# MOTHER INDIA

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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.


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**MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE**

**Vol. LXX** **No. 8**

*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

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*Bande Mataram – I*, Vol. 6 of the Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo.

*Autobiographical Notes and Other Writings of Historical Interest*, Vol. 36 of the Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo.

*Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo*, recorded by A. B. Purani (2007 Edition).

# *SOME EARLY WRITINGS*

# INDIA RENASCENT

The patriot who passes judgment on a great movement in an era of change and turmoil, should be very confident that he has something worth saying before he ventures to speak; but if he can really put some new aspect on a momentous question or emphasize any side of it that has not been clearly understood, it [is] his bounden duty however obscure he may be to ventilate [it.]

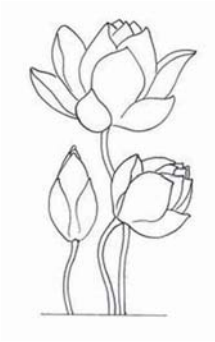
The commonplace that India is in transition has of late been strongly impressed on us by certain English empiricists; they have devoted whole articles and pamphlets to marshal proofs and enumerate instances in support of this proposition

It is time that an Indian who has devoted his best thoughts and aspirations to the service of his country, should have in his turn a patient hearing

India is indeed a snake who has rejected her outworn winter weeds

(S6: 3)

*Jottings from a notebook used by Sri Aurobindo at Cambridge in 1891 and 1892.*



# INDIA AND THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT

(Published in the newspaper *Indu Prakash* of Bombay on 26 June 1893)

A great critic has pronounced that the aim of all truly helpful criticism is to see the object as it really is. The Press is the sole contemporary critic of politics, and according as its judgments are sound or unsound, the people whose political ideas it forms, will be likely to prosper or fail. It is therefore somewhat unfortunate that the tendency of journalists should be to see the object not as it really is, but as they would like it to be. In a country like England this may not greatly matter; but in India, whose destinies are in the balance, and at a time when a straw might turn the scale, it is of the gravest importance that no delusion, however specious or agreeable, should be allowed to exist. Yet in the face of this necessity, the Indian Press seems eager to accept even the flimsiest excuse for deluding itself.

If we want a striking example of this, we need only turn to the recent vote in the House of Commons on the subject of simultaneous examinations for the Civil Service of India. On this occasion a chorus of jubilant paeans arose from the Press, resembling nothing so much as the joyful chorus of ducks when the monsoon arrives. Had then some political monsoon arrived raining down justice and happiness on this parched and perishing country? What was the fountain-head from which this torrent of dithyrambs derived its being? Was it a solemn and deliberate pronouncement by the assembled representatives of the English nation that the time was now come to do justice to India? Was it a resolution gravely arrived at in a full House, that the cruel burden of taxation which has exhausted our strength, must be alleviated without delay? Or was it a responsible pledge by a person in authority that the high-sounding promises of '58 should at last become something more than a beautiful chimera? No, it was simply a chance vote snatched by a dexterous minority from a meagre and listless House. As a fine tactical success it reflects every credit on the acuteness and *savoir faire* of our friends in Parliament, but no more expresses the real feeling of the English people than a decree of the Chinese Emperor would express it.

The vote was by no means a mandate of the British Parliament, as some have sonorously phrased it; it was merely a pious opinion. It will have to meet not only the bitter antagonism of the Indian Government, but the opposition, open or veiled, of a vast majority in the Commons. How then can it possibly be enforced? Can our handful of philo-Indian members help to eject a Government that will not ratify its empty triumph? It would be too absurd even to dream of such a thing: and even if any of them were so impossibly rash, their constituencies would quickly teach them

that they were sent to Parliament to support Mr. Gladstone and not to do justice to India. The vote is nothing but a tactical advantage; and yet on this flimsy basis we have chosen to erect the most imposing castles in the air. Yet if this were an isolated instance of blindness, it might be allowed to pass without comment; but it is only one more example of a grave illusion that possesses the Indian mind. We constantly find it asserted that the English are a just people and only require our case to be clearly stated in order to redress our grievances. It is more than time that some voice should be raised — even though it may be the voice of one crying in the wilderness — to tell the Press and the public that this is a grave and injurious delusion, which must be expunged from our minds if we would see things as they really are.

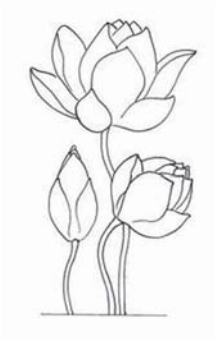
The English are not, as they are fond of representing themselves, a people panting to do justice to all whom they have to govern. They are not an incarnation of justice, neither are they an embodiment of morality; but of all nations they are the most sentimental: hence it is that they like to think themselves, and to be thought by others, a just people and a moral people. It is true that in the dull comedy which we call English politics, Truth and Justice — written in large letters — cover the whole of the poster, but in the actual enactment of the play these characters have very little indeed to do. It was certainly not by appealing to the English sense of justice that the Irish people have come within reach of obtaining some measure of redress for their grievances. Mr. Parnell was enabled to force Mr. Gladstone's hand solely because he had built up a strong party with a purely Irish policy: but we unfortunately have neither a Parnell nor a party with a purely Indian policy. We have Mr. Naoroji and Sir W. Wedderburn, both staunch friends of India; we have Mr. Swift McNeill, true son of a high souled and chivalrous race; we have Mr. Mclaren, Mr. Paul and many others pledged to champion the Congress movement: but well nigh all these are Liberal members who must give their support to Mr. Gladstone, whether he is inclined to do justice to India or no. It is evident that if we wish to obtain any real justice from the British Parliament we must secure the pledges not of individual Liberals but of the responsible heads of the party, and that is just what we are least likely to obtain. For we must remember that within the last 20 years the immense personal influence of Mr. Gladstone has been leavening and indeed remoulding English political life; and the tendency of that influence has been to convert politics into a huge market where statesmen chaffer for votes. In this political bazaar we have no current coin to buy justice from the great salesman, and if he is inclined to give the commodity gratis, he will jeopardise many of the voters he has already in his hand. What lever have we then by which we can alter the entire fuse of English opinion on Indian matters? It is clear that we have none.

Moreover the lessons of experience do not differ from the lessons of common sense. After years of constant effort and agitation a bill was brought forward in Parliament professing to remodel the Legislative Councils. This bill was nothing short of an insult to the people of India. We had asked for wheaten bread, and we

got in its place a loaf made of plaster-of-Paris and when Mr. Schwann proposed that the genuine article should be supplied, Mr. Gladstone assured him on his honour as a politician that the Executive authority would do its best to make plaster-of-Paris taste exactly like wheat. With this assurance Mr. Schwann and the Indian people were quite satisfied. Happy Indian people! And yet now that the loaf has actually reached their hands, they seem a little inclined to quarrel with the gift: they have even complained that the proportion of plaster in its composition is extravagantly large. Nevertheless we still go on appealing to the English sense of justice.

The simple truth of the matter is that we shall not get from the British Parliament anything better than nominal redress, or at the most a petty and tinkering legislation. This is no doubt a very disagreeable truth to the sanguine among us who believe that India can be renovated in a day, but we shall gain nothing by shutting our eyes to it. Rather we shall lose: for the more we linger in the wrong path, the further we shall wander from our real and legitimate goal. If we are indeed to renovate our country, we must no longer hold out supplicating hands to the English Parliament, like an infant crying to its nurse for a toy, but must recognise the hard truth that every nation must beat out its own path to salvation with pain and difficulty, and not rely on the tutelage of another. It is not within the scope of the present article to point out how this may be done. But until we recognise these simple truths, half of our efforts will fail — as they are now failing — through misdirection and want of real insight.

(S6: 7-10)



# ON 'NEW LAMPS FOR OLD'

[*A series of nine articles* — New Lamps for Old — *was published in the* Indu Prakash *from 7 August 1893 to 6 March 1894.*

*We give below Sri Aurobindo's remarks regarding those articles, sometimes to rectify incorrect statements made by biographers (put in square brackets) preceding Sri Aurobindo's observations.*]

For the first few years in India, Sri Aurobindo abstained from any political activity (except the writing of the articles in the *Indu Prakash)* and studied the conditions in the country so that he might be able to judge more maturely what could be done.

(S36: 49)

*

The public activity of Sri Aurobindo began with the writing of the articles in the *Indu Prakash.* These [nine] articles written at the instance of K. G. Deshpande, editor of the paper and Sri Aurobindo's Cambridge friend, under the caption "New Lamps for Old" vehemently denounced the then congress policy of pray, petition and protest and called for a dynamic leadership based upon self-help and fearlessness. But this outspoken and irrefutable criticism was checked by the action of a Moderate leader who frightened the editor and thus prevented any full development of his ideas in the paper; he had to turn aside to generalities such as the necessity of extending the activities of the Congress beyond the circle of the bourgeois or middle class and calling into it the masses. Finally, Sri Aurobindo suspended all public activity of this kind and worked only in secret till 1905, but he contacted Tilak whom he regarded as the one possible leader for a revolutionary party and met him at the Ahmedabad Congress; there Tilak took him out of the pandal and talked to him for an hour in the grounds expressing his contempt for the Reformist movement and explaining his own line of action in Maharashtra.

(S36: 51)

*

[*Sri Aurobindo revolved these things in his mind, and read, wrote and thought incessantly. Could not something be done? Could he not find an opportunity for service in the larger life of Bengal, — of the Indian nation itself?*]

He had already in England decided to devote his life to the service of his country and its liberation. He even began soon after coming to India to write on political matters (without giving his name) in the daily press, trying to awaken the nation to the ideas of the future. But these were not well received by the leaders of the time, they succeeded in preventing farther publication and he drew back into silence. But he did not abandon either his ideas or his hope of an effective action.

(S36: 67)

*

[New Lamps for Old*, the series of articles he published in the* Indu Prakash*, was on Indian civilisation.*]

This title did not refer to Indian civilisation but to Congress politics. It is not used in the sense of the Aladdin story, but was intended to imply the offering of new lights to replace the old and faint reformist lights of the Congress.

(S36: 67)

*

[*It is said that Sri Aurobindo was persuaded to discontinue his contribution to* Indu Prakash *by the late Mahadeo Govind Ranade*.]

The facts are: After the first two articles, Ranade called the proprietor [saying] that these articles were revolutionary and dangerous and a case for sedition might be brought against the paper. The proprietor alarmed told the editor K. G. Deshpande that this series must be discontinued. It was finally concluded that the tone should be moderated, the substance made more academic and the thus moderated articles could then continue. Sri Aurobindo lost interest in these muzzled productions, sent in numbers at long intervals and finally dropped the whole affair.

Sri Aurobindo saw Ranade at this time, his only contact; Ranade advised him to take some special subject and write about [it], he recommended Jail Reform, perhaps thinking that this writer would soon have personal experience of jails and thus become an expert on his subject!

[*Another version:*]

The facts about the articles in the Indu Prakash were these. They were begun at the instance of K. G. Deshpande, Aurobindo's Cambridge friend, who was editor of the paper, but the first two articles made a sensation and frightened Ranade and other Congress leaders. Ranade warned the proprietor of the paper that, if this went on, he

would surely be prosecuted for sedition. Accordingly the original plan of the series had to be dropped at the proprietor's instance. Deshpande requested Sri Aurobindo to continue in a modified tone and he reluctantly consented, but felt no farther interest and the articles were published at long intervals and finally dropped of themselves altogether.

(S36: 67-68)

*

[*The authorities objected to his patriotic activities.*]

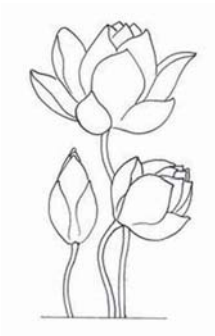
Is the reference to the Baroda authorities? Sri Aurobindo is not aware that his utterances or writings were ever objected to by them. His articles in the Indu Prakash were anonymous, although many people in Bombay knew that he was the writer.

(S36: 68)

*

When I came to Baroda from England I found what the Congress was at that time and formed a contempt for it. Then I came in touch with Deshpande, Tilak, Madhav Rao and others. Deshpande got me to write a series in the *Indu Prakash* (of which he was an editor). There I strongly criticised the Congress for its moderate policy. The articles were so fiery that M. G. Ranade, the great Maharashtrian leader, asked the proprietor of the paper (through Deshpande) not to allow such seditious things to appear in the paper, otherwise he might be arrested and imprisoned. Deshpande approached me with the news and requested me to write something less violent. I then began to write about the philosophy of politics, leaving aside the practical part of politics. But I soon got disgusted with it.

(*Evening Talks*: 568-69)



# NEW LAMPS FOR OLD — I

If the blind lead the blind, shall they not both fall into a ditch? So or nearly so runs an apophthegm of the Galilean prophet, whose name has run over the four quarters of the globe. Of all those pithy comments on human life, which more than anything else made his teaching effective, this is perhaps the one which goes home deepest and admits of the most frequent use. But very few Indians will be found to admit — certainly I myself two years ago would not have admitted, — that it can truthfully be applied to the National Congress. Yet that it can be so applied, — nay, that no judicious mind can honestly pronounce any other verdict on its action, — is the first thing I must prove, if these articles are to have any *raison d'être*. I am quite aware that in doing this my motive and my prudence may be called into question. I am not ignorant that I am about to censure a body which to many of my countrymen seems the mightiest outcome of our new national life; to some a precious urn in which are guarded our brightest and noblest hopes; to others a guiding star which shall lead us through the encircling gloom to a far distant paradise: and if I were not fully confident that this fixed idea of ours is a snare and a delusion, likely to have the most pernicious effects, I should simply have suppressed my own doubts and remained silent. As it is, I am fully confident, and even hope to bring over one or two of my countrymen to my own way of thinking, or, if that be not possible, at any rate to induce them to think a little more deeply than they have done.

I know also that I shall stir the bile of those good people who are so enamoured of the British Constitution that they cannot like anyone who is not a partisan. "What!" they will say "you pretend to be a patriot yourself, and you set yourself with a light heart to attack a body of patriots, which has no reason at all for existing except patriotism, — nay, which is the efflorescence, the crown, the summit and coping-stone of patriotism? How wickedly inconsistent all this is! If you are really a friend to New India, why do you go about to break up our splendid unanimity? The Congress has not yet existed for two lustres; and in that brief space of time has achieved miracles. And even if it has faults, as every institution, however excellent it may be, must have its faults, have you any plausible reason for telling our weakness in the streets of Gath, and so taking our enemies into the secret?" Now, if I were a strong and self-reliant man, I should of course go in the way I had chosen without paying much attention to these murmurers, but being, as I am, exceedingly nervous and afraid of offending anyone, I wish to stand well, even with those who admire the British Constitution. I shall therefore find it necessary to explain at some length the attitude which I should like all thinking men to adopt towards the Congress.

And first, let me say that I am not much moved by one argument which may possibly be urged against me. The Congress, it will be said, has achieved miracles,

and in common gratitude we ought not to expose it to any sort of harsh or malevolent criticism. Let us grant for the moment that the Congress has achieved miracles for us. Certainly, if it has done that, we ought to hold it for ever in our grateful memory; but if our gratitude goes beyond this, it at once incurs the charge of fatuity. This is the difference between a man and an institution; a great man who has done great things for his country, demands from us our reverence, and however he may fall short in his after-life, a great and high-hearted nation — and no nation was ever justly called great that was not high-hearted — will not lay rude hands on him to dethrone him from his place in their hearts. But an institution is a very different thing, it was made for the use and not at all for the worship of man, and it can only lay claim to respect so long as its beneficent action remains not a memory of the past, but a thing of the present. We cannot afford to raise any institution to the rank of a fetish. To do so would be simply to become the slaves of our own machinery. However I will at once admit that if an institution has really done miracles for us, — and miracles which are not mere conjuring tricks, but of a deep and solemn import to the nation, — and if it is still doing and likely yet to do miracles for us, then without doubt it may lay claim to a certain immunity from criticism. But I am not disposed to admit that all this is true of the Congress.

It is within the recollection of most of us to how giddy an eminence this body was raised, on how prodigious a wave of enthusiasm, against how immense a weight of resisting winds. So sudden was it all that it must have been difficult, I may almost say impossible, even for a strong man to keep his head and not follow with the shouting crowd. How shall we find words vivid enough to describe the fervour of those morning hopes, the April splendour of that wonderful enthusiasm? The Congress was to us all that is to man most dear, most high and most sacred; a well of living water in deserts more than Saharan, a proud banner in the battle of Liberty, and a holy temple of concord where the races met and mingled. It was certainly the nucleus or thrice-distilled essence of the novel modes of thought among us; and if we took it for more than it really was, — if we took it for our pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night; if we worshipped it as the morning-star of our liberty; if we thought of old myths, of the trumpets that shook down Jericho or the brazen serpent that healed the plague, and nourished fond and secret hopes that the Congress would prove all this and more than this; — surely our infatuation is to be passed by gently as inevitable in that environment rather than censured as unnatural or presuming.

