our bards and reciters and those who came to sing or play. There we could arrange lantern lectures on sanitation. There we could have heart to

heart talks with each other, and bethink ourselves of ways and means, in regard to all matters of national interest,—and with gentle and rustic alike we could hold communion in our own language.

Our countrymen are mainly villagers. When the village desires to feel in its veins the throb of the greater life of the outside world the *mela* has always been its way of achieving that object. The *mela* is the invitation of the village to the world into its cottage home. On such festive occasion the village forgets its narrowness in a hospitable expansion of heart. Just as in the rains the water-courses are filled with water from the sky, so in *mela* time the village heart is filled with the spirit of the Universal.

These *melas* are altogether a natural growth in our country. If you call people to a formal meeting they come burdened with doubt and suspicion and it takes time for their hearts to open. But those who come to a *mela* are already in the open, holiday mood, for they have left plough and hoe and all cares behind. So, that is the place and time to come and sit by the people and hold converse with them.

There is not a district in Bengal where, at different times in the year and at suitable places, *melas* are not held. We should make a list of these times and places to begin with, and then take pains to make acquaintance with our own people through this open door.

If the leaders of the country will abjure empty politics, and make it their business to give new life and objective to these *melas*, putting their own heart into the work and bringing together the hearts of Hindu and Muslim, and then confer about the real wants of the people,—schools, roads, water reservoirs, grazing commons and the like,—then will the country soon awaken into life.

It is my belief that if a band of workers go about, from district to district, organising these *melas* of Bengal, furnishing them with new compositions by way of *jatras*, *kirtans* and recitations, with bioscope and lantern shows, gymnastics and legerdemain, then the money question will give no trouble. In fact, if they undertake to pay the zamindars their usual dues on being allowed to make the collections, they will stand to make considerable profit. And if this profit be used for

national work, it would result in uniting the organisers of the *mela* to the people with a stronger tie, and would enable them to get acquainted with every detail of the life of the country. The valuable functions they could then perform in connexion with national awakening would be too numerous to recount.

Religious and literary education has always been imparted in our country in the midst of the joy of festivity. Now-a-days, for one reason or another, the zamindars have been drawn away to the metropolis, and the festivities on the occasion of the weddings of their sons and daughters are limited to the dinners and nautches given for their rich town-friends, the poor tenants being often called upon to pay extra impositions for the purpose. So the villages are losing all their joy, and the religious and literary culture, which was a feature of all festivity, and used to be the solace of man, woman and child alike, is getting to be more and more beyond the means of ordinary people. If our suggested band of organisers can take back this current of festivity to the villages, they will reclaim the

desert into which the heart of the nation is fast lapsing.

We should also remember that the drying up or pollution of our reservoirs is not only a cause of water-scarcity, but of disease and death as well. So also, many of our *melas*, originating in the name of some religious festival, have degenerated, and far from being a source of education are becoming centres of corruption. Fields which are neglected not only do not yield crops, but breed noxious weeds. If we do not rescue these institutions from such foul decay we shall be guilty before our country and our *dharma*.

I have said this much to give an example of how we can approach our countrymen in a natural way, and also to give an idea how, by organising and regulating our existing institutions, it may be possible to make them fruitful of untold blessings to the country at large.

Those who are unable to pin their faith on petitioning the Government as the highest form of political activity, are dubbed pessimists by the opposite school. That is to say, they think that we refuse to beg because we are pessimistic as to the quantity or quality

of the alms. But, let me say as clearly as I can that I have never been one of those who seek the consolation of the grape-forswearing fox, and that I have never preached the superiority of self-determination because of the big stick with which Government goes for over-impudent beggars. On the contrary, I say that a dependence on the favours of others is the sign of the truly pessimistic wretch. I refuse to be a party to the attitude that unless we bend our knees and fold our hands there is no hope for the country. I believe in our country and I have a great respect for the powers of our people. And, above all, I know for certain that if our present unity be not a realisation of India's essential oneness from within, if it be something depending on the changing of his mood by the foreigner, then is it doomed to repeated futility.

Therefore, it is always incumbent on us to inquire and find out what is the true way of India. To establish a personal relationship between man and man was always India's main endeavour. Our relationships extended to the most distant connections, continued unrelaxed with children even when grown up,

and included neighbours and villagers irrespective of race or caste. The householder was bound by family ties to preceptor and teacher, guest and wayfarer, landlord and tenant,—not ties prescribed by religion or law, but of the heart. Some were as fathers, others as sons, some as brothers, others as intimates. Whomsoever we came into contact with we drew into the circle of relationship. So we never got into the habit of looking on man as a machine, or a tool, for the furtherance of some interest.

There may be a bad as well as a good side to this, but it was the way of our country,—nay more, it is the way of the East.

We saw this in the Japanese war. War is doubtless a mechanical thing now-a-days and those who engage in it have to act and become as parts of a machine. And yet every Japanese soldier was something more than a machine. He was not reduced to a blind piece of war material, nor to a blood-thirsty brute. They all remained related to their Mikado and their country in a reverential self-dedication. So in our old days, our warriors did not go to their death like pawns

moved by an unknown player, but, through their chiefs, each of them dedicated himself to the *Ksahtr -dharma*. No doubt this made the ancient battle-field resemble a vast sacrifice of self-immolation : and the westerner may exclaim that it was magnificent, but not war : but the Japanese by not neglecting their pristine magnificence, while making efficient modern war, won the admiration of East and West alike.

Anyhow, that is our nature. We are unable to turn necessity to account unless we first purify it with the touch of personal relation. And so we have often to take on ourselves extra burdens. The ties of necessity are narrow and confined to the place of business. If master and servant are merely so related, their commerce is confined to the giving and taking of work and wages ; but if personal relations are brought in, then is the burden of each cast on the other through the whole gamut of their respective joys and sorrows.

Let me give a modern illustration of what I mean. I was present at the Provincial Conferences of Rajshahi and Dacca. Of

course we all looked on the work of the Conference as a serious piece of business, but what took me by surprise was, that the demands of hospitality, and not of the business of the day, were the more conspicuous—as if we had accompanied a bridegroom to his wedding—and the requirements of our comfort and our amusement were so insistent that they must have strained our hosts to the limit. If they had reminded us that we had come to do patriotic work and that there was no reason to suppose that we had laid them under some eternal obligation, they would have been justified. But it is not our characteristic to admit business as an excuse for keeping to one's own concerns. However business-like our modern training may be making us, the host must still be above mere business considerations. We cannot allow even business to remain untouched by the heart. And so at the Conferences we were less impressed by the business done than by the hospitality received. Those meetings of our countrymen, with all their western paraphernalia, were unable to get rid of their eastern heart. So, also, with the Congress, that much of it which

is truly national—its hospitality—has played an abiding part in the national regeneration, while its work ends with its three-day's session and is heard of no more during the rest of the year.

This eastern hospitality, which is of India's very nature, is a source of great joy to her when it can be offered on a grand scale. The individual hospitality of the householder used to be expanded in the old days into a vast *Yajna* in order to find its completest realisation. That, however, was so not in the distant past only. When India got this recent opportunity of throwing open her guest-house once more, she was over-joyed, and India's Goddess stepped in and took her long unused seat. And thus it happened that, even in the midst of the outrageously outlandish speechifying and clapping of hands in our Congress and Conferences, our Mother smiled on us once more, happy that she could serve out of her humble store to each one of her guests, albeit understanding but little else of what it was all about! She would have been happier still if, instead of this book-learned, this watch-and-chain-bedecked assembly, she had found

rich and poor, cultured and rustic, invited and uninvited, gathered together as in the *yajnas* of old, to join this festivity. Perhaps in such case, there would have been less of material to go round, but the Mother's blessing would have fallen in richer abundance.

However that may be, what I was saying is, that India is unwilling to forego the sweetness of human relationship even in her work and business, and is ready to take on herself the extra burdens so arising. That is why, in the past, no outsider has had to be concerned with the succour of the helpless, the teaching of the young, the sheltering of wayfarers, or any other public good work. If to-day the old samajic bonds have ceased to hold, and if the giving of water and health and learning be no longer possible from within the broken-up Samaj, even that need not cause us to despair.

Hindu Dharma has always shown the way for every householder to transcend the narrowness of home or parish and relate himself to the universal. Our householder is still in the habit of making his daily offerings of *pancha-yajna* to the Gods, the

rishis, ancestors, humanity and all creatures. Why should it not be possible for him to maintain the same high relations with his country? Could we not set apart every day some offering, be it the smallest coin, be it half-a-handful of rice, in the name of our country? Would it be too much to ask of our Hinduism that it should unite us in concrete relations with this India of ours, the resort of our gods, the retreat of our rishis, the motherland of our ancestors? The relation of good works with our own land,—are we not to gain that for each one of ourselves, rather than leave it to others, taking our hearts off elsewhere?

We are ceaselessly bewailing the draining out of our money, but is it a thing of less moment that our heart should be enticed away? Does our patriotism, then, consist simply in urging others to do all good work, and is that what all our Congresses and Conferences are content to be busy with? No, that can never be! This state of things cannot last long in our country, for it is not of India's nature. We who have uncomplainingly shared our hard-earned little with our

destitute relations and connections without considering that to be any extraordinary sacrifice,—shall we say that we are unable to bear the burden of supporting our Mother? Is the foreigner to be for ever doling out alms, and we crying ourselves hoarse because the doles are not generous to our liking? Never, never! Each one of us shall, for every day of our lives, take up the burdens of our country. This shall be our glory, this is our *dharma*. The time has come when each of us must know that he is not alone, that, insignificant though he be, he cannot be neglected, nor must he neglect the meanest.