If then anyone tells me that the Congress was itself a miracle, if in nothing else, at any rate in the enthusiasm of which it was the centre, I do not know that I shall take the trouble to disagree with him; but if he goes on and tells me that the Congress has achieved miracles, I shall certainly take leave to deny the truth of his statement. It appears to me that the most signal successes of this body were not miracles at all, but simply the natural outcome of its constitution and policy. I suppose that in the sphere of active politics its greatest success is to be found in the enlargement of the

Legislative Councils. Well, that was perhaps a miracle in its way. In England a very common trick is to put one ring under a hat and produce in another part of the room what appears to be the same ring and is really one exactly like it — except perhaps for the superscription. Just such a miracle is this which the Congress has so triumphantly achieved. Another conjuring trick, and perhaps a cleverer one, was the snatch vote about Simultaneous Examinations, which owed its success to the sentimentalism of a few members of Parliament, the self-seeking of others and the carelessness of the rest. But these, however much we may praise them for cleverness, are, as I hope to show later on, of no really deep and solemn import to the nation, but simply conjuring tricks and nothing more. Over the rest of our political action the only epitaph we can write is "Failure." Even in the first flush of enthusiasm the more deep-thinking among us were perhaps a little troubled by certain small things about the Congress, which did not seem altogether right. The barefaced hypocrisy of our enthusiasm for the Queen-Empress, — an old lady so called by way of courtesy, but about whom few Indians can really know or care anything — could serve no purpose but to expose us to the derision of our ill-wishers. There was too a little too much talk about the blessings of British rule, and the inscrutable Providence which has laid us in the maternal, or more properly the step-maternal bosom of just and benevolent England. Yet more appalling was the general timidity of the Congress, its glossing over of hard names, its disinclination to tell the direct truth, its fear of too deeply displeasing our masters. But in our then state of mind we were disposed to pass over all this as amiable weaknesses which would wear off with time. Two still grosser errors were pardoned as natural and almost inadvertent mistakes. It was true that we went out of our way to flatter Mr. Gladstone, a statesman who is not only quite unprincipled and in no way to be relied upon, but whose intervention in an Indian debate has always been of the worst omen to our cause. But then, we argued, people who had not been to England, could not be expected to discern the character of this astute and plausible man. We did more than flatter Mr. Gladstone; we actually condescended to flatter "General" Booth, a vulgar imposter, a convicted charlatan, who has enriched himself by trading on the sentimental emotions of the English middle-class. But here too, we thought, the Congress has perhaps made the common mistake of confounding wealth with merit, and has really taken the "General" for quite a respectable person. In the first flush of enthusiasm, I say, such excuses and such toleration were possible and even natural, but in the moment of disillusionment it will not do for us to flatter ourselves in this way any longer. Those amiable weaknesses we were then disposed to pass over very lightly have not at all worn off with time, but have rather grown into an ingrained habit; and the tendency to grosser errors has grown not only into a habit, but into a policy. In its broader aspects the failure of the Congress is still clearer. The walls of the Anglo-Indian Jericho stand yet without a breach, and the dark spectre of Penury draws her robe over the land in greater volume and with an ampler sweep.

(S6: 11-15)

# NEW LAMPS FOR OLD — II

But after all my present business is not with negative criticism. I want rather to ascertain what the Congress has really done, and whether it is so much as to condemn all patriots to an Eleusinian silence about its faults. My own genuine opinion was expressed, perhaps with too much exuberance of diction, — but then the ghost of ancient enthusiasm was nudging my elbow — when I described the Congress as a well of living water, a standard in the battle, and a holy temple of concord. It is a well of living water in the sense that we drink from it assurance of a living political energy in the country, and without that assurance perhaps the most advanced among us might not have been so advanced: for it is only one or two strong and individual minds, who can flourish without a sympathetic environment. I am therefore justified in describing the Congress as a well of living water; but I have also described it as the standard under which we have fought; and by that I mean a living emblem of our cause the tired and war-worn soldier in the mellay can look up to and draw from time to time fresh funds of hope and vigour. Such, and such only, is the purpose of a banner. One does not like to say that what must surely be apparent even to a rude intelligence, has been beyond the reach of intellects trained at our Universities and in the liberal professions. Yet it is a fact that we have entirely ignored what a casual inspection ought at once to have told us, that the Congress is altogether too unwieldy a body for any sort of executive work, and must solely be regarded as a convenient alembic, in which the formulae of our aspirations may be refined into clear and accurate expression. Not content with using a banner as a banner, we have actually caught up the staff of it with a view to breaking our enemy's heads. So blind a misuse must take away at least a third part of its virtue from the Congress, and if we are at all to recover the loss, we must recognize the limits of its utility as well as emend the device upon it.

The Congress has been, then, a well of living water and a standard in the battle of liberty; but besides these it has been something which is very much better than either of them, good as they too undoubtedly are; it has been to our divergent races and creeds a temple, or perhaps I should be more correct in saying a school of concord. In other words the necessities of the political movement initiated by the Congress have brought into one place and for a common purpose all sorts and conditions of men, and so by smoothing away the harsher discrepancies between them has created a certain modicum of sympathy between classes that were more or less at variance. Here, and not in its political action, must we look for any direct and really important achievement; and even here the actual advance has as a rule been absurdly exaggerated. Popular orators like Mr. Pherozshah Mehta, who carry the methods of the bar into politics, are very fond of telling people that the Congress

has habituated us to act together. Well, that is not quite correct: there is not the slightest evidence to show that we have at all learned to act together; the one lesson we have learned is to talk together, and that is a rather different thing. Here then we have in my opinion the sum of all these capacities, in which the Congress has to any appreciable extent promoted the really high and intimate interests of the country. Can it then be said that in these lines the Congress has had such entirely beneficial effects as to put the gag on all harsher criticism? I do not think that it can be properly so said. I admit that the Congress has promoted a certain modicum of concord among us; but I am not prepared to admit that on this line of action its outcome has been at all complete and satisfying. Not only has the concord it tends to create been very partial, but the sort of people who have been included in its beneficent action, do not extend beyond certain fixed and narrow limits. The great mass of the people have not been appreciably touched by that healing principle, which to do the Congress justice has very widely permeated the middle class. All this would still leave us without sufficient grounds to censure the Congress at all severely, if only it were clear that its present line of action was tending to increase the force and scope of its beneficence: but in fact the very contrary appears. We need no soothsayer to augur that, unless its entire policy be remodelled, its power for good, even in the narrow circle of its present influence, will prove to have been already exploited. One sphere still remains to it; it is still our only grand assurance of a living political energy in the country: but even this well of living water must in the end be poisoned or dried up, if the inner political energy of which it is the outward assurance remains as poor and bounded as we now find it to be. If then it is true that the action of the Congress has only been of really high import on one or two lines, that even on those lines the actual result has been petty and imperfect, and that in all its other aspects we can pronounce no verdict on it but failure, then it is quite clear that we shall get no good by big talk about the splendid unanimity at the back of the Congress. A splendid unanimity in failure may be a very magnificent thing in its way, but in our present exigencies it is an unanimity really not worth having. But perhaps the Congress enthusiast will take refuge in stinging reproaches about my readiness to publish our weakness to the enemy. Well, even if he does I can assure him that however stinging his reproaches may be, I shall not feel at all stung by them. I leave that for those honest people who imagine that, when they have got the Civil Service and other lucrative posts for themselves, the Indian question will be satisfactorily settled. Our actual enemy is not any force exterior to ourselves, but our own crying weaknesses, our cowardice, our selfishness, our hypocrisy, our purblind sentimentalism. I really cannot see why we should rage so furiously against the Anglo-Indians and call them by all manner of opprobrious epithets. I grant that they are rude and arrogant, that they govern badly, that they are devoid of any great or generous emotion, that their conduct is that of a small coterie of masters surrounded by a nation of Helots. But to say all this is simply to say that they are very commonplace men put into a

quite unique position. Certainly it would be very grand and noble, if they were to smother all thought of their own peculiar interests, and aim henceforth, not at their own promotion, not at their own enrichment, but at the sole good of the Indian people. But such conduct is what we have no right to expect save from men of the most exalted and chivalrous character; and the sort of people England sends out to us are not as a rule exalted and chivalrous, but are usually the very reverse of that. They are really very ordinary men, — and not only ordinary men, but ordinary Englishmen — types of the middle class or Philistines, in the graphic English phrase, with the narrow hearts and commercial habit of mind peculiar to that sort of people. It is something very like folly to quarrel with them for not transgressing the law of their own nature. If we were not so dazzled by the artificial glare of English prestige, we should at once acknowledge that these men are really not worth being angry with: and if it is idle to be angry with them, it is still more unprofitable to rate their opinion of us at more than a straw's value. Our appeal, the appeal of every high-souled and self-respecting nation, ought not to be to the opinion of the Anglo-Indians, no, nor yet to the British sense of justice, but to our own reviving sense of manhood, to our own sincere fellow-feeling — so far as it can be called sincere — with the silent and suffering people of India. I am sure that eventually the nobler part of us will prevail, — that when we no longer obey the dictates of a veiled self-interest, but return to the profession of a large and genuine patriotism, when we cease to hanker after the soiled crumbs which England may cast to us from her table, then it will be to that sense of manhood, to that sincere fellow-feeling that we shall finally and forcibly appeal. All this, it will be said, may be very true or very plausible, but it is after all made up of unsupported assertions. I quite admit that it is more or less so, nor did I at all intend that it should be otherwise; the proof and support of those assertions is a matter for patient development and wholly beside my present purpose. I have been thus elaborate with one sole end in view. I wish even the blindest enthusiast to recognise that I have not ventured to speak without carefully weighing those important considerations that might have induced me to remain silent. I trust that after this laboured preface even those most hostile to my views will not accuse me of having undertaken anything lightly or rashly. In my own opinion I should not have been to blame even if I had spoken without this painful hesitation. If the Congress cannot really face the light of a free and serious criticism, then the sooner it hides its face the better. For nine years it has been exempt from the ordeal; we have been content to worship it with that implicit trust which all religions demand, but which sooner or later leads them to disaster and defeat. Certainly we had this excuse that the stress of battle is not the time when a soldier can stop to criticize his weapon: he has simply to turn it to the best use of which it is capable. So long as India rang with turbulent voices of complaint and agitation, so long as the air was filled with the turmoil of an angry controversy between governors and governed, so long we could have little leisure or quiet thought

and reflection. But now all is different; the necessity for conflict is no longer so urgent and has even given place to a noticeable languor and passivity, varied only by perfunctory public meetings. Now therefore, while the great agitation that once filled this vast peninsula with rumours of change, is content to occupy an obscure corner of English politics it will be well for all of us who are capable of reflection, to sit down for a moment and think. The hour seems to have come when the Congress must encounter that searching criticism which sooner or later arrives to all mortal things; and if it is so, to keep our eyes shut will be worse than idle. The only good we shall get by it is to point with a fresh example the aphorism with which I set out. "If the blind lead the blind, shall they not both fall into a ditch?"

(S6: 16-20)

# NEW LAMPS FOR OLD — III

"Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting."

"The little that is done seems nothing when we look forward and see how much we have yet to do."

Thus far I have been making a circuit, in my disinclination to collide too abruptly with the prepossessions of my countrymen and now that I am compelled to handle my subject more intimately and with a firmer grasp, nothing but my deliberate conviction that it is quite imperative for someone to speak out, has at all persuaded me to continue. I have at the very outset to make distinct the grounds on which I charge the Congress with inadequacy. In the process I find myself bound to say many things that cannot fail to draw obloquy upon me: I shall be compelled to outrage many susceptibilities; compelled to advance many unacceptable ideas; compelled, — worst of all, — to stroke the wrong way many powerful persons, who are wont to be pampered with unstinted flattery and worship. But at all risks the thing must be done, and since it is on me that the choice has fallen, I can only proceed in the best fashion at my command and with what boldness I may. I say, of the Congress, then, this, — that its aims are mistaken, that the spirit in which it proceeds towards their accomplishment is not a spirit of sincerity and whole-heartedness, and that the methods it has chosen are not the right methods, and the leaders in whom it trusts, not the right sort of men to be leaders; — in brief, that we are at present the blind led, if not by the blind, at any rate by the one-eyed.

To begin with, I should a little while ago have had no hesitation in saying that the National Congress was not really national and had not in any way attempted to become *national*. But that was before I became a student of Mr. Pherozshah Mehta's speeches. Now to deal with this vexed subject, one must tread on very burning ground, and I shall make no apology for treading with great care and circumspection. The subject is wrapped in so thick a dust of controversy, and legal wits have been so busy drawing subtle distinctions about it, that a word which was once perfectly straightforward and simple, has become almost as difficult as the Law itself. It is therefore incumbent on me to explain what I wish to imply, when I say that the Congress is not really national. Now I do not at all mean to re-echo the Anglo-Indian catchword about the Hindus and Mahomedans. Like most catchwords it is without much force, and has been still farther stripped of meaning by the policy of the Congress. The Mahomedans have been as largely represented on that body as any reasonable community could desire, and their susceptibilities, far from being denied respect, have always been most assiduously soothed and flattered. It is entirely

futile then to take up the Anglo-Indian refrain; but this at least I should have imagined, that in an era when democracy and similar big words slide so glibly from our tongues, a body like the Congress, which represents not the mass of the population, but a single and very limited class, could not honestly be called national. It is perfectly true that the House of Commons represents not the English nation, but simply the English aristocracy and middle class and yet is none the less national. But the House of Commons is a body legally constituted and empowered to speak and act for the nation, while the Congress is self-created: and it is not justifiable for a self-created body representing only a single and limited class to call itself national. It would be just as absurd if the Liberal party, because it allows within its limits all sorts and conditions of men, were to hold annual meetings and call itself the English National Congress. When therefore I said that the Congress was not really national, I simply meant that it did not represent the mass of the population.

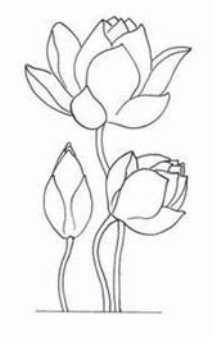
But Mr. Pherozshah Mehta will have nothing to do with this sense of the word. In his very remarkable and instructive Presidential address at Calcutta, he argued that the Congress could justly arrogate this epithet without having any direct support from the proletariate; and he went on to explain his argument with the profound subtlety expected from an experienced advocate. "It is because the masses are still unable to articulate definite political demands that the functions and duty devolve upon their educated and enlightened compatriots to feel, to understand and to interpret their grievances and requirements, and to suggest and indicate how these can best be redressed and met." This formidable sentence is, by the way, typical of Mr. Mehta's style, and reveals the secret of his oratory, which like all great inventions is exceedingly simple: it is merely to say the same thing twice over in different words. But its more noteworthy feature is the idea implied that because the Congress professes to discharge this duty, it may justly call itself national. Nor is this all; Calcutta comes to the help of Bombay in the person of Mr. Manmohan Ghose, who repeats and elucidates Mr. Mehta's idea. The Congress, he says, asserting the rights of that body to speak for the masses, represents the thinking portion of the Indian people, whose duty it is to guide the ignorant, and this in his opinion sufficiently justifies the Congress in calling itself national. To differ from a successful barrister and citizen, a man held in high honour by every graduate in India, and above all a future member of the Viceroy's Council, would never have been a very easy task for a timid man like myself. But when he is reinforced by so respectable and weighty a citizen as Mr. Manmohan Ghose, I really cannot find the courage to persevere. I shall therefore amend the obnoxious phrase and declare that the National Congress may be as national as you please, but it is not a popular body and has not in any way attempted to become a popular body.