If to-day we should say to one: "Go and work for your Swadeshi Samaj," he would be utterly puzzled to make out how, where, on what and for whom he is to work. It is perhaps just as well that each individual should not be capable of deciding for himself his own programme of work. Therefore there must be a centre. Our bands of workers are often successful in making their enthusiasm blossom forth, but they fail to carry on till fruition. There may be many a reason for this, but one reason is, that they are unable to realise the

oneness of their party, and thus to maintain it. So each one's slackening responsibility gradually slips off his shoulders and cannot find a place. Our *Samaj* cannot afford to go on any longer in this way, because the opposing force, which is seeking to devour it, is well-knit and organised in its unity, and moreover has introduced its tentacles through and through our social fabric, from our educational institutions to the shops dealing with our daily necessities. In order to save ourselves from its fatal embrace, our *Samaj* must make the firmest stand in its united strength. And the only way is, to anoint some *Samaj-pati* to be our chief, and then for each one to rally round him as the symbol and representative of our union, not deeming it derogatory to render him the fullest obedience, for he shall represent the spirit of Freedom itself.

Such *Samaj-pati* may sometimes be the best of men, and sometimes not, but if the *Samaj* be alive and alert, that will not matter, for the worst of them can do it no permanent injury. On the other hand, the anointment of such a Chief is the best way to keep the *Samaj* in full vigour,—by dint of continually

realising its strength in that of its representative it will become unconquerable. Under the Samaj-pati there will, of course, be subordinate leaders for each convenient division of the country, who will see to the doing of all needful good works and be responsible to the Samaj-pati for their due performance. I have suggested that each one should set apart a small voluntary contribution for his country as a matter of daily habit. This could be amplified by larger contributions out of expenditure on all festive occasions. In our country, where voluntary contributions have founded rich monasteries and built monumental temples, it should be easily possible for the Samaj to be adequately maintained, especially when by its good works it would be entitled to the gifts of the grateful as well.

A little consideration will convince anyone how necessary it is to have a centre to which the *shakti* of the country may flow, where it will accumulate, and from which it can be appropriately distributed. No doubt we should contrive, as best we may, that disease should not gain entrance from without, but what if, in spite of us, it does come? Are we not to

have our internal vital force ready to combat it? If such force be there, no outside aggression can reduce us to lifelessness, for its very *dharma* is to cure wounds, to co-ordinate efforts, and to maintain the fullest consciousness.

Even the Government is in the habit of bestowing titles for good work, but we can only be truly rewarded when we receive the benediction of our own country. Such power of reward, therefore, must also be placed in the hands of our Samaj, else shall we deprive ourselves of a potent source of self-satisfaction. Lastly, there is the Hindu-Moslem friction, which it must be the duty of our Swadeshi Samaj to eradicate by equity of treatment and regulation of communal interests—failing this, repeated disruptions will only weaken it more and more.

Let us not mistrust our own *shakti*, for it is clear that the time has come. Know for certain that India has always been endowed with the power of binding together. Through adverse circumstances of every kind she has invariably succeeded in evolving an orderly system, so does she still survive. On this India I pin my faith. Even to-day, at this very moment, she is wonderfully adapting her-

self to recent conditions. May it be vouchsafed to each of us to co-operate with her consciously,—not to succumb to material considerations and go against her.

This is not the first time that India has come into contact with the outer world. When the Aryans first came in, violent antagonisms were set up between them and the first inhabitants. The Aryans won, but the non-Aryans were not exterminated, as were the American and Australian aborigines. In spite of their different manners and modes of thought, they found a place in the Aryan polity. And, in their turn, they contributed variety to the Aryan *Samaj*.

Later there came another and more prolonged period of disruption. So long as Buddhism prevailed, there was intimate commerce between India and every kind of foreigner. Such intimacy was far more serious for her than any conflict, for, in the absence of the latter the instinct of self-preservation is not awake, and indiscriminate mingling threatens to turn into disorganisation. That is what happened in the Buddhist age. During that Asia-wide religious inundation, widely differ-

ing ideals and institutions found entry unchecked.

But even when weltering in that vast chaos, India's genius for synthesis did not desert her. With all that she had before, and all that had come upon her, she set to work to reconstruct her *Samaj* afresh, and in the midst of all this multifarious diversity she preserved and consolidated her unity of Ideal. Even now many ask, where in all these self-contradicting, mutually-conflicting differences is the unity of the Hindu religion, of the Hindu *Samaj*? It is difficult to give a clear answer. The larger the circumference, the harder it is to locate the centre; but nevertheless the centre exists. We may not be able to lay our finger on the spot, but each one of us knows that the unity is there.

Then came the Mohamedans. It cannot be said that they did not influence our *Samaj*. Synthetical re-actions began almost immediately, and a common ground was in course of preparation where the boundary lines between Hindu and Muslim were growing fainter and fainter. The followers of Nanak, of Kabir, and the lower orders of Vaishnavas are cases

in point. But our educated classes do not keep in touch with the makings and breakings which are going on beneath the surface of the Samaj, among the common people. Had they done so they would have known that these reactions have even now not ceased to work.

There has lastly come yet another religion with its different manners, customs and educational methods. And so now all the four great religions of the world are here together—Hinduism, Buddhism, Mohamedanism and Christianity. It is evident that India is God's chemical factory for the making of a supreme religious synthesis.

Here, however, we must take note of one thing. The long and thorough disorganisa-tion which characterised the Buddhist age, left behind it a shrinking timidity in the succeeding Hindu Samaj—an utter dread of novelty or change—which still persists. This constant fearfulness is hampering its further progress, and makes it difficult for it to rise superior to obstacles. Any Samaj, which concentrates all its attention on sheer self-preser-vation, cannot freely move or act and comes to a state of death in life.

The barriers within which the Hindu Samaj then entrenched itself with all it could gather together, caused India to lose her place in the world. Once India was the world's *guru*, for her free thought ranged fearlessly over reli-gion, philosophy and science, far and wide. But from that high seat she is now deposed,—and that because fear has entered into her soul.

Our timidity has caused us to stop all voyag-ing on the high seas,—whether of water or of wisdom. We belonged to the universe but have relegated ourselves to the parish. Our *shakti* has become the womanish *shakti* of thrift and conservation, and our masculine adventurous curiosity has owned defeat. Our treasure, which used to multiply by commerce, is now hoarded in the zenana store-room; it increases no longer, and whatever we may lose out of it is lost for good.

We must realise that every nation is a member of humanity and each must render an account of what it has created for the weal of mankind. By the measure of such contribu-tion does each nation gain its place. When any nation loses its creative power, it hangs

limp-like a paralysed limb, for there is no virtue in mere continued existence.

India never sallied forth for domination, nor scrambled for spoils. China, Japan and Tibet, who are so careful to bar their windows against the advances of Europe, welcomed India with open arms as their *guru*, for she had never sent out armies for plunder and pillage, but only her messages of peace and good will. This glory, which India had earned as the fruit of her self-discipline, was greater than that of the widest of Empires.

When, with the loss of our glory, we with our bundled-up belongings were huddled together in our corner, it was high time for the Britisher to come. At his onslaught the defensive barriers of our crouching, run-away *Samaj* began to give way in places, and through the gaps the Outside, in dread of which we had shrunk into ourselves, came hurtling in upon us. Now who shall thrust it back? With this breaking down of our enclosure we discovered two things—how wonderfully strong we had been, how miserably weak we have become.

And to-day we have likewise understood that this policy of funk will not do. The true way of self-defence is to use our inherent powers. The policy of protection by imitation of the conqueror is a self-delusion which will not serve either,—the imitation cannot prevail against the reality. I repeat, therefore, that the only way to stem the tide of waste of heart and taste and intellect is, to become our true selves, consciously, actively and with our full strength. Our dormant *shakti* must awake at the impact of the outside, for, to-day the world stands sorely in need of the priceless fruits of the discipline of our ancient Rishis. God will not allow these to go to waste. That is why, in the fulness of time, He has roused us by this agony of suffering.

The realisation of unity in diversity, the establishment of a synthesis amidst variety,—that is the inherent, the *Sanatan* Dharma of India. India does not admit difference to be conflict, nor does she espy an enemy in every stranger. So she repels none, destroys none; she abjures no methods, recognises the greatness of all ideals; and she seeks to bring them all into one grand harmony.

By reason of this genius of India, Hindu, Moslem and Christian need not fight here for supremacy, but will find common ground under the shelter of her hospitality. That common ground will not be un-Hindu, it will be more especially Hindu. And, however foreign the several limbs may be, the heart will still be the heart of India.

If we but realise this God-given function of India, our aim will become true, our shame will depart from us, and we shall revive the undying *shakti* of India. Before that great day comes, call once on the Mother!—the One Mother who, through the ages, has been nourishing her children from her eternal store of wisdom and truth, preserving them from destruction, drawing them nearer one another, and to Herself.

We had once learnt to despise riches, to make poverty beautiful and glorious. Shall we to-day insult our Sanatan Dharma by falling prostrate before money? Shall we not once more be fit to serve our Mother; to build anew her fallen house, by taking up a clean, disciplined, simple life? It was never reckoned a shame in our country to eat off

plantain leaves—the shame was in eating by oneself alone. Shall we not get back this sense of shame? Shall we not be able to forego some of our comforts, some of our luxuries, so that we may have enough to serve to all our brethren? Will that which was once so easy for us become impossible to-day? Never!