But at this point someone a little less learned than Mr. Pherozshah Mehta may interfere and ask how it can be true that the Congress is not a popular body. I can only point his attention to a previous statement of mine that the Congress represents

not the mass of the population, but a single and limited class. No doubt the Congress tried very hard in the beginning to believe that it really represented the mass of the population, but if it has not already abandoned, it ought now at least to abandon the pretension as quite untenable. And indeed when Mr. Pherozshah Mehta and Mr. Manmohan Ghose have admitted this patent fact — not as delegates only, but as officials of the Congress — and have even gone so far as to explain the fact away, it is hardly requisite for me to combat the fallacy. But perhaps the enquirer not yet satisfied, may go on to ask what is that single and limited class which I imagine the Congress to represent. Here it may be of help to us to refer again to the speeches of the Congress leaders and more especially to the talented men from whom I have already quoted. In his able official address Mr. Manmohan Ghose asks himself this very question and answers that the Congress represents the thinking portion of the Indian people. "The delegates present here today" he goes on "are the chosen representatives of that section of the Indian people who have learnt to think, and whose number is daily increasing with marvellous rapidity." Perhaps Mr. Ghose is a little too facile in his use of the word "thinking". So much at the mercy of their instincts and prejudices are the generality of mankind, that we hazard a very high estimate when we call even one man out of ten thousand a thinking man. But evidently by the thinking portion Mr. Ghose would like to indicate the class to which he himself belongs; I mean those of us who have got some little idea of the machinery of English politics and are eager to import it into India along with cheap Liverpool cloths, shoddy Brummagem wares, and other useful and necessary things which have killed the fine and genuine textures. If this is a true interpretation he is perfectly correct in what he says. For it is really from this class that the Congress movement draws its origin, its support and its most enthusiastic votaries. And if I were asked to describe their class by a single name, I should not hesitate to call it our new middle class. For here too English goods have driven out native goods: our society has lost its old landmarks and is being demarcated on the English model. But of all the brand new articles we have imported, inconceivably the most important is that large class of people — journalists, barristers, doctors, officials, graduates and traders — who have grown up and are increasing with prurient rapidity under the aegis of the British rule: and this class I call the middle class: for, when we are so proud of our imported English goods, it would be absurd, when we want labels for them, not to import their English names as well. Besides this name which I have chosen is really a more accurate description than phrases like "thinking men" or "the educated class" which are merely expressions of our own boundless vanity and self-conceit. However largely we may choose to indulge in vague rhetoric about the all-pervading influence of the Congress, no one can honestly doubt that here is the constituency from which it is really empowered. There is indeed a small contingent of aristocrats and a smaller contingent of the more well-to-do ryots: but these are only two flying-wheels in the great middle-class machine. The fetish-worshipper may declare as loudly as he

pleases, that it represents all sorts and conditions of people, just as the Anglo-Indians used to insist that it represented no one but the Bengali Babu. Facts have been too strong for the Anglo-Indian and they will be too strong in the end for the fetish-worshipper. Partisans on either side can in no way alter the clear and immutable truth — these words were put on paper long before the recent disturbances in Bombay and certainly without any suspicion that the prophecy I then hazarded would be fortified by so apt and striking a comment. Facts are already beginning to speak in a very clear and unambiguous voice. How long will the Congress sit like careless Belshazzar, at the feast of mutual admiration? Already the decree has gone out against it; already even the eyes that are dim can discern, — for has it not been written in blood? — the first pregnant phrase of the handwriting upon the wall. "God has numbered the kingdom and finished it." Surely after so rough a lesson, we shall not wait to unseal our eyes and unstop our ears, until the unseen finger moves on and writes the second and sterner sentence. "Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting." Or must we sit idle with folded hands and only bestir ourselves when the short hour of grace is past and the kingdom given to another more worthy than we?

(S6: 21-25)



# NEW LAMPS FOR OLD — IV

I repeat then with renewed confidence, but still with a strong desire to conciliate Mr. Pherozshah Mehta, that the Congress fails, because it has never been, and has made no honest endeavour to be, a popular body empowered by the fiat of the Indian people in its entirety. But for all that I have not managed to bring my view into coincidence with Mr. Mehta's. It is true he is not invincibly reluctant to concede the limits, which hedge in the Congress action and restrict its output of energy; but he is quite averse to the dictum that by not transgressing the middle-class pale the Congress has condemned itself, as a saving power, to insignificance and ultimate sterility. The bounded scope of its potency and the subdued tone which it affects, are, he opines, precisely what our actual emergencies of the moment imperatively demand; wider activity and a more intense emphasis would be in his view highly unadvisable and even injurious and besides it does not at all signify whether we are fortified by popular sympathy or are not; for is not Mr. Pherozshah Mehta there with all the enlightenment of India at his back to plead temperately — temperately, mind you; we are nothing if not temperate — for just and remedial legislation on behalf of a patient and suffering people? In plain words a line of argument is adopted amounting to this: — "The Congress movement is nothing if not a grand suit-at-law, best described as the case of India *vs.* Anglo-India, in which the ultimate tribunal is the British sense of justice, and Pherozshah Mehta, Mr. Umesh Chandra Bonnerji and the other eminent leaders of the bar are counsel for the complainant. Well then when so many experienced advocates have bound themselves to find pleas for him, would it not be highly rash and inopportune for the client to insist on conducting his own complaint?" Now it is abundantly clear that, judged as it stands, this line of argument, though adroit beyond cavil and instinct with legal ingenuity, will nevertheless not answer. I am not going to deny that Mr. Pherozshah Mehta and the enlightenment of India, such as it is, are pleading, undoubtedly with temperance and perhaps with sincerity, for something or other, which for want of a more exact description, we may call remedial legislation. But so far there has been nothing at all to prevent me from denying that the analogy of the law-court holds; this sort of vicarious effort may be highly advantageous in judicial matters, but it is not, I would submit, at all adequate to express the reviving energies of a great people. The argument, I say, is not complete in itself, or to use a vernacular phrase, it will not walk; it badly wants a crutch to lean upon. Mr. Mehta is clever enough to see that and his legal acumen has taken him exactly to the very store where or not at all he must discover an efficient crutch. So he goes straight to history, correctly surmising that the experience of European races is all that we, a people new to modern problems, can find to warn or counsel us, and he tells us that this sort of vicarious effort has

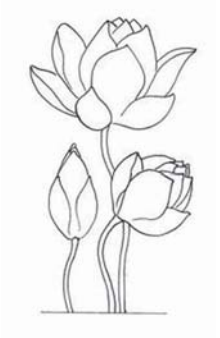
invariably been the original step towards progress: or, to put it in his own rhetorical way, "History teaches us that such has been the law of widening progress in all ages and all countries, notably in England itself." Here then is the argument complete, crutch and all; and so adroit is it that in Congress propaganda it has become a phrase of common parlance, and is now in fact the stereotyped line of defence. Certainly, if he is accurate in his historical data, Mr. Mehta has amply proved his case; but in spite of all his adroitness, I suspect that his trend towards double-shotted phrases has led him into a serious difficulty. "In all ages and all countries" is a very big expression, and Mr. Mehta will be exceedingly lucky if it will stand a close scrutiny. But Mr. Manmohan Ghose at least is a sober speaker; and if we have deserted his smooth but perhaps rather tedious manner for a more brilliant style of oratory, now at any rate, when the specious orator fails us, we may well return to the rational disputant. But we shall be agreeably disappointed to find that this vivid statement about the teaching of History is Mr. Ghose's own legitimate offspring and not the coinage of Mr. Mehta's heated fancy: indeed, the latter has done nothing but convey it bodily into his own address. "History teaches us" says Mr. Ghose "that in all ages and all countries it is the thinking classes who have led the unthinking, and in the present state of our society we are bound not only to think for ourselves, but also to think for those who are still too ignorant to exercise that important function." When we find the intellectual princes of the nation light-heartedly propagating such gross inaccuracies, we are really tempted to inquire if high education is after all of any use. History teaches us! Why, these gentlemen can never have studied any history at all except that of England. Would they be ignorant otherwise that mainly to that country, if not to that country alone, their statement applies, but that about most ages and most countries it is hopelessly inaccurate? Absurd as the statement is, its career has been neither limited nor obscure. Shot in the first instance from Mr. Ghose's regulation smoothbore, it then served as a bullet in Mr. Pherozshah's patent new double-barrelled rifle, and has ultimately turned out the stock ammunition of the Congress against that particular line upon which I have initially ventured. Here then the argument has culminated in a most important issue; for supposing this line of defence to be adequate, the gravest indictment I have to urge against the Congress goes at once to the ground. It will therefore be advisable to scrutinize Mr. Ghose's light-hearted statement; and if the policy he advocates is actually stamped with the genuine consensus of all peoples in all ages, then we shall very readily admit that there is no reason why the masses should not be left in their political apathy. But if it is quite otherwise and we cannot discover more than one precedent of importance, then Mr. Ghose and the Congress chairmen will not make us dance to their music, charm they never so wisely, and we shall be slow to admit even the one precedent we have got without a very narrow scrutiny. If then we are bent upon adopting England as our exemplar, we shall certainly imitate the progress of the glacier rather than the progress of the torrent. From Runnymede to the Hull riots is a far cry; yet

these seven centuries have done less to change partially the political and social exterior of England, than five short years to change entirely the political and social exterior of her immediate neighbour. But if Mr. Ghose's dogmatic utterance is true of England, I imagine it does not apply with equal force to other climes and other eras. For example, is it at all true of France? Rather we know that the first step of that fortunate country towards progress was not through any decent and orderly expansion, but through a purification by blood and fire. It was not a convocation of respectable citizens, but the vast and ignorant proletariate, that emerged from a prolonged and almost coeval apathy and blotted out in five terrible years the accumulated oppression of thirteen centuries. And if the example of France is not sufficient to deprive Mr. Ghose's statement of force, let us divert our eyes to Ireland, where the ancient and world-wide quarrel between Celt and Teuton is still pending. Is it at all true that the initiators of Irish resistance to England were a body of successful lawyers, remarkable only for a power of shallow rhetoric, and deputed by the sort of men that are turned out at Trinity College, Dublin? At any rate that is not what History tells us. We do not read that the Irish leaders annually assembled to declaim glib orations, eulogistic of British rule and timidly suggestive of certain flaws in its unparalleled excellence, nor did they suggest as a panacea for Irish miseries, that they should be given more posts and an ampler career in the British service. I rather fancy Turlough O'Neill and his compeers were a different sort of men from that. But then it is hardly fair perhaps to cite as an example a disreputable people never prolific of graduates and hence incapable of properly appreciating the extraordinary blessings which British rule gives out so liberally wherever it goes. Certainly men who preferred action to long speeches and appealed, by the only method available in that strenuous epoch, not to the British sense of justice but to their own sense of manhood, are not at all the sort of people we have either the will or the power to imitate. Well then let us return to our own orderly and eloquent era. But here too, just as the main strength of that ancient strenuous protest resided in the Irish populace led by the princes of their class, so the principal force of the modern subtler protest resides in the Irish peasantry led by the recognized chiefs of an united people. I might go on and cull instances from Italy and America but to elaborate the matter further would be to insult the understanding of my readers. It will be sufficient to remind them that the two grand instances of ancient history point to an exactly similar conclusion. In Athens and in Rome the first political quarrel is a distinct issue between the man of the people and a limited, perhaps an alien, aristocracy. The force behind Cleisthenes and the constituency that empowered Tiberius Gracchus were not a narrow middle class, but the people with its ancient wrongs and centuries of patient endurance.

If then, as we are compelled to infer, Mr. Mehta's statement is entirely inaccurate of remoter ages and in modern times accurate of one country alone, we shall conclude that whatever other proof he may find for his lame argument, that crutch at least is

too large and must go to the ground. But Mr. Mehta, too acute and experienced a pleader to be disheartened by any initial failure, will no doubt pick up his crutch again and whittle it down to the appropriate size. It may be quite correct, he will perhaps tell me, that his statement applies with appreciable force to England and to England alone but when all is said, it does not eventually matter. In allowing that his statement does generally apply to England, I have admitted everything he seriously wants me to admit, for England is after all that country which has best prospered in its aspirations after progress, and must therefore be the grand political exemplar of every nation animated by a like spirit, and it must be peculiarly and beyond dispute such for India in her present critical stage of renascence. I am quite aware that in the eyes of that growing community which Mr. Ghose is pleased to call the thinking class, these plausible assertions are only the elementary axioms of political science. But however confidently such statements are put before me, I am not at all sure that they are entirely correct. I have not quite made up my mind that England is indeed that country which has best prospered in its aspirations after progress and I am as yet unconvinced that it will eventually turn out at all a desirable exemplar for every nation aspiring to progress, or even for its peculiar pupil, renascent India. I shall therefore feel more disposed to probe the matter to the bottom than to acknowledge a very disputable thesis as in any way self-evident. To this end it is requisite closely to inquire what has actually been the main outcome of English political effort, and whether it is of a nature to justify any implicit reliance on English methods or exact imitation of English models.

(S6: 26-31)



# NEW LAMPS FOR OLD — V

We have then to appreciate the actual conditions of English progress, in their sound no less than their unsound aspects: and it will be to our convenience to have ready some rough formulae by which we may handle the subject in an intelligible way. To this problem Mr. Surendranath Banerji, a man who with all his striking merits, has never evinced any power of calm and serious thought, proffers a very grandiloquent and heart-stirring solution. "We rely" he has said "on the liberty-loving instincts of the greatest representative assembly in the world, the palladium of English Liberty, the sanctuary of the free and brave, the British House of Commons" and at this inspiriting discharge of oratory there was, we are told, nor do we wonder at it — a responding volley of loud and protracted applause. Now when Mr. Banerji chooses to lash himself into an oratorical frenzy and stir us with his sounding rhetoric, it is really impracticable for anything human to stand up and oppose him: and though I may hereafter tone down his oriental colouring to something nearer the hue of truth, yet it does not at present serve my purpose to take up arms against a sea of eloquence. I would rather admit at once the grain of sound fact at the core of all this than strip off the costly integuments with which Mr. Banerji's elaborate Fancy chooses to invest it. But when Mr. Banerji's words no longer reverberate in your ears, you may have leisure to listen to a quieter, more serious voice, now unhappily hushed in the grave, — the voice of Matthew Arnold, himself an Englishman and genuine lover of his country, but for all that a man who thought deeply and spoke sanely. And where according to this sane and powerful intellect shall we come across the really noteworthy outcome of English effort? We shall best see it, he tells us, not in any palladium or sanctuary, not in the greatest representative assembly in the world, but in an aristocracy materialized, a middle class vulgarised and a lower class brutalized: and no clear-sighted student of England will be insensible to the just felicity with which he has hit off the social tendencies prevailing in that country. Here then we have ready rough formulae by which we may, at the lowest, baldly outline the duplicate aspect of modern England: for now that we have admitted Mr. Banerji's phrase as symbolic of the healthy outcome creditable to English effort, we can hardly be shy of admitting Matthew Arnold's phrase as symbolic of the morbid outcome discreditable to it. But it is still open to us to evince a reasonable doubt whether there is any way of reconciling two items so mutually destructive: for it does seem paradoxical to rate the produces of institutions so highly lauded and so universally copied at a low grade in the social ladder. But this apparent paradox may easily be a vital truth; and in establishing that, as I hope to establish it, I shall have incidentally to moot another and wider theorem. I would urge that our entire political philosophy is rooted in shallow earth, so much so indeed that without

repudiation or radical change we cannot arrive at an attitude of mind healthily conducive to just and clear thinking. I am conscious that the argument has hitherto been rather intangible and moved too largely among wide abstract principles. Such a method is by its nature less keenly attractive to the general readers than a close and lively handling of current politics, but it is required for an adequate development of my case, and I must entreat indulgence a step or two further, before I lay any grasp on the hard concrete details of our actual political effort.

Now the high value at which Mr. Mehta appraises history as our sole available record of human experience in the mass will clearly be endorsed by every thoughtful and judicious mind. But to sustain it at that high level of utility, we must not indulge in hasty deductions based on a very partial scrutiny, but must group correctly and digest in a candid spirit such data as we can bring within our compass. If we observe this precept, we shall not easily coincide with his opinion that European progress has been of a single texture. We shall rather be convinced that there run through it two principles of motion distinct in nature and adverse in event, the trend of whose divergence may be roundly expressed as advance in one direction through political methods and in another direction through social methods. But as the use of these time-worn epithets might well promote misconception and drag us into side-issues, I will attempt a more delicate handling and solicit that close attention without which so remote and elusive a subject cannot come home to the mind with proper force and clearness.

In bringing abstractions home to the human intelligence, it is perhaps best to dispel by means of near and concrete specimens that sense of remoteness which we shrink from in what is at all intangible. Hence I shall attempt to differentiate by living instances the two principles which I suggest as the main motors of progress. The broad cast of national thought in England prevalent from very early times, may not inappropriately stand for the sort of progress that runs after a political prize. The striking fact of English history — the fact that dwarfs all others — is, without doubt, the regular development from certain primordial seeds and the continuous branching out, foliation and efflorescence of the institution which Mr. Banerji has justly termed the greatest representative assembly in the world. This is highly typical of the English school of thought and the exaggerated emphasis it lays on the mould and working of institutions. However supreme in the domain of practical life, however gifted with commercial vigour and expansive energy, the English mind with its short range of vision, its too little of delicacy and exactness, its inability to go beyond what it actually sees, is wholly unfit for any nice appraisal of cause and effect. It is without vision, logic, the spirit of curiosity, and hence it has not any habit of entertaining clear and high ideals, any audacity of experiment, any power of finding just methods nicely adopted to produce the exact effect intended: — it is without speculative temerity and the scientific spirit, and hence it cannot project great political theories nor argue justly from effect to cause. All these incapacities have forced the English mind into a certain mould of thought and expression. Limited to the visible and

material, they have put their whole force into mechanical invention; void of curiosity, they have hazarded just so much experiment and no more, as was necessary to suit existing institutions to their immediate wants; inexact, they have never cared in these alterations to get at more than an approximation to the exact effect intended; illogical and without subtlety, they have trusted implicitly to the political machines, for whose invention they have a peculiar genius, and never cared to utilize mightier forces and a subtler method. Nor is this all: in their defect of speculative imagination, they are unable to get beyond what they themselves have experienced, what they themselves have effected. Hence, being unscientific and apt to impute every power to machinery, they compare certain sets of machines, and postulating certain effects from them, argue that as this of their own invention has been attended by results of the highest value, it is therefore of an unique excellence and conserves in any and every climate its efficiency and durability. And they do not simply flaunt this opinion in the face of reason, but, by their stupendous material success and vast expansion, they have managed to convince a world apt to be impressed by externals, that it is correct, and even obviously correct. Yet it is quite clear that this opinion, carefully analysed, reduces itself to a logical absurdity. By its rigid emphasizing of a single element it slurs over others of equal or superior importance: it takes no account of a high or low quality in the raw material, of variant circumstances, of incompatibilities arising from national temperament, and other forces which no philosophical observer will omit from his calculations. In fact it reduces itself to the statement, that, given good machinery, then no matter what quality of material is passed through it, the eventual fabric will be infallibly of the most superior sort. If the Indian intellect had been nourished on any but English food, I should be content with stating the idea in this its simplest form, and spare myself a laborious exegesis; but I do not forget that I am addressing minds formed by purely English influences and therefore capable of admitting the rooted English prejudice that what is logically absurd, may be practically true. At present however I will simply state the motive principle of progress exemplified by England as a careful requisition and high appraisal of sound machinery in preference to a scientific social development.

But if we carry our glance across the English Channel, we shall witness a very different and more animating spectacle. Gifted with a lighter, subtler and clearer mind than their insular neighbours, the French people have moved irresistibly towards a social and not a political development. It is true that French orators and statesmen, incapacitated by their national character from originating fit political ideals, have adopted a set of institutions curiously blended from English and American manufactures; but the best blood, the highest thought, the real grandeur of the nation does not reside in the Senate or in the Chamber of Deputies; it resides in the artistic and municipal forces of Parisian life, in the firm settled executive, in the great vehement heart of the French populace — and that has ever beaten most highly in unison with the grand ideas of Equality and Fraternity, since they were first enounced on the

banner of the great and terrible Republic. Hence though by the indiscreet choice of a machine, they have been compelled to copy the working of English machinery and concede an undue importance to politics, yet the ideals which have genuinely influenced the spirit which has most deeply permeated their national life are widely different from that alien spirit, from those borrowed ideals. I have said that the French mind is clearer, subtler, lighter than the English. In that clarity they have discerned that without high qualities in the raw material excellence of machinery will not suffice to create a sound and durable national character, — that it may indeed develop a strong, energetic and capable temper, but that the fabric will not combine fineness with strength, will not resist permanently the wear and tear of time and the rending force of social problems: — through that subtlety they divined that not by the mechanic working of institutions, but by the delicate and almost unseen moulding of a fine, lucid and invigorating atmosphere, could a robust and highly-wrought social temper be developed: — and through that lightness they chose not the fierce, sharp air of English individualism, but the bright influence of art and letters, of happiness, a wide and liberal culture, and the firm consequent cohesion of their racial and social elements. To put all this briefly, the second school of thought I would indicate to my readers, is the preference of a fine development of social character and a wide diffusion of happiness to the mechanic development of a sound political machinery. Here then as indicated by these grand examples we have our two principal motors of progress; a careful requisition, for the sake of evolving an energetic national character and high level of capacity, of a sound political machinery; and the ardent, yet rational pursuit, for its own sake, of a sound and highly-wrought social temper.

It may be worth while here to develop a point I have broadly suggested, that with these distinct lines of feeling accord distinct types of racial character. The social ideal is naturally limited to peoples distinguished by a rare social gift and an unbounded receptivity for novel ideas along with a large amount of practical capacity. The ancient Athenian, preeminent for lightness of temper and lucidity of thought, was content with the simplest and most nakedly logical machinery, and principally sought to base political life on equality, a wide diffusion of culture, and a large and just social principle. Moreover, as the subtlest and hence the most efficient way of conserving the high calibre of his national character, he chose the infusion of light, gaiety and happiness into the common life of the people. Clear in thought and felicitous in action, he pursued an ideal strictly consonant with his natural temper and rigidly exclusive of the anomalous: and so highly did he attain, that the quick, shifting, eager Athenian life, with its movement and colour, its happy buoyancy, its rapid genius, or, as the Attic poet beautifully phrases it, walking delicately through a fine and lucid air, has become the admiration and envy of posterior ages. The modern Frenchman closely allied by his clear habit of mind to the old Athenian, himself lucid in thought, light in temper and not without a supreme felicity of method

in practical things, evinces much the same sentiments, pursues much the same ideals. He too has a happily-adjusted executive machinery, elaborated indeed to fit the needs of a modern community, but pervaded by a thoroughly clear and logical spirit. He also has a passionate craving for equality and a large and just social principle, and prefers to conserve the high calibre of his national character by the infusion of light, gaiety and happiness into the common life of the people. And he too has so far compassed his ideal that a consensus of competent observers have pronounced France certainly the happiest, and, taken in the mass, the most civilized of modern countries. But to the Englishman or American, intellect, lucidity, happiness are not of primary importance: they strike him in the light of luxuries rather than necessities. It is the useful citizen, the adroit man of business, the laborious worker, whom he commends with the warmest emphasis and copies with the most respectful emulation. Such a cast of mind being entirely incompatible with social success, he directs his whole active powers into the grosser sphere of commerce and politics, where practical energy, unpurified by thought, may struggle forward to some vulgar and limited goal. To put it in a concrete form Paris may be said to revolve around the Theatre, the Municipal Council and the French Academy, London looks rather to the House of Commons and New York to the Stock Exchange. I trust that I have now clearly elucidated the exact and intimate nature of those two distinct principles on which progress may be said to move. It now remains to gauge the practical effect of either policy as history indicates them to us. We in India, or at any rate those races among us which are in the van of every forward movement, are far more nearly allied to the French and Athenian than to the Anglo-Saxon, but owing to the accident of British domination, our intellects have been carefully nurtured on a purely English diet. Hence we do not care to purchase an outfit of political ideas properly adjusted to our natural temper and urgent requirements, but must eke out our scanty wardrobe with the cast-off rags and threadbare leavings of our English Masters and this incongruous apparel we display with a pompous self-approval which no unfriendly murmurs, no unkind allusions are allowed to trouble. Absurd as all this is, its visible outcome is clearly a grave misfortune. Prompted by our English instruction we have deputed to a mere machine so arduous a business as the remoulding of our entire destinies, needing as it does patient and delicate manual adjustment and a constant supervising vigilance — and this to a machine not efficient and carefully pieced together but clumsy and made on a rude and cheap model. So long as this temper prevails, we shall never realise how utterly it is beyond the power of even an excellent machine to renovate an effete and impoverished national character and how palpably requisite to commence from within and not depend on any exterior agency. Such a retrospect as I propose will therefore be of peculiar value, if it at all induces us to acknowledge that it is a vital error, simply because we have invented a clumsy machine, to rest on our oars and imagine that expenditure of energy in other directions is at present superfluous.

(S6: 32-39)

# NEW LAMPS FOR OLD — VI

That this intimate organic treatment of which I speak is really indispensable, will be clearly established by the annals of ancient Rome. The Romans were a nation quite unique in the composition and general style of their character; along with a predilection for practical energy, a purely material habit of mind, and an indifference to orderly and logical methods which suggest a strong affinity to the Anglo-Saxon temperament, they possessed a robust and clear perception, and a strong practical contempt for methods pronounced by hard experience to be ineffectual, which are entirely un-English and allied rather to the clarity and impatience of the Gaul. Moreover their whole character was moulded in a grand style, such as has not been witnessed by any prior or succeeding age — so much so that the striking description by which the Greek ambassador expressed the temper of the Roman Senate, might with equal justice be transferred to the entire people. They were a nation of Kings: that is to say, they possessed the gift of handling the high things of life in a grand and imposing style, and with a success, an astonishing sureness of touch, only possible to a natural tact in government and a just, I may say a royal instinct for affairs. Yet this grand, imperial nation, even while it was most felicitous abroad in the manner and spirit in which it dealt with foreign peoples, was at home convulsed to a surprising extent by the worst forms of internal disorder: — and all for the want of that clear, sane ideal which has so highly promoted the domestic happiness of France and Athens. At first, indeed, the Romans inexpert in political methods, were inclined to repose an implicit trust in machinery, just as the English have been inclined from the primary stages of their development, and just as we are led to do by the contagious influence of the Anglomaniac disease. They hoped by the sole and mechanic action of certain highly lauded institutions to remove the disorders with which the Roman body politic was ailing. And though at Rome no less than among ourselves, the social condition of the poor filled up the reform posters and a consequent amelioration was loudly trumpeted by the popular leaders, yet the genuine force of the movement was disposed, as is the genuine force of the present Congress movement, to the minimising of purely political inequality. But when the coveted institutions were in full swing, a sense gradually dawned on the people that the middle class had the sole enjoyment of any profit accruing from the change, as indeed it is always to the middle class alone that any profit accrues from the elimination of merely political inequality; but the great Roman populace untouched by the change for which they had sacrificed their ease and expended their best and highest energies, felt themselves pushed from misery to misery and broke out again in a wild storm of rebellion. But to maintain a stark persistence in unreason, to repose an unmoved confidence in the bounded potency of a mechanic formula,

proved ineffectual by the cogent logic of hard experience, they had no thought, or if they had the thought, they being a genuinely practical race, and not like the English, straining after practicality, had not the disposition. Hence that mighty struggle was fought out with perplexed watchwords, amid wild alarms and rumours of battle and in a confused medley of blood, terror and unspeakable desolation. In that horror of great darkness, the Roman world crashed on from ruin to ruin, until the strong hand of Caesar stayed its descent to poise it on the stable foundation of a sane and vigilant policy rigorously enforced by the fixed will of a single despotic ruler. But the grand secret of his success and the success of those puissant autocrats who inherited his genius and his ideals, was the clear perception attained to by them that only by social equality and the healing action of a firm despotism, could the disorders of Rome be permanently eradicated. Maligned as they have been by those who suffered from their astuteness and calm strength of will, the final verdict of posterity will laud in them that terrible intensity of purpose and even that iron indifference to personal suffering, which they evinced in forcing the Caesarian policy to its bitter but salutary end. The main lesson for us however is the pregnant conclusion that the Romans, to whom we cannot deny the supreme rank in the sphere of practical success, by attempting a cure through external and mechanic appliances entailed on themselves untold misery, untold disorder, and only by a thorough organic treatment restored the sanity, peace, settled government and calm felicity of an entire world.

But perhaps Mr. Mehta will tell me "What have we to do with the ancient Romans, we who have an entirely modern environment and suffer from disorders peculiar to ourselves?" Well, the connection is not perhaps so remote as Mr. Mehta imagines: I will not however press that point, but rather appeal to the instance of two great European nations, who also have an entirely modern environment and suffer or have suffered from very similar maladies — and so end my long excursion into the domain of abstract ideas.

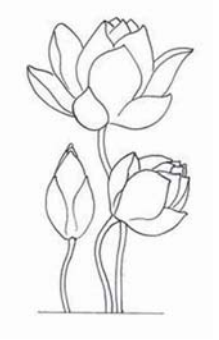
As the living instances most nearly suggesting the diversity of impulse and method, which is my present subject, I have had occasion to draw a comparison between these two peoples, whom, by a singular caprice of antithesis, chance has put into close physical proximity, but nature has sundered as far as the poles in genius, temper and ideals. Whatever healthy and conservative effects accrue from the close pursuit of either principle, whatever morbid and deleterious effects accrue from the close pursuit of either principle, will be seen operating to the best advantage in the social and political organism of these two nations. The healthy effects of the one impulse we shall find among those striking English qualities which at once catch the eye, insatiable enterprise, an energetic and pushing spirit, a vigorous tendency towards expansion, a high capacity for political administration, and an orderly process of government; the morbid effects are social degradation and an entire absence of the cohesive principle. The better qualities have no doubt grown

by breathing the atmosphere of individualism and been trained up by the habit of working under settled and roughly convenient forms; but after all is said, the original high qualities of the raw material enter very largely into the credit side of the account. Even were it not so, we are not likely, tutored by English instruction, to undervalue or to slur over the successful and imposing aspect of English attainment. Hence it will be more profitable for us, always keeping the bright side in view, to concentrate our attention on the unsounder aspects which we do not care to learn, or if we have learned, are in the habit of carefully forgetting. We may perhaps realize the nature of that unsounder aspect, if we amplify Matthew Arnold's phrase: — an aristocracy no longer possessed of the imposing nobility of mind, the proud sense of honour, the striking preeminence of faculty, which are the saving graces — nay, which are the very life-breath of an aristocracy; debased moreover by the pursuit, through concession to all that is gross and ignoble in the English mind, of gross and ignoble ends: — a middle class inaccessible to the influence of high and refining ideas, and prone to rate everything even in the noblest departments of life, at a commercial valuation: — and a lower class equally without any germ of high ideas, nay, without any ideas high or low; degraded in their worst failure to the crudest forms of vice, pauperism and crime, and in their highest attainment restricted to a life of unintelligent work relieved by brutalising pleasures. And indeed the most alarming symptoms are here; for it may be said of the aristocracy that the workings of the Time-Spirit have made a genuine aristocracy obsolete and impracticable, and of the middle class, that, however successful and confident, it is in fact doomed; its empire is passing away from it: but with the whole trend of humanity shaping towards democracy and socialism, on the calibre and civilisation of the lower class depends the future of the entire race. And we have seen what sort of lower class England, with all her splendid success, has been able to evolve — in calibre debased, in civilisation nil. And after seeing what England has produced by her empiricism, her culture of a raw energy, her exaltation of a political method not founded on reason, we must see what France has produced by her steady, logical pursuit of a fine social ideal: it is the Paris *ouvrier* with his firmness of grasp on affairs, his sanity, his height of mind, his clear, direct ways of life and thought, — it is the French peasant with his ready tact, his power of quiet and sensible conversation, located in an enjoyable corner of life, small it may be, but with plenty of room for wholesome work and plenty of room for refreshing gaiety. There we have the strong side of France, a lucid social atmosphere, a firm executive rationally directed to insure a clearly conceived purpose, a high level of character and refinement pervading all classes and a scheme of society bestowing a fair chance of happiness on the low as well as the high. But if France is strong in the sphere of England's weakness, she is no less weak in the sphere of England's strength. Along with and militating against her social happiness, we have to reckon constant political disorder and instability, an alarming defect of expansive vigour, and entire failure in the handling of general

politics. France, unable to conceive and work out a proper political machinery, has been reduced to copy with slight variations the English model and import a set of machinery well suited to the old English temper, but now unsuited even to the English and still more to the vehement French character. Passionate, sensitive, loquacious, fond of dispute and apt to be blown away by gusts of feeling, the Gaul is wholly unfit for that heavy decorum, that orderly process of debate, that power of combining anomalies, which still exist to a great extent in England, but which even there must eventually grow impossible. Hence the vehement French nation after a brief experience of each alien manufacture has grown intensely impatient and shipped it back without superfluous ceremony to its original home. Here is the latent root of that disheartening failure which has attended France in all her brief and feverish attempts to discover a stable basis of political advance, — of that intense consequent disgust, that scornful aversion to politics which has led thinking France to rate it as an indecent harlequin-show in which no serious man will care to meddle. But if this were all, a superficial observer might balance a defect and merit on one side by an answering merit and defect on the other, and conclude that the account was clear; but social status is not the only department of success in which England compares unfavourably with France. There is her fatal incoherency, her want of political cohesion, her want of social cohesion. A Breton, a Basque, a Provençal, though no less alien in blood to the mass of the French people than the Irish, the Welsh, the Scotch to the mass of the English people, would repel with alarm and abhorrence the mere thought of impairing the fine solidarity, the homogeneity of sentiment, which the possession of an agreeable social life has developed in France. And we cannot sufficiently admire the supreme virtue of that fine social development and large diffusion of general happiness, which has conserved for France in the midst of fearful political calamities her splendid cohesiveness as a nation and as a community. In England on the other hand we see the sorry spectacle of a great empire lying at the mercy of disintegrating influences, because the component races have neither been properly merged in the whole nor persuaded by the offer of a high level of happiness to value the benefits of solidarity. And if France by her injudicious choice of mechanism, her political incapacity, her refusal to put her best blood into politics, has involved herself in fearful political calamities, no less has England by her exclusive pursuit of machinery, her social incompetence, her prejudice against a rational equality, her excessive individualism, entered on an era of fearful social calamities. It is a suggestive fact that the alienation of sympathy, the strong antipathetic feelings of Labour towards Capital, are nowhere so marked, the quarrel between them is nowhere so violent, sustained and ferocious as in the two countries which are proudest of their institutions and have most systematically neglected their social development — England and America. It is not therefore unreasonable to conclude — and had I space and leisure, I should be tempted to show that every circumstance tends to fortify the conclusion and convert it into a

certainty — that this social neglect is the prime cause of the fearful array of social calamities, whose first impact has already burst on those proud and successful countries. But enough has been said, and to discuss the matter exhaustively would unduly defer the point of more direct importance for ourselves; — I mean the ominous connection which these truths have with the actual conditions of politics and society in India.