Even in her uttermost extremity India's tremendous power has secretly and calmly regained victory for herself. I know for certain that this school-taught obsession of ours will never be able to prevail over that imperishable power. I know for certain that the deep note of India's call has already found a response in our hearts, and that, unknown to ourselves, we are slowly but surely going back to her.

Here, standing at the crossing of the ways, with face turned towards Home, and eyes fixed on the pure light of its sacred lamp, call once on the Mother!

## THE WAY TO GET IT DONE

Date of original—1905-6

**T**HE river may think that it divides a country, but it really brings one part nearer another by carrying commerce and keeping open a permanent way. In a disunited country foreign domination is just such a unifying agency; and it is as the instrument of divine providence for this purpose that British Rule in India has been touched with glory. This process of unification will go on even though England does not like it.

History has shown that no permanent good can be gained by one set of men at the expense of another. Only in a harmonious development is to be found that permanent force of coherence which we call *Dharma*. If the harmony be destroyed, so is the *dharma* and—*Dharma eva hato hanti*—if the *dharma* be destroyed, it destroys in turn. Britain has been made great by her Empire. If now she tries to keep India weak, her greatness cannot last, but will topple over

of itself,—the weakness of a disarmed, effete and starving India will be the ruin of the British Empire.

Few have the gift of taking a broad comprehensive view of politics, especially when greed stands in the way. If any system of political exploitation should fix its ambition on the permanence of India's connexion, then such a system is bound to overlook the very factors essential for such connexion. A permanent connexion is against the law of Nature. Even the tree has to yield up its fruit, and any artificial attempt to prolong its hold can only result in a shortening of its natural term.

To make a subjugated country weak, to keep it distracted in disunity, to prevent the natural growth of its powers by refusing to allow their exercise, and thus to reduce it to lifelessness,—this is England's policy of the day when world-entrancing flowers have ceased to bloom in her literature and only thorny politics flourish in overwhelming luxuriance; when pity has ceased to well up for the weak, the unfortunate, the downtrodden; when only the expansion of dominion is accounted great-

ness ; when deeds of daring have given way to aggressive exploitation, and the selfish cult of patriotism has usurped the place of religion.

Whether this state of things in England is unfortunate for us in India, or otherwise, will depend upon ourselves. A clearer vision of Truth is to be obtained in the day of tribulation, and without the vision of Truth there is no hope for any people. God has been visiting us with suffering in order to bring it home to us that we cannot gain by petitioning what it is our own duty to earn, and that expenditure of words is mere waste where service alone will do. So long as these simple truths are not realised by us, sorrow on sorrow, contumely on contumely, will be our lot.

We must first of all understand one thing clearly. If moved by some secret, underlying apprehension, the Government should choose to put obstacles in the way of our growing unity, to protest is worse than useless. Can we contrive any form of words clever enough to give them the assurance that we desire for ever to be under the British Empire as our *summum bonum*? And are

they of such infantile innocence as to believe it? All we can say—and it will be clear enough even if we do not say it—is, that we have use for the British connexion only so long as we are unable to evolve a secure and lasting union among the differing elements which exist within India,—and no further.

Such being the case, if the Englishman looking to his own selfish interests—selfish albeit glorified with the name of Empire—should say that it is high time for him to set about consolidating his position by refusing to allow us to be united, then what reply have we to give him except in the shape of the purest of platitudes? If when the woodman is about to ply his axe, the tree should cry: “Stay, else I lose my branch.” and the woodcutter should reply: “I know, I am here because I want it!”—is there any room for further argument?

But we have learnt that in Parliament they debate: one party replies to the other party: and the winning party rejoices in its victory. So we cannot get rid of the idea that success in debate is final. We forget the difference. There the two parties are the right and left

hands of the same body, and are both nourished by the same power. Is it the same here? Are our powers and those of the Government derived from the same source? Do we get the same shower of fruit when we shake the same tree? Please do not look into your text books in answering this question. It will be of no avail to know what Mill has said, and Herbert Spencer has said, and Seeley has said. The book of the country lies open before us, and the true answer is there.

To put it briefly, it is for the master to call the tune, and we are not the master. But the lover of argument will not be silenced. Do we not pay so many crores of taxes, and is not the power of Government based on our money? Why not ask for an account to be rendered? But why, oh why does not the cow brandish her horns and ask for an account of the milk that has gone to fatten the plump young hopefuls of her lord and owner?

The simple truth is that methods must vary with circumstances. If the British prime Minister wants to get some concession out of the French Government, he does not try to get the better of the French President in argu-

ment, nor does he preach to him high moral doctrine,—he makes some diplomatic move, and for that reason expert diplomats are permanently employed. There is a story that once upon a time when England was friendly with Germany, an English Duke left his seat at dinner to hand a table napkin to the Kaiser—this, it appears, largely advanced his cause. There was also a day when the Englishman had to bow and scrape at the durbar of the great Moghul, smilingly and with infinite patience to put up with repulses, spend any amount of money and toil in gratifying his satellites, in order to gain his object. This sort of thing is inevitable if concessions have to be won from adverse hands.

And yet in this impotent country of ours, what possesses us to think that constitutional agitation will serve with our all-powerful Government? Agitation may raise butter from milk, but not if the milk be in the dairy, and the agitation at home. Granted that we are only asking for rights and not favours,—yet when the rights are barred by limitation, that means the same old begging from the person in possession. Our Government is not a machine,—it is run by creatures of flesh

and blood, with a good dash of passion in their composition, who have by no means come here purged of all earthly weaknesses. So, to put them in the wrong is not the way to make them mend their ways.

We never pause to consider the nature of our circumstances, of the object of our desires, and the means and methods best fitted thereto. Just as victory is the sole end of war, so is success in gaining the object the end of politics. But even if we admit this in words we fail to realise it in action. That is why our political meetings are conducted like a debating club, as if the Government is a rival school-boy whom to silence is to defeat! But as men may die under the most scientific treatment, so have we failed of our object in spite of the most splendid oratory.

May I make a personal confession? For my part, I do not worry myself overmuch about what the Government does, or does not, do for us. I count it silly to be a-tremble every time there is a rumbling in the clouds. First of all, a thunderbolt may or may not fall; secondly, we are not asked to assist in the counsels of the thunderbolt factory, nor

will our supplications determine its course; and lastly, if the thunderbolt is at all to be diverted that cannot be done by making a counter-demonstration of feebler thundering, but only by using the proper scientific appliances. The lightning conductor does not fall from the skies, like the lightning itself; it has to be manufactured patiently, laboriously and skilfully down below, by our own efforts.

It is no use fretting against the laws of nature. The winged ant may complain about the inequity of its getting burnt, but if it flies into the flame, the inevitable will nevertheless happen. So, instead of wasting time over a discussion of the equities, it is better to keep the fire at a respectful distance. The Englishman is determined to maintain his hold upon India at any cost, so that whenever he finds anything working loose he is bound to hammer in a nail or two, promptly and vigorously, in order to fix it firmly again. Merely because we can speak good English, or chop subtle logic, he is not likely to give up this very business-like habit of his. And whatever else we may or may not do about it, it is futile to lose our temper.

One thing we should always remember,—how very small we figure in the Englishman's eyes. He rules us from a remote corner of his vast political arena. All his attention and skill are absorbed in steering through the troubled waters of Europe and of his colonies. We who inhabit a fringe of his unwieldy empire,—our likes and dislikes, our effusions and tantrums, alike leave him cold. Hence the soporific power of Indian debates in Parliament.

The Englishman passes through this country like flowing water; he carries no memory of value away with him; his heart strikes no root in its soil. He works with the prospect of furlough in his mind, and even for his amusements he looks to his compatriots alone. His acquaintance with our language is confined to the depositions of witnesses and with our literature to translations in the Government Gazette. How little of his view we subtend we are apt to forget and so are every now and then taken by surprise at his callousness towards us. When we blurt out our feelings, he in turn, naturally considers such expression an exaggeration, which sometimes provokes irritation and sometimes only a smile.

I am not saying all this by way of formulating a charge against the Englishman but merely to point to the facts as they are, and naturally must be. How can the high and mighty have a vision keen enough to discern in detail the agonies, however heart-rending, the losses however vital, of what is so very small? So what seems to us of immense moment is negligible to his perceptions. When we rage and fume over the partition of this little province of ours, or of some problem concerning this petty municipality of ours, or this education or literature of ours, we are astounded at not getting results proportionate to our outcry. We forget that the Englishman is not of us, but over us; and if ever we should reach the olympian heights where he dwells, only then could we know at what a distance we are and how ridiculously diminutive we look.

It is because we appeared so small to him that Lord Curzon asked with naive surprise why we were so absurdly unable to appreciate the glory of being merged in the British Empire. Just think of it! To be compared with Australia, Canada, and the rest, for

whose imperial embrace the Britisher is pining, at whose window he sings such moving serenades, for whose sake he is even willing to allow the price of his daily bread to mount up! Could his lordship have been serious? But whatever Lord Curzon may have felt when making this extravagant suggestion, our feelings were much the same as those of the lamb ceremonially invited, along with the guests, to join the feast! So are we called to glory within the British Empire. There, if tropical areas are to be brought under cultivation, it shall be our function to furnish cheap indentured labour; it shall be our right to supply funds for expeditions against poor, inoffensive Tibet; and if there be a rising of the oppressed in Somaliland, it shall be our privilege to die in its suppression. Only thus can both big and small participate in a common glory.