(S6: 40-45)



# NEW LAMPS FOR OLD — VII

I am not ignorant that to practical men all I have written will prove beyond measure unpalatable. Strongly inimical as they are to thought in politics, they will detect in it an offensive redolence of dilettantism, perhaps scout it as a foolish waste of power, or if a good thing at all a good thing for a treatise on general politics, a good thing out of place. To what end these remote instances, what pertinence in these political metaphysics? I venture however to suggest that it is just this gleaning from general politics, this survey and digestion of human experience in the mass that we at the present moment most imperatively want. No one will deny, — no one at least in that considerable class to whose address my present remarks are directed, — that for us, and even for those of us who have a strong affection for oriental things and believe that there is in them a great deal that is beautiful, a great deal that is serviceable, a great deal that is worth keeping, the most important objective is and must inevitably be the admission into India of Occidental ideas, methods and culture: even if we are ambitious to conserve what is sound and beneficial in our indigenous civilization, we can only do so by assisting very largely the influx of Occidentalism. But at the same time we have a perfect right to insist, and every sagacious man will take pains to insist, that the process of introduction shall not be as hitherto rash and ignorant, that it shall be judicious, discriminating. We are to have what the West can give us, because what the West can give us is just the thing and the only thing that will rescue us from our present appalling condition of intellectual and moral decay, but we are not to take it haphazard and in a lump; rather we shall find it expedient to select the very best that is thought and known in Europe, and to import even that with the changes and reservations which our diverse conditions may be found to dictate. Otherwise instead of a simply ameliorating influence, we shall have chaos annexed to chaos, the vices and calamities of the West superimposed on the vices and calamities of the East.

No one has such advantages, no one is so powerful to discourage, minimise and even to prevent the intrusion of what is mischievous, to encourage, promote and even to ensure the admission of what is salutary, than an educated and vigorous national assembly standing for the best thought and the best energy in the country, and standing for it not in a formal parliamentary way, but by the spontaneous impulse and election of the people. Patrons of the Congress are never tired of giving us to understand that their much lauded idol does stand for all that is best in the country and that it stands for them precisely in the way I have described. If that is so, it is not a little remarkable that far from regulating judiciously the importation of Occidental wares we have actually been at pains to import an inferior in preference to a superior quality, and in a condition not the most apt but the most inapt for consumption in

India. Yet that this has been so far the net result of our political commerce with the West, will be very apparent to anyone who chooses to think. National character being like human nature, maimed and imperfect, it was not surprising, not unnatural that a nation should commit one or other of various errors. We need not marvel if England, overconfident in her material success and the practical value of her institutions has concerned herself too little with social development and set small store by the discreet management of her masses: nor must we hold French judgment cheap because in the pursuit of social felicity and the pride of her magnificent cohesion France has failed in her choice of apparatus and courted political insecurity and disaster. But there are limits even to human fallibility and to combine two errors so distinct would be, one imagines, a miracle of incompetence. Facts however are always giving the lie to our imaginations; and it is a fact that we by a combination of errors so eccentric as almost to savour of felicity, are achieving this prodigious *tour de force*. Servile in imitation with a peculiar Indian servility we have swallowed down in a lump our English diet and especially that singular paradox about the unique value of machinery: but we have not the stuff in us to originate a really effective instrument for ourselves. Hence the Congress, a very reputable body, I hasten to admit, teeming with grave citizens and really quite flush of lawyers, but for all that meagre in the scope of its utility and wholly unequal to the functions it ought to exercise. There we have laid the foundations, as the French laid the foundations, of political incompetence, political failure; and of a more fatal incompetence, a more disastrous failure, because the French have at least originality, thought, resourcefulness, while we are vainglorious, shallow, mentally impotent: and as if this error were not enough for us, we have permitted ourselves to lose all sense of proportion, and to evolve an inordinate self-content, an exaggerated idea of our culture, our capacity, our importance. Hence we choose to rate our own political increase higher than social perfection or the advancement, intellectual and economical, of that vast unhappy proletariate about which everybody talks and nobody cares. We blandly assent when Mr. Pherozshah in the generous heat of his temperate and carefully restricted patriotism, assures us after his genial manner that the awakening of the masses from their ignorance and misery is entirely unimportant and any expenditure of energy in that direction entirely premature. There we have laid the foundation, as England laid the foundation, of social collapse, of social calamities. We have sown the wind and we must not complain if we reap the whirlwind. Under such circumstances it cannot be superfluous or a waste of power to review in the light of the critical reason that part of human experience most nearly connected by its nature with our own immediate difficulties. It is rather our main business and the best occupation not of dilettantes but of minds gifted with insight, seriousness, original power. So much indeed is it our main business that according as it is executed or neglected, we must pronounce a verdict of adequacy or inadequacy on our recent political thought: and we have seen that it is hopelessly

inadequate, that all our efforts repose on a body organically infirm to the verge of impotence and are in their scheme as in their practice selfishly frigid to social development and the awakening of the masses.

Here then we have got a little nearer to just and adequate comprehension. At any rate I hope to have enforced on my readers the precise and intrinsic meaning of that count in my indictment which censures the Congress as a body not popular and not honestly desirous of a popular character — in fact as a middle-class organ selfish and disingenuous in its public action and hollow in its professions of a large and disinterested patriotism. I hope to have convinced them that this is a solid charge and a charge entirely damaging to their character for wisdom and public spirit. Above all I hope to have persuaded Mr. Pherozshah Mehta, or at least the eidolon of that great man, the shadow of him which walks through these pages, that our national effort must contract a social and popular tendency before it can hope to be great or fruitful. But then Mr. Pherozshah is a lawyer: he has, enormously developed in him, that forensic instinct which prompts men to fight out a cause which they know to be unsound, to fight it out to the last gasp, not because it is just or noble but because it is theirs; and in the spirit of that forensic tradition he may conceivably undertake to answer me somewhat as follows. "Material success and a great representative assembly are boons of so immense a magnitude, so stupendous an importance that even if we purchase them at the cost of a more acute disintegration, a more appalling social decadence, the rate will not be any too exorbitant. Let us exactly imitate English success by an exact imitation of English models and then there will be plenty of time to deal with these questions which you invest with fictitious importance." Monstrous as the theorem is, profound as is the mental darkness which pervades it, it summarises not unfairly the defence put forward by the promoters and well-wishers of the Congress.

On us as the self-elected envoys of a new evangel there rests a heavy responsibility, assumed by our own will, but which once assumed we can no longer repudiate or discard; a responsibility which promises us immortal credit, if performed with sincerity and wisdom, but saddled with ignominy to ourselves and disaster to our country, if we discharge it in another spirit and another manner. To meet that responsibility we have no height, no sincerity of character, no depth of emotion, no charity, no seriousness of intellect. Yet it is only a sentimentalist, we are told, who will bid us raise, purify and transform ourselves so that we may be in some measure worthy of the high and solemn duties we have bound ourselves to perform! The proletariate among us is sunk in ignorance and overwhelmed with distress. But with that distressed and ignorant proletariate, — now that the middle class is proved deficient in sincerity, power and judgment, — with that proletariate resides, whether we like it or not, our sole assurance of hope, our sole chance in the future. Yet he is set down as a vain theorist and a dreamy trifler who would raise it from its ignorance and distress. The one thing needful we are to suppose, the one thing worthy of a great and

statesmanlike soul is to enlarge the Legislative Councils, until they are big enough to hold Mr. Pherozshah M. Mehta, and other geniuses of an immoderate bulk. To play with baubles is our ambition, not to deal with grave questions in a spirit of serious energy. But while we are playing with baubles, with our Legislative Councils, our Simultaneous Examinations, our ingenious schemes for separating the judicial from the executive functions, — while we, I say, are finessing about trifles, the waters of the great deep are being stirred and that surging chaos of the primitive man over which our civilized societies are superimposed on a thin crust of convention, is being strangely and ominously agitated. Already a red danger-signal has shot up from Prabhas-Patan, and sped across the country, speaking with a rude eloquence of strange things beneath the fair surface of our renascent, enlightened India: yet no sooner was the signal seen than it was forgotten. Perhaps the religious complexion of these occurrences has lulled our fears; but when turbulence has once become habitual in a people, it is only folly that will reckon on its preserving the original complexion. A few more taxes, a few more rash interferences of Government, a few more stages of starvation, and the turbulence that is now religious will become social. I am speaking to that class which Mr. Manmohan Ghose has called the thinking portion of the Indian community: well, let these thinking gentlemen carry their thoughtful intellects a hundred years back. Let them recollect what causes led from the religious madness of St. Bartholomew to the social madness of the Reign of Terror. Let them enumerate if their memory serves them, the salient features and symptoms which the wise man detected many years before the event to be the sure precursors of some terrible catastrophe; and let them discover, if they can, any of those symptoms which is absent from the phenomena of our disease. With us it rests — if indeed it is not too late — with our sincerity, our foresight, our promptness of thought and action, that the hideous parallel shall not be followed up by a sequel as awful, as bloody and more purely disastrous. Theorist, and trifler though I may be called, I again assert as our first and holiest duty, the elevation and enlightenment of the proletariate: I again call on those nobler spirits among us who are working erroneously, it may be, but with incipient or growing sincerity and nobleness of mind, to divert their strenuous effort from the promotion of narrow class-interests, from silly squabbles about offices and salaried positions, from a philanthropy laudable in itself and worthy of rational pursuit, but meagre in the range of its benevolence and ineffectual towards promoting the nearest interests of the nation, into that vaster channel through which alone the healing waters may be conducted to the lips of their ailing and tortured country.

(S6: 46-51)

# NEW LAMPS FOR OLD — VIII

Poverty of organic conception and unintelligence of the deeper facts of our environment are the inherent vices I have hitherto imputed to the Congress and the burgess-body of which it is the political nucleus. But I have not done enough when I have done that. Perversion or error in the philosophy of our aim does indeed point to a serious defect of the political reason, but it is not incompatible with a nearer apprehension and happier management of surface facts; and if we had been so far apprehensive and dexterous, that would have been an output of native directness and force on which we might reasonably felicitate ourselves. For directness and force are an inalienable ancestral inheritance handed down by vigorous forefathers, and where they are, the political reason which comes of liberal culture and ancient experience, may be waited for with a certain patient hopefulness. But it is to be feared that our performance up to date does not give room for so comforting an assurance. Is it not rather the fact that our whole range of thought and action has been pervaded by a stamp of unreality and helplessness, a straining after achievement for which we have not the proper stamina and an entire misconception of facts as well as of natural laws? To be convinced of this we have only to interrogate recent events, not confiding in their outward face as the shallow and self-contented do, but getting to the heart of them, making sure of their hidden secret, their deeper reality. Indeed it will not hurt any of us to put out of sight for a moment those vain and fantastic chimeras about Simon de Montfort and the gradual evolution of an Indian Parliament, with which certain politicians are fond of amusing us, and look things straight in the face. We must resolutely hold fast to the primary fact that right and effective action can only ensue upon a right understanding of ourselves in relation to our environment. For by reflection or instinct to get a clear insight into our position and by dexterity to make the most of it, that is the whole secret of politics, and that is just what we have failed to do. Let us see whether we cannot get some adequate sense of what our position really is: after that we shall be more in the way to hit closely the exact point at which we have failed.

Whatever theatrical attitude it may suit our vanity to adopt, we are not, as we pretend to be, the embodiment of the country's power, intelligence and worth: neither are we disinterested patriots striving in all purity and unselfishness towards an issue irreproachable before God. These are absurd pretensions which only detract from the moral height of our nature and can serve no great or serious end. We may gain a poor and evanescent advantage by this sort of hypocrisy, but we lose in candour and clearness of intellect, we lose in sincerity which is another name for strength. If we would only indulge less our bias towards moral ostentation and care more to train ourselves in a healthy robustness and simple candour, it would really advantage

us not only in character, but in power; and it would have this good effect, that we should no longer throw dust into our own eyes; we should be better fitted to see ourselves as a critic of human society would see us, better able to get that clear insight into our own position, which is one condition of genuine success. No, we are not and cannot be a body of disinterested patriots. Life being, as science tells us, an affirmation of one's self, any aggregate mass of humanity must inevitably strive to emerge and affirm its own essence, must by the law of its own nature aspire towards life, aspire towards expansion, aspire towards the perfecting of its potential strength in the free air of political recognition and the full light of political predominance. That is just what has been happening in India. In us the Indian burgess or middle-class emerges from obscurity, perhaps from nothingness, and strives between a strong and unfeeling bureaucracy and an inert and imbecile proletariate to possess itself of rank, consideration and power. Against that striving it is futile to protest; one might as well quarrel with the law of gravitation; but though our striving must be inherently selfish, we can at least make some small effort to keep it as little selfish as possible, to make it, as far as may be, run in harness with the grand central interests of the nation at large. So much at least those of us who have a broad human affection for our country as distinct from ourselves, have a right to expect.

Thus emergent, thus ambitious, it was our business by whatever circumstances we were environed, to seize hold of those circumstances and make ourselves masters of them. The initial difficulties were great. A young and just emergent body without experience of government, without experience even of resistance to government, consequently without inherited tact, needs a teacher or a Messiah to initiate it in the art of politics. In England the burgess was taught almost insensibly by the nobility; in France he found a Messiah in the great Napoleon. We had no Napoleon, but we had a nobility. Europeans, when the spirit moves them to brag of their superiority over us Asiatics, are in the habit of saying that the West is progressive, the East stationary. That is a little too comprehensive. England and France are no doubt eminently progressive, but there are other countries of Europe which have not been equally forward. America is a democratic country which has not progressed: Russia is a despotic country which has not progressed: in Italy, Spain, Germany even progress has been factitious and slow. Nevertheless, though the vulgar wording of the boast may be loose and careless, yet it does express a very real superiority. The nations of the West are not all progressive, true; but they are all in that state which is the first condition of progress, a state, I mean, of fluidity, but of fluidity within limits, fluidity on a stable and normal basis. If no spirit of thought or emotion moves on the face of the waters, they become as foul and stagnant as in the most conservative parts of Asia, but a very slight wind will set them flowing. In most Asiatic countries, — I do not speak of India — one might almost imagine a hurricane blowing without any perceptible effect. Accordingly in Europe the transition of power from the noble to the burgess has been natural and inevitable. In India, just as naturally and

inevitably, the administration remained with the noble. The old Hindu mechanism of society and government certainly did prescribe limits, certainly had a basis that was stable and normal; but it was too rigid, too stationary: it bound down the burgess and held him in his place by an iron weight of custom and religious ordinance. The regime that overthrew and succeeded it, the Mussulman regime, was mediaeval in character, fluid certainly, indeed in a perpetual state of flux, but never able to shake off the curse of instability, never in a position to prescribe limits, never stable, never normal. In such a society the qualities which make for survival, are valour, dexterity, initiative, swiftness, a robust immorality, qualities native to an aristocracy and to nations moulded by an aristocracy, native also to certain races, but even in those nations, even in those races, alien to the ordinary spirit of the burgess. His ponderous movements, his fumbling, his cold timidity, his decent scrupulousness have been fatal to his pretensions, at times inimical to his existence. Accordingly in India he has been submerged, scarcely existent. Great affairs and the high qualities they nourish have rested in the hand of the noble. We had then our nobility, our class trained and experienced in government and affairs: but to them unhappily we could not possibly look for guidance or even for co-operation. At the period of our emergence they were lethargic, effete, moribund, partially sunk in themselves; and even if any of the old energy had survived their fall, the world in which they moved was too new and strange, the transition to it had been too sudden and confounding to admit of their assimilating themselves so as to move with ease and success under novel conditions. The old nobility was quite as helpless from decay and dotage, as we from youthful inexperience. It was foreign energy that had pushed aside the old outworn machinery, it was an alien government that had by policy and self-will hurried us into a new and quite unfamiliar world. Would that government, politic and self-willed as it was, help us to an activity that might, nay, that must turn eventually to their personal detriment? Certainly they had the power but quite as certainly they had not the will. No doubt Anglo-Indians have very little right to speak of us as bitterly as they are in the habit of doing. By setting themselves to compel our social elements into a state of fluidity, and for that purpose not only putting in motion organic forces but bringing direct pressure to bear, by strictly enforcing system and order so as to lay down fixed limits and a normal basis, within which the fluid elements might settle into new forms, they in fact made themselves responsible for us and lost the right to blame anyone but themselves for what might ensue. They are in the unlucky position of responsibility for a state of things which they abhor and certainly had no intention of bringing about. The force which they had in mind to construct was a body of grave, loyal and conservative citizens, educated but without ideas, a body created by and having a stake in the present order, and therefore attached to its continuance, a power in the land certainly, but a power for order, for permanence, not a power for disturbance and unrest. In such an enterprise they were bound to fail and they failed egregiously. Sir Edwin Arnold

when he found out that it was a grievous mistake to occidentalize us, forgot, no doubt, for the moment his role as the preacher and poetaster of self-abnegation, and spoke as an ordinary mundane being, the prophet of a worldly and selfish class: but if we accept his words in that sense, there can be no doubt that he was perfectly right. Anglo-Indians had never seriously brought themselves to believe that we are in blood and disposition a genuine Aryan community. They chose to regard our history as a jungle of meaningless facts, and could not understand that we were not malleable dead matter, but men with Occidental impulses in our blood, not virgin material to be wrought into any shape they preferred, but animate beings with a principle of life in us and certain, if subjected to the same causes, placed in the same light and air as European communities, to exhibit effects precisely similar and shape ourselves rather than be shaped. They proposed to construct a tank for their own service and comfort; they did not know that they were breaking up the fountains of the great deep. There, stated shortly, is the whole sense of their policy and conduct. The habit, set in vogue by rhetoricians of Macaulay's type, of making large professions of benevolence invested with an air of high grandiosity, has become so much a second nature with them, that I will not ask if they are sincere when they make them: but it is a rhetorical habit and nothing more. We who are not interested in keeping up the fiction, may just as well pierce through it to the fact. If they had seen things as they really are, they would have been wisely inactive: but they wanted a submissive and attached population, and they thought they had hit on the best way of getting what they wanted. In this confidence, if there was a great deal of delusion, there was also something of truth. But we must not be surprised or indignant if the Anglo-Indians, when they saw their confidence so rudely dashed and themselves confronted, not with submission and attachment but with a body eager, pushing, recriminative, pushing for recognition, pushing for power, covetous above all of that authority which they had come to regard as their private and peculiar possession, — there is no cause for surprise or resentment, if they cared little for the grain of success in their bushelful of failure, and regarded us with those feelings of alarm, distrust and hatred which Frankenstein experienced when having hoped to make a man, he saw a monster. Their conduct was too natural to be censured. I do not say that magnanimity would not have been better, more dignified, more politic. But who expects magnanimity from bureaucracy? The old nobility then were almost extinct and had moreover no power to help us: the bureaucracy had not the will. Yet it was from their ranks that the Messiah came.

(S6: 52-57)

# NEW LAMPS FOR OLD — IX

The Civilian Order, which accounts itself, and no doubt justly, the informing spirit of Anglo-India, is credited in this country with quite an extraordinary degree of ability and merit, so much so that many believe it to have come down to us direct from heaven. And it is perhaps on this basis that in their dealings with Indians, — whom being moulded of a clay entirely terrestrial, one naturally supposes to be an inferior order of creatures, — they permit themselves a very liberal tinge of presumption and arrogance. Without disputing their celestial origin, one may perhaps be suffered to hint that eyes unaffected by the Indian sun, will be hard put to it to discover the pervading soul of magnificence and princeliness in the moral and intellectual style of these demigods. The fact is indeed all the other way. The general run of the Service suffers by being recruited through the medium of Competitive Examination: its tone is a little vulgar, its character a little raw, its achievement a little second-rate. Harsh critics have indeed said more than this; nay, has not one of themselves, has not Mr. Rudyard Kipling, a blameless Anglo-Indian, spoken, and spoken with distressing emphasis to the same effect? They have said that it moves in an atmosphere of unspeakable boorishness and mediocrity. That is certainly strong language and I would not for a moment be thought to endorse it; but there is, as I say, just a small sediment of truth at the bottom which may tend to excuse, if not to justify, this harsh and unfriendly criticism. And when one knows the stuff of which the Service is made, one ceases to wonder at it. A shallow schoolboy stepping from a cramming establishment to the command of high and difficult affairs, can hardly be expected to give us anything magnificent or princely. Still less can it be expected when the sons of small tradesmen are suddenly promoted from the counter to govern great provinces. Not that I have any fastidious prejudice against small tradesmen. I simply mean that the best education men of that class can get in England, does not adequately qualify a raw youth to rule over millions of his fellow-beings. Bad in training, void of culture, in instruction poor, it is in plain truth a sort of education that leaves him with all his original imperfections on his head, unmannerly, uncultivated, unintelligent. But in the Civil Service, with all its vices and shortcomings, one does find, as perhaps one does not find elsewhere, rare and exalted souls detached from the failings of their order, who exhibit the qualities of the race in a very striking way; not geniuses certainly, but swift and robust personalities, rhetorically powerful, direct, forcible, endowed to a surprising extent with the energy and self-confidence which are the heirlooms of their nation; men in short who give us England — and by England I mean the whole Anglo-Celtic race — on her really high and admirable side. Many of these are Irish or Caledonian; others are English gentlemen of good blood and position, trained at the great public schools, who still preserve that fine

flavour of character, scholarship and power, which was once a common possession in England, but threatens under the present dispensation to become sparse or extinct. Others again are veterans of the old Anglo-Indian school, moulded in the larger traditions and sounder discipline of a strong and successful art who still keep some vestiges of the grand old Company days, still have something of a great and noble spirit, something of an adequate sense how high are the affairs they have to deal with and how serious the position they are privileged to hold. It was one of these, one endowed with all their good gifts, it was Mr. Allan Hume, a man acute and vigorous, happy in action and in speech persuasive, an ideal leader, who prompted, it may be by his own humane and lofty feelings, it may be by a more earthly desire of present and historic fame, took us by the hand and guided us with astonishing skill on our arduous venture towards preeminence and power. Mr. Hume, I have said, had all the qualities that go to make a fine leader in action. If only he had added to these the crowning gifts, reflectiveness, ideas, a comprehensive largeness of vision! Governing force, that splendid distinction inherited by England from her old Norman barons, governing force and the noble gifts that go along with it, are great things in their way, but they are not the whole of politics. Ideas, reflection, the political reason count for quite as much, are quite as essential. But on these, though individual Englishmen, men like Bolingbroke, Arnold, Burke, have had them pre-eminently, the race has always kept a very inadequate hold: and Mr. Hume is distinguished from his countrymen, not by the description of his merits, but by their degree. His original conception, I cannot help thinking, was narrow and impolitic.

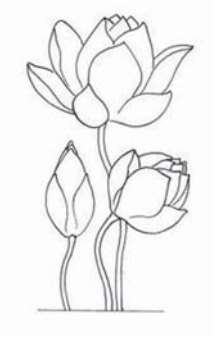
He must have known, none better, what immense calamities may often be ripening under a petty and serene outside. He must have been aware, none better, when the fierce pain of hunger and oppression cuts to the bone what awful elemental passions may start to life in the mildest, the most docile proletariates. Yet he chose practically to ignore his knowledge; he conceived it as his business to remove a merely political inequality, and strove to uplift the burgess into a merely isolated predominance. That the burgess should strive towards predominance, nay, that for a brief while he should have it, is only just, only natural: the mischief of it was that in Mr. Hume's formation the proletariate remained for any practical purpose a piece off the board. Yet the proletariate is, as I have striven to show, the real key of the situation. Torpid he is and immobile; he is nothing of an actual force, but he is a very great potential force, and whoever succeeds in understanding and eliciting his strength, becomes by the very fact master of the future. Our situation is indeed complex and difficult beyond any that has ever been imagined by the human intellect; but if there is one thing clear in it, it is that the right and fruitful policy for the burgess, the only policy that has any chance of eventual success, is to base his cause upon an adroit management of the proletariate. He must awaken and organize the entire power of the country and thus multiply infinitely his volume and significance, the better to attain a supremacy as much social as political. Thus and

thus only will he attain to his legitimate station, not an egoist class living for itself and in itself, but the crown of the nation and its head.

But Mr. Hume saw things in a different light, and let me confess out of hand, that once he had got a clear conception of his business, he proceeded in it with astonishing rapidity, sureness and tact. The clear-cut ease and strong simplicity of his movements were almost Roman; no crude tentatives, no infelicitous bungling, but always a happy trick of hitting the right nail on the head and that at the first blow. Roman too was his principle of advancing to a great object by solid and consecutive gradations. To begin by accustoming the burgess as well as his adversaries to his own corporate reality, to proceed by a definitive statement of his case to the Vice-regal Government, and for a final throw to make a vehement and powerful appeal to the English Parliament, an appeal that should be financed by the entire resources of middle-class India and carried through its stages with an iron heart and an obdurate resolution, expending moreover infinite energy, — so and so only could the dubious road Mr. Hume was treading, lead to anything but bathos and anticlimax. Nothing could be happier than the way in which the initial steps were made out. To be particularly obstreperous about his merits and his wrongs is certainly the likeliest way for a man to get a solid idea of his own importance and make an unpleasant impression on his ill-wishers. And for that purpose, for a blowing of trumpets in concert, for a self-assertion persistent, bold and clamorous, the Congress, however incapable in other directions may be pronounced perfectly competent; nay, it was the ideal thing. The second step was more difficult. He had to frame somehow a wording of our case at once bold and cautious, so as to hit Anglo-India in its weak place, yet properly sauced so as not to offend the palate, grown fastidious and epicurean, of the British House of Commons. Delicate as was the task he managed it with indubitable adroitness and a certain success. We may perhaps get at the inner sense of what happened, if we imagine Mr. Hume giving this sort of ultimatum to the Government. "The Indian burgess for whose education you have provided but whose patrimony you sequestrated and are woefully mismanaging, having now come to years of discretion, demands an account of your stewardship and the future management of his own estate. To compromise, if you are so good as to meet us half-way, we are not unready, but on any other hypothesis our appeal lies at once to the tribunal of the British Parliament. You will observe our process is perfectly constitutional." The sting of the scorpion lay as usual in its tail. Mr. Hume knew well the magic power of that word over Englishmen. With a German garrison it would have been naught; they would quickly have silenced with bayonets and prohibitive decrees any insolence of that sort. With French republicans it would have been naught; they would either have powerfully put it aside or frankly acceded to it. But the English are a nation of political jurists, and any claim franked by the epithet "constitutional" they are bound by the very law of their being to respect or at any rate appear to respect. The common run of Anglo-

Indians, blinded as selfishness always does blind people, might in their tremulous rage and panic vomit charges of sedition and shout for open war; but a Government of political jurists pledged to an occidentalizing policy could not do so without making nonsense of its past. Moreover a Government vice-regal in constitution cannot easily forget that it may have to run the gauntlet of adverse comment from authorities at home. But if they could not put us down with the strong hand or meet our delegates with a *non possumus*, they were not therefore going to concede to us any solid fraction of our demands. It is the ineradicable vice of the English nature that it can never be clear or direct. It recoils from simplicity as from a snake. It must shuffle, it must turn in on itself, it must preserve cherished fictions intact. And supposing unpleasant results to be threatened, it escapes from them through a labyrinth of unworthy and transparent subterfuges. Our rulers are unfortunately average Englishmen, Englishmen, that is to say, who are not in the habit of rising superior to themselves; and if they were uncandid, if they were tortuously hostile we may be indignant, but we cannot be surprised. Mr. Hume at any rate saw quite clearly that nothing was to be expected, perhaps he had never seriously expected anything, from that quarter. He had already instituted with really admirable promptitude, the primary stages of his appeal to the British Parliament.

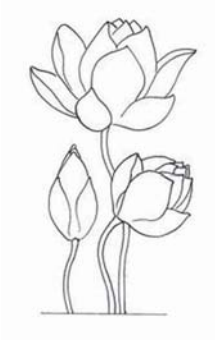
(S6: 58-62)



# AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

The last century of the second millennium after Christ has begun; of the twenty centuries it seems the most full of incalculable possibilities & to open the widest door on destiny. The mind of humanity feels it is conscious of a voice of a distant advancing Ocean and a sound as of the wings of a mighty archangel flying towards the world, but whether to empty the vials of the wrath of God or to declare a new gospel of peace upon earth and goodwill unto men, is as yet dark to our understanding.

(S6: 63)

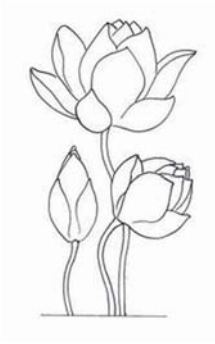


# OLD MOORE FOR 1901

| | |
|---|---|
| Opening months of year | political trouble & agitation for France<br>Eastern question to be revived |
| Feb. & March | Indian affairs cause anxiety |
| May | Recrudescence of troubles in Ireland |
| June | Anarchism rampant & Spanish King in danger from insidious foes |
| July | Numerous & startling catastrophes<br>Widespread disaster in the East |
| Autumn | Plague & Famine in India<br>Holland assumes diplomatic & dangerous attitude<br>Under ill advice its rulers may suffer reverse |
| November | Revival of sedition & turbulence in India & Egypt |
| December | insurrections, revolts & seditions the order of the day |

(S6: 64)

*Jottings from a notebook: These "predictions" are based on those found in the 1901 edition of* Old Moore's Almanack, *published in London.*



# THE CONGRESS MOVEMENT

With the opening of the twentieth century there is visible in India — visible at least to a trained political observer who is accustomed to divine the flux & change of inner forces from the slight signs that are the first faintly heard footsteps of the future & does not limit himself to the imposing & external features which are often merely the landmarks of the past — a remarkable & most vital change in the feeling and thought habit of our nation or at least of those classes in it whose thought & action most tells on the future. The lifestream of our national existence is taking a massive swerve towards a far other ocean than the direction of its flow hitherto had ever presaged. If I say that the Congress movement has spent itself, I shall be reminded of the Ahmedabad Congress, the success of the Industrial Exhibition and the newborn enthusiasm of Gujerat. Are these, it may be said, symptoms of decline & weakness? The declining forces of a bygone impetus touching a field which it had not yet affected, assume thereby some resemblance to their first youthful vigour but must not on that account be mistaken for the great working vitality of youth & manhood. The political activity of the nation gathering itself into the form of the Congress rose for some time with noise and a triumphant surging impetus until like a wave as it culminates breaking upon rocks, it dashed itself against the hard facts of human nature & the elementary conditions of successful political action which the Congress leaders had never grasped or had chosen to ignore; there it stopped and now there is throughout the country the languor, the weakness, the tendency to break up & discohere of the retiring wave. But behind & under cover of this failure & falling back there has been slowly & silently gathering another & vaster wave the first voices of which are now being heard, the crests of whose foam are just mounting here & there into view. Soon it will push aside or assimilate its broken forerunner, occupy the sea and ride on surging and shouting to its predestined failure or triumph. By the succession of such waves shall our national life move forward to its great & inevitable goal.