But, as I say, that is a natural law over which it is no use making our eyes either red or moist. In all that we do, it is enough to bear in mind what the natural law is. If we appeal to the Englishman on the ground of lofty morality and say: "Rise superior to the

level of ordinary humanity and subordinate the interests of your country to those of India!" suppose he retorts: "Look here, we'll listen to your preaching later on, but will you first have the goodness to come down to our very ordinary level, and place the interests of your country before your own selfish ones; if you cannot give up your life, at least give up your money, your comforts, anything at all, for your country. Are we to do everything for you, and you nothing for yourselves?" What are we to say to that? What after all are we doing, what are we giving? If we had only kept ourselves acquainted with our country, that would have been something,—but so lazy are we, we know next to nothing about her. The foreigner writes our history, we translate it; the foreigner discovers our grammar, we cram it! If we want to know what there is next door, we have to look into Hunter. We gather no facts first hand,—neither about men, nor commerce, nor even agriculture. And yet, with such crass indifference on our own part, we are not ashamed to prate about the duties of others towards our country. Is it any wonder that our empty fulminations should be so utterly

futile? The Government is at least doing something and has some responsibility. We are doing nothing and have none. Can there be any real interchange of counsels between two such parties? And so it happens that on the one hand we get up agitations and hold indignation meetings and vociferate to our heart's content and then, the very next day, swallow the most unpalatable humiliations so completely that no doctor, even, has to be called in!

I do hope that my readers will tell me that I am uttering the stalest truisms. The truths—that we must look after our own interests, carry on our own work, wipe away our own shame, earn our own welfare, do everything ourselves—are certainly not new. And I shall glory in any censure that may be passed on me because of their triteness. What I dread is lest any one should accuse me of advocating something new-fangled, for then must I confess ignorance of the art of proving self-evident things. It is the sign of a critical condition indeed, if the simple should appear difficult and old truths come as a surprise, or rouse honest indignation!

However, I have wandered of nights on the vast sandbanks of the Padma, and I know how, in the darkness, land and water appear as one, how the straightest of paths seem so confused and difficult to find; and when in the morning the light dawns, one feels astonished how such mistakes could have been made. I am living in the hope that when our morning comes, we shall discover the true path and retrace our steps.

Moreover, I am not sure that all of us are wandering in the same darkness. There are many enthusiastic young fellows whom I know, who are willing to spend more than words in the service of their country. Their difficulty is, they do not know what to do about it, where to go for advice, what service is to be rendered and to whom; to spend oneself without method and without organisation would be mere waste. If there had been some centre of our *shakti*, where all could unite; where thinkers could contribute their ideas, and workers their efforts; then there the generous would find a repository for their gifts. Our education, our literature, our arts and crafts, and all our good works would range themselves round such

centre and help to create in all its richness the commonwealth which our patriotism is in search of.

I have not the least doubt in my mind that the rebuffs which we are meeting from the outside are intended by Providence to help this centre of our *shakti* to become manifest within the nation; our petitions are being thrown back to us in order that we may turn our faces towards such centre; and the pessimism which is spreading amongst the feckless, workless critics of the government is due, not to the smart of any particular insult, or the hopelessness of any particular concession, but to the growing insistence of an inward quest for this centre.

If we can establish such centre in our midst, our persuasions and arguments may be addressed to it and will then acquire meaning and become real work. At this centre we can pay our tribute, there we can devote our time and energy. It will be the means of evoking and giving full play to our intellect, our capacity for sacrifice and all that is great and deep in us. To it shall we give, and from it shall we receive, our truest wealth.

If our education, our sanitation, our industries and commerce radiate from such a centre, then we shall not, off and on, be kept running after orators to get up public meetings to protest against some wrong, to ventilate some grievance. These sudden awakenings and outcries, by fits and starts, followed by a relapse into the silence of somnolence, is getting to be ludicrous. We can hardly talk about it seriously any more, not even to ourselves. The only way to put a stop to this farce is to take upon ourselves the whole duty of our National Progress.

Let no one think that I am advocating a policy of sullen aloofness. That would only be another form of sulking, which may have its place in a lover's quarrel, but not here. What I say is the reverse. I am for courteous, diplomatic relations with the Government. In courtesy there is freedom. A relationship which is forced on us is but a form of slavery and cannot last. Free relations may mature into friendship later on.

Some of us seem to think that if only we could get all we are asking for from the Government, a state of effusive friendliness

would be sure to arise. But that is contrary to experience. Where can one find the end to begging on the one hand, and granting of favours on the other? As our *shastras* put it, you cannot quench a flame by pouring oil thereon. The more the beggar gets, the more does he want and the less is he satisfied. Where getting depends, not on the earning of the recipient, but on the generosity of the giver, it is twice accurst,—it spoils both him that takes and him that gives.

But where the relationship is one of give and take on both sides, of an exchange of benefits, there amicable arrangements are always possible, and the gain to both is real. This can only be brought about if we establish our power on a foundation of good works. Mutual concessions between two powers are graceful as well as permanent, pleasing and honorable to both parties. That is why I say that, in order to get from the Government what is due from it to the country, up to the last farthing, the only way is to render in our turn the services which our country may expect from us ourselves, likewise to the last farthing. We may demand only by the measure of what we do give.

Here it may be asked, what if the Government should use its forces to hinder our rendering true service to the country? That, of course, is possible. Where interests are adverse such attempts are only to be expected. But that is no reason for our giving it up as a bad job. We should remember that it is not an easy matter to obstruct a person who is honestly engaged in doing his duty. Moreover we must not confuse such obstruction with the arbitrary withdrawal of favours. Take for instance the matter of self-government. We are crying ourselves hoarse because what Lord Ripon wanted to give, some other Lord took away. Shame on us for attaching such value to what others can give and others can take away. It was only our folly which led us to call such a thing by the name of self-government.

And yet self-government lies at our very door, waiting for us. No one has tried, nor is it possible for any one even if he does try, to deprive us of it. We can do everything we like for our villages—for their education, their sanitation, the improvement of their communications,—if only we make up our

minds to set to work, if only we can act in unison. For this work we do not need the sanction of a government badge.....But what if we cannot make up our minds? What if we will not be united? Then are there not ropes and stones enough for us to go and drown ourselves?

I repeat that our education is the thing which we should first of all take into our own hands. The doubter will ask, who will then provide us with lucrative posts? That, also, we shall take upon ourselves. If the work of the country be in our own hands, where is the difficulty in remunerating those who do it? He who provides the employment is bound to be the master,—it cannot be otherwise. And in assessing our wages the foreign master will naturally not be neglectful of his own pocket. All the more reason, therefore, why the whole field of work, including education as an essential part, should be under our own control. We complain of the want of opportunity for acquiring technical knowledge. But we know to our cost that, if the master be an outsider, he will take particular care not to allow us any real opportunity.

I know my critics will say that the matter now begins to sound difficult. I do not hesitate to admit it. If it had not been difficult, it would not have been worth doing. If some one wants to go a-voyaging on a petition-paper boat in quest of the golden fleece, a certain class of patriots may be attracted by this fairy-tale proposition, but I would not recommend anyone to risk real national capital in the venture. It is difficult to build a dike, and easy to get up a constitutional agitation asking the waters to recede,—but the latter is not a way out of the difficulty. To get something ultra cheap makes one feel extra clever, and when the cheap thing collapses under the strain of work, it is comforting to put the blame on some one else; but in spite of all these consolations the fact remains that the work fails to get done.

To consider all responsibilities as being light in one's own case and heavy in the case of others, is not a good moral code. When sitting in judgment on the behaviour of the British towards ourselves, it is well to take note of the difficulties in their way and their human weaknesses. But when searching out

our own lapses, there must be no invention of excuses or palliations, no lowering of the standard on grounds of expediency. And so I say, the rousing of indignation against the British Government may be an easy political method, but it will not serve to lead us to our goal. Rather, the cheap pleasure of giving tit for tat, of dealing shrewd blows, will detract from the efficient pursuit of our own path of duty. When a litigant is worked up into a state of frenzy, he thinks nothing of staking and losing his all. If anger be the basis of our political activities, the excitement itself tends to become the end in place of the object to be achieved. Thereupon side issues assume an exaggerated importance, and all gravity of thought and action is lost. Such excitement is not an exercise of strength, but a display of weakness.

We must give up all such pettiness and found our political work on the broad basis of love of country,—not on dislike of, or dependence upon others. This dislike and this dependence may seem to be opposite states of mind, but they are really twin branches of the same tree of impotence. Because we decided that our

salvation lay in making demands, dislike was born of our disappointment. We then jumped to the conclusion that this new feeling of ours was Patriotism,—gaining at one stroke profound consolation and an elevating pride!

Just think for a moment of the mother from whom the care of her child is taken away and entrusted to another. Why is she inconsolable? Because of her exceeding love. The same anxiety to do our best for our country by our own efforts may alone be called Patriotism,—not the cleverness of shifting that duty on to the foreigner, which is not true cleverness either, for the duty does not get done.