For us of the new age, who are to mount on the rising slope of the wave even if we do not live to ride on its crest, the first necessity is to understand the career of our predecessor, the principle of its life and the source of its weakness. I have said that the Congress movement broke itself on the hard facts of human nature [*incomplete*]

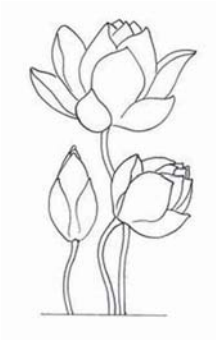
(S6: 65-66)

# FRAGMENT FOR A PAMPHLET

Having in an organisation of this kind a ready and efficient instrument of work, it remains to consider on what lines the energy of the nation may best expend itself. Strength and unity are our objective; ceaseless and self-reliant labour is our motive power; education, organisation and self-help are our road. It is moreover a triple strength we shall have to seek, strength mental, strength material and strength moral. Now it is not the object of this pamphlet to lay down rigidly or in detail the lines on which our movement ought to proceed; that is a question beyond the scope of any single intellect; it is for the united thought of the nation to decide. But the main principles and divergent branches which national energy is bound to take if it would do its work thoroughly may well be very briefly specified. To improve the mental force of the race will be our first object; and for this we need that we ourselves should think, more deeply, as well as that we should [*incomplete*]

(S6: 67)

*An undated fragment from a notebook.*



# UNITY

## AN OPEN LETTER TO THOSE WHO DESPAIR OF THEIR COUNTRY

To the sons of our mother Bharat who disclaim their sonhood, to the children of languor and selfishness, to the wooers of safety & ease, to the fathers of despair and death — greeting.

To those who impugning the holiness of their Mother refuse to lift her out of danger lest they defile their own spotless hands, to those who call on her to purify herself before they will save her from the imminent & already descending sword of Death, — greeting.

Lastly to those who love & perhaps have striven for her but having now grown themselves faint and hopeless bid others to despair and cease, — to them also greeting.

Brothers, — for whether unwise friends or selfish enemies of my Mother, you are still her children, — there is a common voice among you spreading dismay and weakness in the hearts of the people; for you say to each other and to all who would speak to you of their country, "Let us leave these things and look to our daily bread; this nation must perish but let us at least and our children try to live while live we can. We are fallen and depraved and our sins grow upon us day by day; we suffer & are oppressed and oppression increases with every setting of the sun; we are weak and languid and our weakness grows weaker and our languor more languid every time the sun rises in the east. We are sick and broken; we are idle and cowardly; we perish every year from famine and plague; disease decimates us, with every decade poverty annihilates family after family; where there were a hundred in one house, there are now ten; where there was once a flourishing village, the leopard and the jackal will soon inhabit. God is adverse to us and ourselves our worst enemies; we are decaying from within and smitten from without. The sword has been taken out of our hands and the bread is being taken out of our mouths. Worst of all we are disunited beyond hope of union and without union we must ere long perish. It may be five decades or it may be ten, but very soon this great and ancient nation will have perished from the face of the earth and the negro or the Malay will inherit the homes of our fathers & till the fields to glut the pockets & serve the pleasure of the Englishman or the Russian. Meanwhile it is well that the Congress should meet once a year & deceive the country with an appearance of life; that there should be posts for the children of the soil with enough salary to keep a few from starving, that a soulless education should suck the vigour & sweetness out of body & heart & brain of our children while flattering them with the vain lie that they are educated &

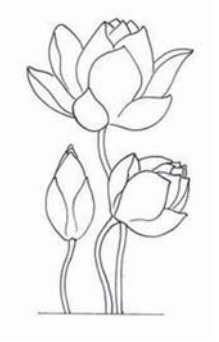
enlightened; for so shall the nation die peacefully of a sort of euthanasia lapped in lies & comforted with delusions and not violently & in a whirlwind of horror and a great darkness of fear & suffering."

With such Siren song do you slay the hearts of those who have still force and courage to strive against Fate and would rescue our Mother out of the hands of destruction. Yet I would willingly believe that matricides though you are, it is in ignorance. Come therefore, let us reason calmly together.

Is it indeed [*incomplete*]

(S6: 68-69)

*An incomplete essay from the period before the partition of Bengal.*



# THE PROPOSED RECONSTRUCTION OF BENGAL

## PARTITION OR ANNIHILATION?

In the excitement & clamour that has followed the revolutionary proposal of Lord Curzon's Government to break Bengal into pieces, there is some danger of the new question being treated only in its superficial aspects and the grave & startling national peril for which it is the preparation being either entirely missed or put out of sight. On a perusal of the telegrams which pour in from Eastern Bengal one is struck with the fact that they mainly deal with certain obvious & present results of the measure, not one of which is really vital. The contention repeatedly harped on that Assam is entirely different to us in race, language, manners etc. is in the first place not altogether true, and even if true, is very bad political strategy. In these days when the whole tendency of a reactionary Government is to emphasize old points of division & create new ones, it should plainly be the policy of the national movement to ignore points of division and to emphasize old and create new points of contact and union. The Assamese possess the same racial substratum as ourselves though the higher strata may be less profoundly Aryanised and their language is a branch of Bengali which but for an artificial diversion would have merged into the main stream of Bengali speech. Why then should we affront our brothers in Assam and play the game of our opponents by declaring them outcast from our sympathies? The loss by Eastern Bengal of a seat on the Legislative Council is again the loss of a delusion and does not really concern its true national welfare. Even separation from the Calcutta High Court if it should come about, means very little now that the High Court has definitely ceased to protect the liberties of the people and become an informal department of the Government. The dislocation of trade caused by its diversion from Calcutta to Chittagong might be a calamity of the first magnitude to Calcutta but its evil effects on Eastern Bengal would, the enemy might well argue, be of a very temporary character. The transfer of advanced provinces to a backward Government is, no doubt, in itself a vital objection to the measure but can be at once met by elevating the new province to the dignity of a Lieutenant-Governorship with a Legislative Council and a Chief Court. Indeed by this very simple though costly contrivance the Government can meet every practical objection of a political nature that has been urged against their proposal. There are signs which seem to indicate that this is the expedient to which Government will eventually resort and under the cover of it affect an even more extended amputation than it was at first convenient to announce; for Rajshahi as well as Faridpur & Backergunge, are it appears also to be cut away from us. There would remain the violation of Bengali sentiment and the social disturbance and mortal inconvenience to innumerable individuals which must

inevitably accompany such a disruption of old ties & interests and severance from the grand centre of Bengali life. But our sentiments the Government can very well afford to ignore and the disturbance and inconvenience they may politely regret as deplorable incidents indeed but after all minor & temporary compared with the great and permanent administrative necessities to be satisfied. Will then the people of Eastern Bengal finally, seeing the Government determined, pocket the bribe of a separate Lieutenant-Governorship, a Legislative Council and High Court and accept this violent revolution in our national life? Or will Western Bengal submit to lose Eastern Bengal on such terms? If not, then to nerve them for the struggle their refusal will involve they must rely on something deeper than sentiment, something more potent than social & personal interests, they must have the clear & indelible consciousness of the truth that this measure is no mere administrative proposal but a blow straight at the heart of the nation. The failure to voice clearly this, the true & vital side of the question can arise only from want of moral courage or from that fatal inability to pass beyond superficialities & details & understand in their fulness deep truths & grand issues in politics, which has made our political life for the last fifty years so miserably barren and ineffective. That it springs largely if not altogether from the latter is evidenced by the amazing apathy which allows Western Bengal to sit with folded hands and allow Eastern Bengal to struggle alone and unaided. Eastern Bengal is menaced with absorption into a backward province and therefore struggles; Western Bengal is menaced with no such calamity and can therefore sit lolling on its pillows, hookah-pipe in hand, waiting to see what happens; this apparently is how the question is envisaged by a race which considers itself the most intelligent and quick witted in the world. That it is something far other than this, that the danger involved is far more urgent and appalling, is what I shall try to point out in this article.

Unfortunately, to do this is impossible without treading on Lord Curzon's corns and indeed on the tenderest of all the crop. We have recently been permitted to know that our great Viceroy particularly objects to the imputation of motives to his Government — and not unnaturally; for Lord Curzon is a vain man loving praise & sensitive to dislike & censure; more than that, he is a statesman of unusual genius who is following a subtle and daring policy on which immense issues hang and it is naturally disturbing him to find that there are wits in India as subtle as his own which can perceive something at least of the goal at which he is aiming. But in this particular instance he has only himself & M$^{r}$ Risley to thank, if his motives have been discovered — or let us say, misinterpreted. The extraordinary farrago of discursive ineptitudes which has been put forward [*incomplete*]

(S6: 70-72)

*An incomplete essay written during an early stage of the agitation against the partition of Bengal, probably in 1904.*

# ON THE BENGALI AND THE MAHRATTA

The relation of the Bengalis to other races of India
Bengali & Mahratta
creation & concentration
traditions. weight of
intellectual basis. Rajput. Islam. Bihar.
resulting unerringness of tendency as illustrated by vernacular literature, preparatory light for religious & social reconstruction. tendency towards science & industry — failure in education & physical training.
In England or India?
Necessity of provincial before national development
Literary reconstruction. Academy, its duties.
Religious reconstruction
Social reconstruction
Educational reconstruction
Science & Industry
Political Reconstruction — the masses
Elements in Bengal, Prince, pleader & peasant
Possible expansion of Bengal

In England or India?
Prior necessity of Provincial Union . . . let the Bengalis & Mahrattas organize themselves & spread their influence over the rest of India.
the genius of the Bengalis is at present original, creative, moving towards development & acquisition, the genius of the Mahrattas critical, conservative, standing in the concentration of what it has already developed & acquired.
Mahratta activity has been the most brilliant passage in our history since the fall of Prithvi Raj & we may well look back to it with pride & admiration but it is to be feared that it did not proceed upon a sufficiently intellectual basis. Had the movement of thought & intelligence expressed in the writings of Ramdas, Tukaram, Moropunt been allowed first to fulfil itself & the Mahratta development refrained from transferring itself too hastily into the sphere of political action, the result might have been more sure, more lasting.
The Bengali is not weighted in the race by traditions inconsistent with present necessities.
That we should all act together, is a fine thing, but the question still remains what will that action come to? When all the limbs are themselves too weak & incoherent to effect anything, it is cold comfort to be told that they are learning to cohere with

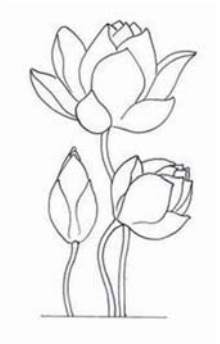
one another. Let them cohere among themselves first.

In a struggle between a strong Gov$^{t}$ & an organized nation, when that struggle is put to the arbitration of armed force, all the chances are with the Gov$^{t}$, & in nine cases out of ten it is morally sure of victory, but where the struggle is decided by the clash of social & intellectual agencies & under conditions of law, the relations are exactly reversed, & indeed they are more than reversed.

The India of today may be presented under the image of the Greek biga [*incomplete*]

(S6: 73-74)

*Jottings on a loose sheet of paper; date uncertain.*



# ON 'BHAWANI MANDIR'

## (1905)

(The pamphlet was put in as evidence in the Alipore Bomb Case).

Bhawani Mandir was written by Sri Aurobindo but it was more Barin's idea than his. It was not meant to train people for assassination but for revolutionary preparation of the country. The idea was soon dropped as far as Sri Aurobindo was concerned, but something of the kind was attempted by Barin in the Maniktala Garden and it is to this evidently that Hemchandra refers.

*

> [An attempt was made to find a site where the Bhawani Mandir idea could be put into operation; later the plan was dropped.]

Sri Aurobindo does not remember anything of this kind nor of any formal decision to abandon the Bhawani Mandir idea. This selection of a site and a head of the monastery must have been simply an idea of Barin. He had travelled among the hills trying to find a suitable place but caught hill-fever and had to abandon his search and return to Baroda. Subsequently he went back to Bengal, but Sri Aurobindo did not hear of any discovery of a suitable place. Sakaria Swami was Barin's Guru: he had been a fighter in the Mutiny on the rebel side and he showed at the breaking of the Surat Congress a vehement patriotic excitement which caused his death because it awoke the poison of the bite of a mad dog which he had reduced to inactivity by a process of his Yogic will; but Sri Aurobindo would not have chosen him for any control of the political side of such an institution. The idea of Bhawani Mandir simply lapsed of itself. Sri Aurobindo thought no more about it, but Barin who clung to the idea tried to establish something like it on a small scale in the Maniktala Garden.

(S36: 74-75)

There is a similarity to the Ananda Math in that both envisage spiritual life and politics together. The temple of Bhawani was to be there for initiating men for complete consecration to the service of Mother India. It was for preparing political Sannyasins. But this scheme did not get materialised. Sri Aurobindo took to politics and Barin to revolution. The latter tried to find a place in the Vindhya mountains for the Bhavani mandir. But he came back with mountain fever.

(*Evening Talks*: 114-15)

# BHAWANI MANDIR

OM
Namas Chandikayai.

A temple is to be erected and consecrated to Bhawani, the mother, among the hills. To all the children of the mother, the call is sent forth to help in the sacred work.

## WHO IS BHAWANI?

Who is Bhawani, the mother, and why should we erect a temple to Her?

## BHAWANI IS THE INFINITE ENERGY.

In the unending revolutions of the world, as the wheel of the Eternal turns mightily in its courses, the Infinite Energy which streams forth from the Eternal and sets the wheel to work, looms up in the vision of man in various aspects and infinite forms. Each aspect creates and marks an age. Sometimes She is Love, sometimes She is Knowledge, sometimes She is Renunciation, sometimes She is Pity. This Infinite Energy is Bhawani. She also is Durga, She is Kali, She is Radha the Beloved, She is Lakshmi. She is our Mother and the Creatress of us all.

## BHAWANI IS SHAKTI.

In the present age, the Mother is manifested as the mother of Strength. She is pure Shakti.

## THE WHOLE WORLD IS GROWING FULL OF THE MOTHER AS SHAKTI.

Let us raise our eyes and cast them upon the world around us. Wherever we turn our gaze, huge masses of strength rise before our vision, tremendous, swift and inexorable forces, gigantic figures of energy, terrible sweeping columns of force. All is growing large and strong. The Shakti of war, the Shakti of wealth, the Shakti of Science are tenfold more mighty and colossal, a hundredfold more fierce, rapid and busy in their activity, a thousandfold more prolific in resources, weapons and instruments than ever before in recorded history. Everywhere the Mother is at work; from Her mighty and shaping hands enormous forms of Rakshasas, Asuras, Devas are leaping forth into the arena of the world. We have seen the slow but mighty rise of great

empires in the West, we have seen the swift, irresistible and impetuous bounding into life of Japan. Some are Mleccha Shaktis clouded in their strength, black or blood-crimson with *tamas* or *rajas*, others are Arya Shaktis, bathed in a pure flame of renunciation and utter self-sacrifice: but all are the Mother in Her new phase, remoulding, creating. She is pouring Her spirit into the old; She is whirling into life the new.

## WE IN INDIA FAIL IN ALL THINGS FOR WANT OF SHAKTI.

But in India the breath moves slowly, the afflatus is long in coming. India, the ancient mother, is indeed striving to be reborn, striving with agony and tears, but she strives in vain. What ails her, she, who is after all so vast and might be so strong? There is surely some enormous defect, something vital is wanting in us; nor is it difficult to lay our finger on the spot. We have all things else, but we are empty of strength, void of energy. We have abandoned Shakti and are therefore abandoned by Shakti. The Mother is not in our hearts, in our brains, in our arms.

The wish to be reborn we have in abundance, there is no deficiency there. How many attempts have been made, how many movements have been begun, in religion, in society, in politics! But the same fate has overtaken or is preparing to overtake them all. They flourish for a moment, then the impulse wanes, the fire dies out, and if they endure, it is only as empty shells, forms from which the Brahma has gone or in which it lies overpowered with *tamas* and inert. Our beginnings are mighty, but they have neither sequel nor fruit.

Now we are beginning in another direction; we have started a great industrial movement which is to enrich and regenerate an impoverished land. Untaught by experience, we do not perceive that this movement must go the way of all the others, unless we first seek the one essential thing, unless we acquire strength.

## OUR KNOWLEDGE IS A DEAD THING FOR WANT OF SHAKTI.

Is it knowledge that is wanting? We Indians born and bred in a country where Jnana has been stored and accumulated since the race began, bear about in us the inherited gains of many thousands of years. Great giants of knowledge rise among us even today to add to the store. Our capacity has not shrunk, the edge of our intellect has not been dulled or blunted, its receptivity and flexibility are as varied as of old. But it is a dead knowledge, a burden under which we are bowed, a poison which is corroding us rather than as it should be a staff to support our feet, and a weapon in our hands; for this is the nature of all great things that when they are not used or are ill used, they turn upon the bearer and destroy him.