## THE ONE NATIONALIST PARTY

Date of original—1908

IT may be that, because I do not belong to any party, I have had an opportunity of viewing the conflict which took place in the last Congress from a better perspective. It is but natural that those who had to bear the shock of actually witnessing the rupture should have been led to believe it more vital than it may yet prove to be; yet it is not a healthy sign to keep alive as a painful memory an event which in fact has wholly passed away. The sinking pulse of the nation has begun to throb with a new life, and we must not be disheartened if an occasional spasm checks for a time the healthier symptoms of returning activity. We should remember that the shock received may well be overcome by the very vitality, the sudden influx of which was its cause; nay more, it may be simply a measure of the exuberance of returning health. When the dead wood breaks, it breaks for

ever; but the cut limb of a living tree blossoms forth with all the greater vigour. Let us, therefore, by the display of a like healthy activity, cease to allow this national wound to fester. Let the recovery be a signal for renewed effort, chastened by a humble acceptance of the lesson which has been taught us.

The lesson is this, that we must not be impatient of this variously manifested life, which is so great a contrast to the deathlike uniformity of our former stupor. We must not only be tolerant of all shades of differences of opinion, but must re-adjust our methods so as to give each of them full scope to do its share in the building up of the larger whole. Without providing for and profiting by the education that this process will involve, self-government will remain but an empty phrase.

In no free system of government is the expression of any shade of popular opinion ever suppressed. The action and reaction of each and every opposing force is allowed to strengthen and determine the ultimate resultant. Even the Labour and the Socialist parties, whose programme involves nothing short of a revolution in the existing

European system, have their due place in the Parliaments of the nations to which they belong. What is the secret of the co-operation of the representatives of such widely divergent creeds? It is nothing more or less than that submission to discipline which, during their magnificent struggles for freedom, has been ingrained as a necessary instinct in the character of the European peoples, and which to-day is enabling them to evolve unity of action and strength of purpose out of the turmoil of parliamentary debates.

In our Congresses and Conferences there is no such underlying responsibility of action. They have been brought into existence and are maintained simply as a means of awakening the National Consciousness and strengthening the National Will. If then, in an assembly convened for this great purpose, and composed of the pick of our cultured men, no toleration is shown, much less scope given, for the workings of the varied ideals, which are but the necessary outcome of such culture, then we do but show the poverty both of our attainments and of our capacity.

Let me not be misunderstood as for a moment counselling that superficial unity, which is the result of the denial or the sacrifice of differences. Neither is that possible nor can it be wholesome. But just as centripetal and centrifugal forces, working under the same general law, have made the evolution of the universe possible, so in all constitutional assemblies some recognised procedure is needed, a loyal submission to which will enable rival ideals vigorously to contend for supremacy without breaking away into disruption; in other words, a boiler is necessary if the steam that has been generated is to work to useful purpose.

So long as the Nation was lifeless and the Congress unanimous, the want of a constitution was not felt. Now that the Nation's heart is beating, let the Nation's brains direct the work of the limbs. A National Congress broken up into separate sectarian conventions would be a sorry spectacle indeed.

Hindus and Mussalmans have for centuries been brought up together in the arms of the same Motherland, yet how far apart are we

still! Until the defect of our character, which makes all this possible, is removed, difficulties will never cease to beset each step of our political career, and none of our larger hopes are destined to advance towards fruition. If only we can overcome our own weakness, we shall be able to laugh at all outside attempts to set us against each other; for such attempts are bound to be shortlived. The Government has not the fuel wherewith to feed the temporary blaze for which it is responsible, and if it had, it would be the first to send post-haste for the nearest fire-engine! Even the monarch cannot afford to set fire to the cottage of the lowliest of his subjects, lest the flames should be blown palacewards.

When a new party springs up, cleaving its way through the resisting fibres of the old, it is often mistaken for an intruder; and the first impulse is to hustle it out of the way. In its attempts to assert itself, the new party may be forgiven, if its demeanour is not marked by that calm which is characteristic of natural growth, and if as a consequence of the incivility of its reception, it displays a certain hostility of attitude. Nevertheless,

the new is nothing but wholly natural and is moreover indissolubly bound to the old as a further link in the chain of cause and effect. Any temporary bickering, therefore, which may arise between the two is not of any great moment; and in Bengal, at least, we may confidently assert that the new spirit has leavened the whole country and that the old and new parties have coalesced into the one and only Nationalist party.

The fact of the people not succumbing, but rising superior, to every demonstration of a tyrannical power, may lead us, no doubt, into endless discomfort and tribulation, but I cannot refrain from asking you to be cheered by this sign of life, for it shows that nature is not wholly dead within us,—that we are at least still capable of feeling acute pain. I, for one, am unwilling to admit that insensibility is a virtue.

Now a peculiarity of extremism is, that it is easily developed, but difficult to check. Our extremist rulers did not perhaps realise, when they let themselves go, that they would end by going so far. I can very well believe, that the higher authorities were not prepared for

the excesses committed by their underlings when they got out of hand, but the latter are, after all, made of flesh and blood, and are quick to take the contagion of irresponsibility.

It is much the same on the people's side. Our popular extremist manifestations are equally impatient of control; and it is a very difficult matter to say which, if any, leader is responsible for a particular set of opinions or actions. Besides, it should be borne in mind, that the distinction between Extremist and Moderate is not of our making,—it is the Britisher's black mark which draws the line, and we know not always when and where it is placed, or for what purpose.

I repeat, therefore, that there is no *party* of extremists with whom the Government has to deal. It is a symptom of the Nationalist movement, which cannot be cured as long as the exciting causes continue to operate, and if suppressed in one form will break out with equal virulence in another, or at most, be driven to bide its time in the innermost recesses of the Nation's heart.

Natural phenomena of the human mind are often ascribed to sectarian malevolence by

those whom they displease. In the Eighteenth Century, Europe held religion to be an artificial creation of self-seeking priests, and doing away with the priesthood was deemed to be an effectual remedy for the mischief. Hinduism is similarly thought by its opponents to be the outcome of a Brahminical trade guild, which would cease to exist if a wholesale deportation of brahmins could only be effected. In the same way, our rulers seem to be labouring under the idea that this explosive extremism is being concocted in some secret laboratory by a vicious gang of malcontents and that once the real leader can be hauled up before a Magistrate the danger will be over.

This may be good enough for them. Let us however endeavour to look a little more deeply. The increased facility of travel, the study of history, the unity of government, and the strenuous efforts of the Congress party, combined to give us glimpses of such ideas as that the Country is one, that the Nation is one, that whether in joy or in sorrow our Destiny is one, and, that, unless we discover the ties which unify us and endeavour to strengthen them, we are doomed. But these occasional

glimpses did not enable us to put our whole heart into our labours. A realisation of the complete truth could only avail us.

Wondrous are the ways of Truth made manifest! Things that were once preached in vain by the wise have become the commonplace of the people, and everybody is saying to his neighbour: "Yes, it is true—Work is better than slavery." For the Bengali, who knew only how to serve, is not this a wonderful thing to say? And so the rich man's son goes forth to learn the weaver's trade, and the gentleman's son hawks country cloths from door to door, and the brahmin's son proudly puts his hand to the plough. Thus does a Vision triumph where mere words availed not.

For the individual as well as for the nation, Freedom is always the ultimate goal, but, as our *shastras* have pointed out, in our own nature are hidden the obstacles to its attainment, and they must first be removed by work. Work, therefore, and not argument, least of all bickering, is the duty immediately before us,—work such as will give us vitality, and remove that taint in our national character, which is

at the root of our poverty and disunion, our mutual distrust and our subjection. And, in order for it to be possible for us to unite, we must above all be self-contained, and learn, like the truly strong, to control both speech and action; else will the field of work be again and again a field of strife.

You may be absolutely certain that not a fraction of your wealth, which has enabled England to take the leading place among the nations, will be willingly relinquished. The task that lies before us is, therefore, no child's play, and will tax to the uttermost all our strength and all our patience. Those who, by unnecessary display and uncalled for loudness, are adding to already well-nigh insurmountable difficulties, are seriously imperilling the cause they would serve. We must unflinchingly take up each and every incident of our task. We must free our industries, control our education, strengthen our community, and be prepared to strain every nerve in this stupendous endeavour. But we must not and shall not make a luxury of irresponsible strife, within or without.

Do not imagine that I say this in fear or

from caution. I know what suffering is. I recognise and worship suffering as a gift of God. But for that very reason it must not be lightly taken. Only the weak are driven by it to unseemly demonstration or abject prostration. We must distinguish between the stormy and the strong, the braggart and the brave, self-assertion and self-realisation, if we would learn the lesson that sorrow has to teach.

Now, how are we to set about building the place of work? The higher the tower, the broader must be the foundation, and if we desire a national edifice rising to the height of our aspiration we must work up from each and every district. Our Provincial Conferences should scatter branch organisations throughout the country, whose first and foremost duty would be the collection of every possible information; for precise knowledge must precede all efficient work.

Then again, for the organisation to be strong, the component units must be developed and each village must therefore be made self-dependent. They must have their schools, their work-shops, their grain *golas*, their co-operative stores and banks; and they must

be assisted and encouraged to found them and taught to maintain them. Each village community should further have their common meeting place both for work and play and where their appointed headmen may hear and settle their disputes and differences.

Moreover, as long as the landowner and the tiller of the soil go their respective ways in isolation, neither will thrive. The time has come when co-operative methods must step in and prevent the results of our labour from sliding down that inclined plane which leads into the foreigners' granary. Modern labour-saving appliances must be freely utilised and this cannot be done without combination. Improved power looms, more efficient sugar-cane-crushing machines, appliances for utilising jute, the manufacture of dairy products on a large scale, all these require the produce of many fields and homesteads to be brought to a common centre. Such co-operative village centres will, however, be attended by none of the well-known evils which follow in the wake of large-scale town factories.

If even one such model village community could be organised, the example would spread

rapidly throughout the country. But until this can be even partially accomplished, a central organisation can have no meaning. Where no circumference exists, how is a centre possible?

And we, who are frittering away our energies in our impatience to get at the reins of some such central government, how few of us are even aware of the actual condition of what we would govern. As the European mills are killing our handicrafts, so is the all pervading machinery of an alien Government destroying our simple old village organisations. Nowhere do we see any signs of the former activities. The water stores are drying; the pastures are no longer kept inviolate; temples are falling into decay; and the unlettered sons of the village pundits, who used to be the cement of the community, are earning a precarious livelihood by giving false evidence. The rich whose pleasures used to be shared by the poor, are being drawn away to the cities; and how well their functions of assisting the helpless and protecting the weak are being performed by the *Darogas*, who have taken their place, you know only too well.

There is no high altruistic ideal, nor any living example of self-sacrifice before the eyes of the people; no moral sanctions or prohibitions are at work amongst them; and they are protected from sheer anarchy only by the artificial letter of a soulless law. Rival factions are frantically tearing each other to pieces with the weapon of false litigation, while the village is fast growing into a jungle, and malaria devastating the land. Famine recurs in ever narrowing cycles, and the surplus stores which used to feed the people between harvests are fast dwindling into nothingness. There is no manhood left to repel the dacoit or the policeman, the thief or the thief-catcher, when they come to plunder and to ravage. As for food-stuffs, where are they? Milk is prohibitive in price, ghee adulterated, fish a rarity and the oil rank poison. And while our indigenous diseases are sitting enthroned on our enlarged livers and spleens, a host of foreign visitations have likewise come to stay.

No food, no health, no joy, no hope, no man to help his neighbour. When the blow comes, heads are bent to receive it; when death arrives a passive embrace is offered. When

injustice is suffered, the blame is cast on the evil star; and neighbours in their trouble are left to Providence. Why is all this? Because of the canker at the root. The soil which is to sustain has dried up. The village community, the mother of nations, is moribund—its life-giving institutions are uprooted and are floating like dead logs down the stream of time. Shall we then sow nothing new, nor make any attempt to revivify the soil? Shall we, like other nations that have departed, be content to watch with listless and vacant gaze the slow extinction of our race? No! These are not an unconnected series of disasters, to which we must bow as to a decree of fate. These, together with that deadly resignation, which by continually dwelling on death hastens its approach, are mere symptoms of our comatose condition.

And I say to you, the darkness of the critical night already begins to disappear and the breaking dawn shines through the window, bringing hope to the brightening eye of the convalescent sufferer. We the educated and gentle classes, who were once the friends and protectors of the people, and who in the pride

and luxury of our newly acquired attainments were slowly drifting further and further away from them, are once more about to return to our neglected duties, and, breaking down the barrier of our artificial differences, unite with the masses in building up the common-wealth that is to be. Let us be up and doing; for the time has come and is fast passing away. This separation, which was allowing our life-blood to ooze away, was at the bottom of our weakness. Re-union will bring back the healing vitality, which will cure our insensibility to pain and, along with it, the pain itself.

We do not always realise how, as the result of aloofness, our national consciousness has ceased uniformly to permeate the body politic. When, at the instigation of the city leaders, the Swadeshi spirit caught on in the villages, we from a safe distance watched the *jagaddal* stone of the punitive police being placed on the prostrate breasts of village after village. We have all heard, in our fairy tales, of the world-crushing jagaddal stone. Did we ever consider what it felt like to be under it? No, we did not! for then our very sense of suffocation would have impelled every

limb to take part in bearing its weight. Of the crime for which it was the punishment, we are all equally guilty. If we all join in sharing its weight, it will cease to be a burden and become a source of national uplifting.

In this connection I would appeal to our *zamindars*. Unless they put their hearts into the matter of giving fresh life to the villages, the work can never be thoroughly done. Let them not be afraid that the returning strength of the ryot will be a menace to their self-interest. To seek to remove all obstacles in the way of irresponsible dominion is like carrying dynamite in one's pocket,—when chaos comes the arm of oppression smites back the carrier. Let the ryots be strong, so that even the temptation to oppress may not exist. Is the zamindar a shop-keeper, that he should calculate only his petty takings? Unless he sedulously cultivates his ancestral privilege of giving, he will soon find the remnants of his power departed.

Nor must we imagine that spending in charity from a distance will do any good. Sometime ago, I had come to know that a highly placed police official, not content with

wantonly destroying the valuable nets of certain fishermen, had, under pretence of a local enquiry, made over their village to plunder and rapine. I called the fishermen to me and offered to pay for the services of a counsel from Calcutta to assert their rights. "Karta!" said they with folded hands, "what shall it profit us to gain a law suit? The Police will remain with us always." I thought within myself: "It is indeed so—gaining an advantage is the greatest of misfortunes for the weak. The operation may be brilliantly successful, but the patient does not survive."

There is a story that the Kid once went weeping to *Brahma* and said, "Lord, how is it that I am food for all the creatures?" To which *Brahma* replied, "What can I do, my son? When I look on you, I feel tempted myself!" Even the gods cannot get justice done to the helpless and undeserving. Why then do we persist in vainly seeking it at the hands of Government and Parliaments? Besides, do you not see that the present day statesmanship of our rulers consists in endeavours to keep us just as we were? The very man who, in the exercise of his judicial

functions on the Police Commission, declared the police guilty, finds it necessary in his administrative capacity to protest, in lachrymose accounts, against the slightest chance of injury to their fangs. They are afraid that if the kid be made too tough for other jaws, it may prove less succulent to their own palate. Verily are the gods the slayers of the weak!

And lastly, devoted youths, who you have, regardless of all risks, volunteered in your country's cause, accept at my hands the blessings of your Motherland. You have been the first to rise with the roseate dawn and take upon yourselves the arduous doing and cruel suffering of the day's work that lies before us. The advent of your awakening manliness has been heralded not by the thunder of strenuous battle alone, but the soft clouds of love have also poured their mercies on the thirsty land. The down-trodden and depised, who had become callous to insults and oblivious of even the rights of their humanity, have today learnt under your kindly ministration the meaning of the word "brother."

The troubles of India's oppressed children

are not confined to a particular time or place; nor may you hope that your noble efforts will always suffice to save and protect them. Teach them to be strong and to protect themselves; for that is the only way. Take, each of you, charge of some village and organise it. Educate the villagers and show them how to put forward their united strength, so that they may in co-operation better their wretched lot. Look not for fame or praise in this undertaking. Do not expect even the gratitude of those for whom you would give your life, but be prepared rather for their opposition. Let the thought sustain you, that when the dying man pushes away his friend, it is then that the friend is most sorely needed. Vow only to bear a portion of the suffering that you see around you, and the way to its cure will be vouchsafed unto you.

If our Provincial Conferences can help to spread sheltering and fruitful branches over each village, then will our country be really ours; and with the flow of life in the veins, the functions of the Congress as the heart-centre will become real; and India will enthrone it in her breast.

I have endeavoured to point out the fundamental facts on which the determination of all our work depends, Let me place these once more before you:

(1) Unless we can move with the times we are lost.

(2) The watchword of the day is organisation ; of whatever other qualities we may be possessed, we are powerless unless we organise ourselves against organised encroachment.

(3) Our national consciousness does not yet fully and uniformly pervade our organism. While we are busy strengthening one spot another grows weak. The classes must carry their work into the midst of the masses and thus destroy the separating barriers.

(4) The desired unity and intensity of the national consciousness cannot be brought about by argument or persuasion. The many points of artificial difference that separate the sophisticated classes from the masses are so many bars to the proper growth and spread of this consciousness.

(5) Lastly, internecine conflict among the cultured classes cannot but retard the consum-

mation. Let the ultimate be relegated to the future, and all matters of dispute be confined to the debating assemblies. Different ways and methods there may and must be, but there can be no possible difference in regard to the necessity for embarking without loss of time on the dread sea of work we have to cross.

My brethren, let us place before our eyes those fields of *Karma*, vast and broad, whereon, in different periods of the world's history, the divinity in man has shone forth its brightest. Let us profoundly salute those divine men who amidst direst suffering and sacrifices untold, lived and died to give their country the highest *Siddhi*. Let us not, immersed in the tumults of the hour, forget ourselves and mistake the satisfaction of pride for success. We of to-day will be gone to-morrow; but our *Karma* with its endless sequence of cause and effect will accumulate, from generation to generation, giving substance and form to the uprising Nation.

In the midst of our poverty and squalor, let us conjure up that bright and cloudless future wherein our grandsons may be able proudly to say: All this is ours, all this we

have built up. These fields we have made to be fertile, these waters to be pure, this atmosphere healthy. All this knowledge we have spread abroad and from our hearts cast out all fear. And they will say: Ours is this amply-watered, sweetly fruitful, zephyr-cooled land. Ours this people established in right, maintained in labour, and self-controlled in manliness. Wherever we cast our eyes, we see at work our ideals and our efforts. All is filled with our life, and glad with our joyful songs. And the earth quivers with the unwearied tread of pilgrims journeying along the numberless paths which open into the Promised Land.

## EAST AND WEST IN GREATER INDIA

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THE History of India,—of whom is it the history?

This history began with the day when the white-skinned Aryans, overcoming all obstacles natural as well as human, made their entry into India. Sweeping aside the vast enveloping curtain of forest, which stretched across her from East to West, they brought on the scene sunny fields adorned with corn and fruit, and their toil and skill thus laid the foundation. And yet they could not say that this India was exclusively their India.

The non-Aryans became fused with the Aryans. Even in the first blush of the latter's victorious supremacy, they used to take to themselves non-Aryan girls in marriage. And in the Buddhist age such intermingling became freer. When, thereafter, the Brahminic Samaj set to work to repair its barriers and make its encircling walls impregnable, they found some

parts of the country come to such a pass that brahmins of sufficiently pure stock could not be found to conduct the vedic ceremonies, and these either had to be imported, or new creations made by investiture with the sacred thread. The white skin, on the colour of which the difference between Brahmin and Sudra had originally been founded, had meanwhile tarnished into brown. The sudras, with their different manners and ideals, gods and rituals, had been taken into the social polity. And a larger Indian, or Hindu, Samaj had been evolved which not only was not one with the Aryan Samaj of the vedic times, but in many respects even antagonistic.

But was India able to draw the line of her history there? Did Providence allow her to make the assertion that the History of India was the history of the Hindus? No. For, while in Hindu India the Rajputs were busy fighting each other in the vanity of a suicidal competition of bravery, the Mussalmans swept in through the breaches created by their dissensions, and scattering themselves all over the country they also made it their own by living and dying on its soil.

If now we try to draw the line here crying : " Stop ! Enough ! Let us make the History of India a history of Hindu and Muslim ! " will the Great Architect, who is broadening out the history of humanity in ever-increasing circles, modify his plan simply to gratify our pride ?

Whether India is to be yours or mine, whether it is to belong more to the Hindu, or to the Moslem, or whether some other race is to assert a greater supremacy than either, —that is not the problem with which Providence is exercised. It is not as if, at the bar of the judgment seat of the Almighty, different advocates are engaged in pleading the rival causes of Hindu, Moslem or Westerner, and that the party which wins the decree shall finally plant the standard of permanent possession. It is our vanity which makes us think that it is a battle between contending rights,—the only battle is the eternal one between Truth and untruth.

The Ultimate, the Perfect, is concerned with the All, and is evolving itself through every kind of obstacle and opposing force. Only to the extent that our efforts assist in the progress of this evolution can they be

successful. Attempts to push on oneself alone, whether made by individuals or nations, have no importance in the processes of Providence. That Alexander did not succeed in bringing the whole earth under the flag of Greece was merely a case of unsatisfied ambition which has long ceased to be of concern to the world. The preparation of Rome for a world-empire was shattered to pieces by the Barbarians, but this fall of Rome's pride is not bewailed by the world to-day. Greece and Rome shipped their golden harvests on the bark of time,—their failure to get a passage on it, for themselves as well, proved no loss, but rather lightened its burden.

So, in the evolving History of India, the principle at work is not the ultimate glorification of the Hindu, or any other race. In India, the history of humanity is seeking to elaborate a specific ideal, to give to general perfection a special form which shall be for the gain of all humanity;—nothing less than this is its end and aim. And in the creation of this ideal type, if Hindu, Moslem or Christian should have to submerge the aggressive part of their individuality, that

may hurt their sectarian pride, but will not be accounted a loss by the standard of Truth and Right.

We are all here to co-operate in the making of Greater India. If any one factor should become rebellious and arrogate to itself an undue predominance, that will only interfere with the general progress. The section which is unable or unwilling to adapt itself to the entire scheme, but struggles to keep up a separate existence, will have to drop out and be lost, sooner or later. And the component which, realising its dedication to the ultimate ideal, acknowledges its own individual unimportance, will lose only its pettiness and find permanence for its greatness in that of the whole.

So, for ourselves, we must bear in mind that India is not engaged in recording solely our story, but that it is we who are called upon to take our place in the great Drama, which has India for its stage. If we do not fit ourselves to play our part, it is we who shall have to go. If we stand aloof from the rest, in the pride of past achievement, content with heaping up obstacles around ourselves, God will

punish us, either by afflicting us with sorrow unceasing till He has brought us to a level with the rest, or by casting us aside as mere impediments. If we insist on segregating ourselves in our pride of exclusiveness, fondly clinging to the belief that Providence is specially concerned in our own particular development; if we persist in regarding our *dharma* as ours alone, our institutions as specially fit only for ourselves, our places of worship as requiring to be carefully guarded against all incomers, our wisdom as dependent for its safety on being locked up in our strong rooms; then we shall simply await, in the prison of our own contriving, for the execution of the death sentence which in that case the world of humanity will surely pronounce against us.

Of late the British have come in and occupied an important place in India's history. This was not an uncalled for, accidental intrusion. If India had been deprived of touch with the West, she would have lacked an element essential for her attainment of perfection. Europe now has her lamp ablaze. We must light our torches at its wick and

make a fresh start on the highway of time. That our forefathers, three thousand years ago, had finished extracting all that was of value from the universe, is not a worthy thought. We are not so unfortunate, nor the universe, so poor. Had it been true that all that is to be done has been done in the past, once for all, then our continued existence could only be a burden to the earth, and so would not be possible.

With what present duty, in what future hope, can they live who imagine that they have attained completeness in their great grandfathers,—whose sole idea is to shield themselves against the influence of the Modern behind the barriers of antiquated belief and custom?

The Englishman has come through the breach in our crumbling walls, as the messenger of the Lord of the world-festival, to tell us that the world has need of us; not where we are petty, but where we can help with the force of our Life, to rouse the World in wisdom, love and work, in the expansion of insight, knowledge and mutuality. Unless we can justify the mission on which the Englishman

has been sent, until we can set out with him to honour the invitation of which he is the bearer, he cannot but remain with us as our tormentor, the disturber of our quietism. So long as we fail to make good the arrival of the Englishman, it shall not be within our power to get rid of him.

The India to which the Englishman has come with his message, is the India which is shooting up towards the future from within the bursting seed of the past. This new India belongs to humanity. What right have *we* to say who shall and who shall not find a place therein. Who is this "We"? Bengali, Marathi or Panjabi, Hindu or Mussalman? Only the larger "We" in whom all these,—Hindu Moslem and Englishman, and whosoever else there be,—may eventually unite shall have the right to dictate who is to remain and who is to leave.

On us to-day is thrown the responsibility of building up this greater India, and for that purpose our immediate duty is to justify our meeting with the Englishman. It shall not be permitted to us to say that we would rather remain aloof, inactive, irresponsive, unwilling

to give and to take, and thus to make poorer the India that is to be.

So the greatest men of modern India have all made it their life's work to bring about an approachment with the West. The chief example is Rammohan Roy. He stood alone in his day for the union of India with the world on the broad base of humanity. No blind belief, no ancestral habit was allowed to obscure his vision. With a wonderful breadth of heart and intellect he accepted the West without betraying the East. He, alone, laid the foundation of new Bengal.

Rammohan Roy cheerfully put up with persecution in order to extend the field of our knowledge and work, right across from East to West, to gain for us the eternal rights of man in the pursuit of Truth, to enable us to realise that we too had inherited the earth. It was he who first felt and declared that for us Buddha, Christ and Mohammed have spent their lives; that for each one of us has been stored up the fruits of the discipline of our Rishis; that in whatsoever part of the world whosoever has removed obstacles in the path

of wisdom or, breaking the bondage of dead matter, has given freedom to man's true *shakti*, he is our very own, and through him is each one of us glorified.

Rammohan Roy did not assist India to repair her barriers, or to keep cowering behind them,—he led her out into the freedom of Space and Time, and built for her a bridge between the East and West. That is why his spirit still lives with us, his power of stimulating India's creative energies is not yet exhausted. No blind habit of mind, no pettiness of racial pride, were able to make him commit the folly of rebellion against the manifest purpose of time. That grand purpose which could not have found its fulfilment in the past, but is ever marching onwards to the future, found in him a gallant, unflinching standard bearer.

In the Deccan, Ranade spent his life in the making of this same bridge between East and West. In his very nature there was that creative faculty of synthesis which brings men together, builds up the *samaj*, does away with discord and inequity and circumvents all obstacles in the way of knowledge, love and

will-power. And so he rose superior to all the petty or unworthy considerations prevalent in his time, in spite of all the various conflicts of ideas and interests between the Indian and the Englishman. His largeness of heart and breadth of mind impelled him to make a lifelong endeavour to clear the way for an acceptance of whatever elements in the British are of value for the true History of India, and to strive for the removal of whatever obstructions stand in the way of India's attainment of perfection.

And the *mahatma* who passed away from us only the other day—Swami Vivekananda—he likewise took his stand in the middle, with the East on his right, the West on his left. His message was not to keep India bound in her latter-day narrowness by ignoring in her history the advent of the West. His genius was for assimilation, for harmony, for creation. He dedicated his life to opening up the high road by which the thought-treasure of the East may pass to the West, and of the West to the East.

Then there was the day when Bankim-chandra invited both East and West to a

veritable festival of union in the pages of his *Bangadarshan*. From that day the literature of Bengal felt the call of time, responded to it, and having thus justified herself, took her place on the road to immortality. Bengali literature has made such wonderful progress because she cut through all the artificial bonds which would have hampered her communion with the World literature, and regulated her growth in such wise as to be enabled to make her own, naturally and with ease, the science and ideals of the West. Bankim is great, not merely by what he wrote, but because his genius helped to pave the way for such growth.

Thus, from whatever view-point we take a survey, we see that the epoch-makers of modern India, in whom the greatness of man becomes manifest, are gifted, as the very essence of their nature, with that breadth of understanding in which the differences of East and West do not hurt, or conflict with, one another, but where both find their ultimate harmony.

Many of us who belong to the educated class, think that these attempts at union of the different races belonging to India are

for the purpose of gaining political strength. Thus, as in so many other cases, do we view the Great as subservient to the Small. That we in India should attain Unity, is a much greater thing than any particular purpose which our union may serve,—for it is a function of our humanity itself. That we are not succeeding in becoming united is due to some basic defect in our manhood, which also is the reason why on every side we perceive our lack of *shakti*. It is our own sin that destroys our *dharma*, which again makes for the destruction of everything else.

Our attempts at Union can only become successful when they are made from the standpoint of Righteousness, which cannot be brought within the confines of any petty pride or narrow expediency. And if Righteousness be our guiding principle these efforts will not remain restricted to the different classes of Indians alone, but the Englishman also needs must join hands in the good work.

What then are we to make of the antagonism which has arisen of late between the Englishman and the Indian, educated as well as uneducated? Is there nothing real in this?

Is it only the machination of a few conspirators? Is this antagonism essentially different in purpose from the constant action and reaction of making and breaking which are at work in the making of Indian History? It is very necessary for us to come to a true understanding of its meaning.

In our religious literature, opposition is reckoned as one of the means of union. Ravana, for instance, is said to have gained his salvation because of the valiant fight that he fought. The meaning is simply this, that to have to own defeat after a manful contest with the truth is to gain it all the more completely. To accept with a too ready acquiescence is not a full acceptance at all. This is why all science is based on a severe scepticism.

We began with a blind, foolish, insensate begging at the door of Europe, with our critical sense entirely benumbed. That was not the way to make any real gain. Whether it be wisdom, or political rights, they have to be earned, that is to say to be attained by one's own *shakti*, after a successful struggle against obstructing forces. If they be put into our hands by others, by way

of alms, they do not become ours at all. To take in a form which is derogatory can only lead to loss. Hence our reaction against the culture of Europe and its ideals. A feeling of wounded self-respect is prompting us to return upon ourselves.

This revulsion was necessary for the purpose of the History which, as I say, Time is evolving in this land of India. Of what we were receiving weakly, unquestioningly, in sheer poverty of spirit, it was not possible for us to appraise the value: therefore we were unable to appropriate it at its worth, and so to put it to use. It remained with us merely as an ornamental incubus. And when we realised this, our desire to get away from it was only natural.

Rammohan Roy was able to assimilate the ideals of Europe so completely because he was not overwhelmed by them: there was no poverty or weakness on his side. He had ground of his own on which he could take his stand and where he could secure his acquisitions. The true wealth of India was not hidden from him, for this he had already made his own. Consequently he had with

him the touchstone by which he could test the wealth of others. He did not sell himself by holding out a beggar's palms, but assessed the true value of whatever he took.

This *shakti* which was natural to our first great leader, is steadily developing itself amongst us through constantly conflicting stresses and strains, actions and reactions. Pendulum-wise do our movements touch now this extreme, now the other. An undue eagerness of acceptance and an undue timidity of rejection assail us by turns. Nevertheless are we being carried forward to our goal.

Our soul which was overburdened with uncritically accumulated foreign ideas has now swung to the opposite extreme of wholesale rejection. But the cause of the present tension of feelings is not this alone.

The West has come as India's guest; we cannot send away the visitor while the object of his visit remains unfulfilled; he must be properly accommodated. But, whatever be the reason,—whether it be some defect in our power of recognition, or the miserliness of the West in revealing itself in its truth,—if the flow of this great purpose of Time should

receive a check, there is bound to be a disastrous irruption.

If we do not come into touch with what is true, what is best, in the Englishman; if we find in him merely a merchant, or a military man, or a bureaucrat; if he will not come down to the plane in which man may commune with man and take him into confidence;—if, in fine, the Indian and the Englishman needs must remain apart, then will they be to each other a perennial source of unhappiness. In such case the party which is in power will try to make powerless the dissatisfaction of the weaker by repressive legislation, but will not be able to allay it. Nor will the former find any satisfaction in the situation; and feeling the Indian only to be a source of trouble the Englishman will more and more try to ignore his very existence.

There was a time when high-souled Englishmen like David Hare came very near to us and held up before our hearts the greatness of the English character. The students of that day truly and freely surrendered their hearts to the British connexion. The English professor of to-day not only does not succeed in exhibi-

ting the best that is in his race to his pupils, but he lowers the English ideal in their eyes. As the result, the students cannot enter into the spirit of English literature as they used to do. They gulp it down but do not relish it, and we see no longer the same enthusiastic revelling in the delights of Shakspeare or Byron. The approachment which might have resulted from a genuine appreciation of the same literature has thus received a set-back.

This is not only the case in the sphere of education. In no capacity, be it as magistrate, merchant, or policeman, does the Englishman present to us the highest that his racial culture has attained, and so is India deprived of the greatest gain that might have been hers by reason of his arrival; on the contrary, her self-respect is wounded and her powers deprived on every side of their natural development.

All the trouble that we see now-a-days is caused by this failure of East and West to come together. Bound to be near each other, and yet unable to be friends, is an intolerable situation between man and man, and hurtful withal. Therefore the desire to put an end to

it must become overwhelming sooner or later. Such a rebellion, being a rebellion of the heart, will not take account of material gains or losses; it will even risk death.

And yet it is also true that such rebelliousness can only be a temporary phase. In spite of all retarding factors our impact with the West must be made good,—there can be no escape for India until she has made her own whatever there may be worth the taking from the West. Until the fruit is ripe it does not get released from the stem, nor can it ripen at all if it insists on untimely release.

Before concluding I must say one word more. It is we who are responsible for the failure of the Englishman to give us of his best. If we remove our own poverty we can make him overcome his miserliness. We must exert our powers in every direction before the Englishman shall be able to give what he has been sent here to give. If we are content to stand at his door empty-handed we shall only be turned away, again and again.

The best that is in the Englishman is not a thing that may be acquired by us in slothful

ease; it must be strenuously won. If the Englishman should be moved to pity that would be the worst thing for us. It is our manhood which must awaken his. We should remember that the Englishman himself has had to realise his best through supreme toil and suffering. We must cultivate the like power within ourselves. There is no easier way of gaining the best.

Those of us who go to the Englishman's durbar with bowed heads and folded hands, seeking emoluments of office or badges of honour,—we only attract his pettiness and help to distort his true manifestation in India. Those, again, who in a blind fury of passion would violently assail him, succeed in evoking only the sinful side of the Englishman's nature. If, then, it be true that it is our frailty which excites his insolence, his greed, his cowardice or his cruelty, why blame him? Rather should we take the blame on ourselves.

In his own country the Englishman's lower nature is kept under control and his higher nature roused to its fullest capacity by the social forces around him. The social conscience there, being awake, compels each indivi-

dual, with all its force, to take his stand on a high level and maintain his place there with unceasing effort. In this country his society is unable to perform the same function. Anglo-Indian society is not concerned with the whole Englishman. It is either a society of civilians, or of merchants, or of soldiers. Each of these are limited by their own business, and become encased in a hard crust of prejudice and superstition. So they develop into thorough-going civilians, or mere merchants, or blatant soldiers. We cannot find the man in them. When the civilian occupies the High-Court bench we are in despair, for whenever there is a conflict between the Right and the civilian's gods, the latter are sure to prevail,—but these gods are inimical to India, nor are they worshipped by the Englishmen at his best.

On the other hand, the decay and weakness of the Indian *Samaj* itself is also a bar to the rousing of the true British spirit, wherefore both are losers. It is our own fault, I repeat, that we meet only *Burra Sahebs* and not great Englishmen. And to this we owe all the sufferings and insults with which we have to

put up. We have no remedy but to acknowledge our sin and get rid of it.

**Nayamatma balahinena labhyah**

*Self-realisation is not for the weak.*—nor the highest truth.

Neither tall talk nor violence, but only sacrifice and service are true tests of strength. Until the Indian can give up his fear, his self-interest, his luxury, in his quest for the best and the highest, in his service of the Motherland, our demanding from the Government will but be empty begging and will aggravate both our incapacity and our humiliation. When we shall have made our country our own by sacrifice and established our claim to it by applying our own powers for its reclamation, then we shall not need to stand abjectly at the Englishman's door. And if we are not abject, the Englishman need not lower himself. Then may we become colleagues and enter into mutual arrangements.

Until we can cast off our individual or *Samajic* folly; as long as we remain unable to grant to our own countrymen the full rights of man; as long as our zamindars continue to look on their tenantry as part of their property,

our men in power glory in keeping their subordinates under their heels, our higher castes think nothing of looking down on the lowest castes as worse than beasts; so long shall we not have the right or power to demand from the Englishman proper behaviour towards ourselves.

At every turn,—in her religion, in her *samaj*, in her daily practice—does the India of to-day fail to do justice to herself. She does not purify her soul by sacrifice, and so on every side she suffers futility. She cannot meet the outsider on equal terms and so receives nothing of value from him. No cleverness or violence can deliver her from the sufferings and insults of which the Englishman is but the instrument. Only when she can meet him as his equal, will all reason for antagonism, and with it all conflict, disappear. Then will East and West unite in India,—country with country, race with race, knowledge with knowledge, endeavour with endeavour. Then will the History of India come to an end, merged in the History of the World which will begin.

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