Our knowledge then, weighed down with a heavy load of *tamas*, lies under the curse of impotence and inertia. We choose to fancy indeed, now-a-days, that if we

acquire Science, all will be well. Let us first ask ourselves what we have done with the knowledge we already possess, or what have those, who have already acquired Science, been able to do for India. Imitative and incapable of initiative, we have striven to copy the methods of England, and we had not the strength: we would now copy the methods of the Japanese, a still more energetic people; are we likely to succeed any better? The mighty force of knowledge which European Science bestows is a weapon for the hands of a giant, it is the mace of Bheemsen: what can a weakling do with it but crush himself in the attempt to wield it?

## OUR BHAKTI CANNOT LIVE AND WORK FOR WANT OF SHAKTI.

Is it love, enthusiasm, Bhakti that is wanting? These are ingrained in the Indian nature, but in the absence of Shakti we cannot concentrate, we cannot direct, we cannot even preserve it. Bhakti is the leaping flame, Shakti is the fuel. If the fuel is scanty how long can the fire endure?

When the strong nature, enlightened by knowledge, disciplined and given a giant's strength by Karma, lifts itself up in love and adoration to God, that is the Bhakti which endures and keeps the soul for ever united with the Divine. But the weak nature is too feeble to bear the impetus of so mighty a thing as perfect Bhakti; he is lifted up for a moment, then the flame soars up to Heaven, leaving him behind exhausted and even weaker than before. Every movement of any kind of which enthusiasm and adoration are the life, must fail and soon burn itself out so long as the human material from which it proceeds is frail and light in substance.

## INDIA THEREFORE NEEDS SHAKTI ALONE.

The deeper we look, the more we shall be convinced that the one thing wanting, which we must strive to acquire before all others, is strength — strength physical, strength mental, strength moral, but above all strength spiritual which is the one inexhaustible and imperishable source of all the others. If we have strength, everything else will be added to us easily and naturally. In the absence of strength we are like men in a dream who have hands but cannot seize or strike, who have feet but cannot run.

## INDIA, GROWN OLD AND DECREPIT IN WILL, HAS TO BE REBORN.

Whenever we strive to do anything, after the first rush of enthusiasm is spent, a paralysing helplessness seizes upon us. We often see in the cases of old men full of years and experience that the very excess of knowledge seems to have frozen their

powers of action and their powers of will. When a great feeling or a great need overtakes them and it is necessary to carry out its promptings in action, they hesitate, ponder, discuss, make tentative efforts and abandon them or wait for the safest and easiest way to suggest itself, instead of taking the most direct; thus the time when it was possible and necessary to act passes away. Our race has grown just such an old man with stores of knowledge, with ability to feel and desire, but paralysed by simple sluggishness, senile timidity, senile feebleness. If India is to survive, she must be made young again. Rushing and billowing streams of energy must be poured into her; her soul must become, as it was in the old times, like the surges, vast, puissant, calm or turbulent at will, an ocean of action or of force.

## INDIA CAN BE REBORN.

Many of us utterly overcome by *tamas*, the dark and heavy demon of inertia, are saying now-a-days that it is impossible; that India is decayed, bloodless and lifeless, too weak ever to recover; that our race is doomed to extinction. It is a foolish and idle saying. No man or nation need be weak unless *he* chooses, no man or nation need perish unless *he* deliberately chooses extinction.

## WHAT IS A NATION? THE SHAKTI OF ITS MILLIONS.

For what is a nation? What is our mother-country? It is not a piece of earth, nor a figure of speech, nor a fiction of the mind. It is a mighty Shakti, composed of the Shaktis of all the millions of units that make up the nation, just as Bhawani Mahisha-Mardini sprang into being from the Shaktis of all the millions of gods assembled in one mass of force and welded into unity. The Shakti we call India, Bhawani Bharati, is the living unity of the Shaktis of three hundred millions of people; but she is inactive, imprisoned in the magic circle of *tamas*, the self-indulgent inertia and ignorance of her sons. To get rid of *tamas* we have but to wake the Brahma within.

## IT IS OUR OWN CHOICE WHETHER WE CREATE A NATION OR PERISH.

What is it that so many thousands of holy men, Sadhus and Sannyasis, have preached to us silently by their lives? What was the message that radiated from the personality of Bhagawan Ramkrishna Paramhansa? What was it that formed the kernel of the eloquence with which the lionlike heart of Vivekananda sought to shake the world? It is this that in every one of these three hundred millions of men from the Raja on his throne to the coolie at his labour, from the Brahmin absorbed in his *sandhya* to the Pariah walking shunned of men, GOD LIVETH. We are all gods and creators, because the energy of God is within us and all life is creation; not only the making

of new forms is creation, but preservation is creation, destruction itself is creation. It rests with us what we shall create; for we are not, unless we choose, puppets dominated by Fate and Maya: we are facets and manifestations of Almighty Power.

INDIA MUST BE REBORN, BECAUSE HER REBIRTH
IS DEMANDED BY THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD.

India cannot perish, our race cannot become extinct, because among all the divisions of mankind it is to India that is reserved the highest and the most splendid destiny, the most essential to the future of the human race. It is *she* who must send forth from herself the future religion of the entire world, the Eternal religion which is to harmonise all religion, science and philosophies and make mankind one soul. In the sphere of morality, likewise, it is her mission to purge barbarism (mlecchahood) out of humanity and to *aryanise* the world. In order to do this, she must first re-aryanise herself.

It was to initiate this great work, the greatest and most wonderful work ever given to a race, that Bhagawan Ramkrishna came and Vivekananda preached. If the work does not progress as it once promised to do, it is because we have once again allowed the terrible cloud of *tamas* to settle down on our souls — fear, doubt, hesitation, sluggishness. We have taken, some of us, the Bhakti which poured forth from the one and the Jnana given us by the other, but from the lack of Shakti, from the lack of Karma, we have not been able to make our Bhakti a living thing. May we yet remember that it was Kali, who is Bhawani mother of strength, whom Ramkrishna worshipped and with whom he became one.

But the destiny of India will not wait on the *falterings* and failings of individuals; the mother demands that men shall arise to institute her worship and make it universal.

TO GET STRENGTH
WE MUST ADORE THE MOTHER OF STRENGTH.

Strength then and again strength and yet more strength is the need of our race. But if it is strength we desire, how shall we gain it if we do not adore the Mother of strength? She demands worship not for Her own sake, but in order that She may help us and give Herself to us. This is no fantastic idea, no superstition but the ordinary law of the universe. The gods cannot, if they would, give themselves unasked. Even the Eternal comes not unaware upon man. Every devotee knows by experience that we must turn to Him and desire and adore Him before the Divine Spirit pours in its ineffable beauty and ecstasy upon the soul. What is true of the Eternal, is true also of Her who goes forth from Him.

## RELIGION THE TRUE PATH.

Those who, possessed with western ideas, look askance at any return to the old sources of energy may well consider a few fundamental facts.

## THE EXAMPLE OF JAPAN.

I. There is no instance in history of a more marvellous and sudden up-surging of strength in a nation than modern Japan. All sorts of theories had been started to account for the uprising, but now intellectual Japanese are telling us what were the fountains of that mighty awakening, the sources of that inexhaustible strength. They were drawn from religion. It was the Vedantic teachings of Oyomei and the recovery of *Shintoism* with its worship of the national Shakti of Japan in the image and person of the Mikado that enabled the little island empire to wield the stupendous weapons of western knowledge and science as lightly and invincibly as Arjun wielded the Gandiv.

## INDIA'S GREATER NEED OF SPIRITUAL REGENERATION.

II. India's need of drawing from the fountains of religion is far greater than was ever Japan's; for the Japanese had only to revitalise and perfect a strength that already existed. We have to create strength where it did not exist before; we have to change our natures, and become new men with new hearts, to be born again. There is no scientific process, no machinery for that. Strength can only be created by drawing it from the internal and inexhaustible reservoirs of the Spirit, from that Adya-Shakti of the Eternal which is the fountain of all new existence. To be born again means nothing but to revive the Brahma within us, and that is a spiritual process, — no effort of the body or the intellect can compass it.

## RELIGION THE PATH NATURAL TO THE NATIONAL MIND.

III. All great awakenings in India, all her periods of mightiest and most varied vigour have drawn their vitality from the fountain-heads of some deep religious awakening. Wherever the religious awakening has been complete and grand, the national energy it has created has been gigantic and puissant; wherever the religious movement has been narrow or incomplete, the national movement has been broken, imperfect or temporary. The persistence of this phenomenon is proof that it is ingrained in the temperament of the race. If you try other and foreign methods, we shall either gain our end with tedious slowness, painfully and imperfectly, or we shall not attain it at all. Why abandon the plain way which God and the Mother have marked out for you to choose faint and devious paths of your own treading?

## THE SPIRIT WITHIN IS THE TRUE SOURCE OF STRENGTH.

IV. The Brahma within, the one and indivisible ocean of spiritual force is that from which all life material and mental is drawn. This is beginning to be as much recognised by leading western thinkers as it was from the old days by the East. If it be so, then spiritual energy is the source of all other strength. *There* are the fathomless fountain-heads, the deep and inexhaustible sources. The shallow surface springs are easier to reach, but they soon run dry. Why not then go deep instead of scratching the surface? The result will repay the labour.

## THREE THINGS NEEDFUL.

We need three things answering to three fundamental laws.

### I. BHAKTI — THE TEMPLE OF THE MOTHER.

*We cannot get strength unless we adore the Mother of strength.*

We will therefore build a temple to the white Bhawani, the mother of strength, the *Mother* of *India*; and we will build it in a place far from the contamination of modern cities and as yet little trodden by man, in a high and pure air steeped in calm and energy. This temple will be the centre from which Her worship is to flow over the whole country; for there worshipped among the hills, She will pass like fire into the brains and hearts of Her worshippers. This also is what the Mother has commanded.

### II. KARMA — A NEW ORDER OF BRAHMACHARINS.

*Adoration will be dead and ineffective unless it is transmuted into Karma.*

We will therefore have a *math* with a new Order of Karma-Yogins attached to the temple, men who have renounced all in order to work for the Mother. Some may, if they choose, be complete Sannyasins, most will be Brahmacharins who will return to the *grihasthasram* when their allotted work is finished; but all must accept renunciation.

### WHY? FOR TWO REASONS: —

(1) Because it is only in proportion as we put from us the pre-occupation of bodily desires and interests, the sensual gratifications, lusts, longings, indolences of the material world, that we can return to the ocean of spiritual force within us.

(2) Because for the development of Shakti, entire concentration is necessary; the mind must be devoted entirely to its aim as a spear is hurled to its mark; if other

cares and longings distract the mind, the spear will be carried out from its straight course and miss the target. We need a nucleus of men in whom the Shakti is developed to its uttermost extent, in whom it fills every corner of the personality and overflows to fertilise the earth. These, having the fire of Bhawani in their hearts and brains, will go forth and carry the flame to every nook and cranny of our land.

## III. JNANA — THE GREAT MESSAGE.

*Bhakti and Karma cannot be perfect and enduring unless they are based upon Jnana.*

The Brahmacharins of the Order will therefore be taught to fill their souls with knowledge and base their work upon it as upon a rock. What shall be the basis of their knowledge? What but the great *so-aham*, the mighty formula of the Vedanta, the ancient gospel which has yet to reach the heart of the nation, the knowledge which when vivified by Karma and Bhakti delivers man out of all fear and all weakness.

स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात्।

## THE MESSAGE OF THE MOTHER.

When, therefore, you ask who is Bhawani the mother, She herself answers you, "I am the Infinite Energy which streams forth from the Eternal in the world and Eternal in yourselves. I am the Mother of the Universe, the Mother of the Worlds, and for you who are children of the Sacred land, *aryabhumi*, made of her clay and reared by her sun and winds, I am Bhawani Bharati, Mother of India."

Then if you ask why we should erect a temple to Bhawani the mother, hear Her answer, "Because I have commanded it and because by making a centre for the future religion, you will be furthering the immediate will of the Eternal and storing up merit which will make you strong in this life and great in another. You will be helping to create a nation, to consolidate an age, to *aryanise* a world. And that nation is your own, that age is the age of yourselves and your children, that world is no fragment of land bounded by seas and hills, but the whole earth with her teeming millions."

Come then, hearken to the call of the Mother. She is already in our hearts waiting to manifest Herself, waiting to be worshipped, — inactive because the God in us is concealed by *tamas*, troubled by Her inactivity, sorrowful because Her children will not call on Her to help them. You who feel Her stirring within you, fling off the black veil of self, break down the imprisoning walls of indolence, help Her each as you feel impelled, with your bodies or with your intellect or with your speech or with your wealth or with your prayers and worship, each man according

to his capacity. Draw not back, for against those who were called and heard Her not, She may well be wroth in the day of Her coming; but to those who help Her advent even a little, how radiant with beauty and kindness will be the face of their Mother!

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## APPENDIX.

The work and rules of the new Order of Sannyasis will be somewhat as follows

### GENERAL RULES.

1. All who undertake the life of Brahmacharya for the Mother, will have to vow themselves to Her service for *four* years, after which they will be free to continue the work or return to family life.

2. All money received by them in the Mother's name will go to the Mother's Service. For themselves they will be allowed to receive shelter and their meals, when necessary, and nothing more.

3. Whatever they may earn for themselves, e.g. by the publication of books etc., they must give at least half of it to the service of the Mother.

4. They will observe entire obedience to the Head of the Order and his one or two assistants in all things connected with the work or with their religious life.

5. They will observe strictly the discipline and rules of *achar* and purity, bodily and mental, prescribed by the Heads of the Order.

6. They will be given periods for rest or for religious improvement during which they will stop at the *math*, but the greater part of the year they will spend in work outside. This rule will apply to all except the few necessary for the service of the Temple and those required for the central direction of the work.

7. There will be no gradations of rank among the workers and none must seek for distinction or mere personal fame, but practise strength and self-effacement.

### II. WORK FOR THE PEOPLE.

8. Their chief work will be that of mass instruction and help to the poor and ignorant.

9. This they will strive to effect in various ways —

1. Lectures and demonstrations suited to an uneducated intelligence.
2. Classes and nightly schools.
3. Religious teachings.
4. Nursing the sick.

5. Conducting works of charity.
6. Whatever other good work their hands may find to do and the Order approves.

## III. WORKS FOR THE MIDDLE CLASS.

10. They will undertake, according as they may be directed, various works of public utility in the big towns and elsewhere connected especially with the education and religious life and instruction of the middle classes, as well as with other public needs.

## IV. WORK WITH THE WEALTHY CLASSES.

11. They will approach the zamindars, landholders and rich men generally, and endeavour —

1. To promote sympathy between the zamindars and the peasants and heal all discords.
2. To create the link of a single and living religious spirit and a common passion for one great ideal between all classes.
3. To turn the minds of rich men to works of public beneficence and charity to those in their neighbourhood independent of the hope of reward and official distinction.

## V. GENERAL WORK FOR THE COUNTRY.

12. As soon as funds permit, some will be sent to foreign countries to study lucrative arts and manufactures.

13. They will be as Sannyasis during their period of study, never losing hold of their habits of purity and self-abnegation.

14. On their return they will establish with the aid of the Order, factories and workshops, still living the life of Sannyasis and devoting all their profits to the sending of more and more such students to foreign countries.

15. Others will be sent to travel through various countries on foot, inspiring by their lives, behaviour and conversation, sympathy and love for the Indian people in the European nations and preparing the way for their acceptance of Aryan ideals.

After the erection and consecration of the Temple, the development of the work of the Order will be pushed on as rapidly as possible or as the support and sympathy of the public allows. With the blessing of the Mother this will not fail us.

(S6: 75-92)

# ETHICS EAST AND WEST

[. . . . . if the] natural disparity which is so confidently asserted by Europeans and reasserted in echo by not a few Anglicised or revolted Hindus, be a truth and not a fiction of racial pride, the national movement in India becomes a blunder and a solecism. For this movement proceeds on two assertions which the European position directly traverses, the natural equality of the Asiatic to the European, which justifies us in aspiring to liberty and the control of our own destinies and the immense superiority of our own religion, ethics and social ideals to the Western. In traffic with the West we seek only to import the scientific knowledge, the mechanical apparatus of war and communication and the method of efficient organisation in Government which have made it so eminently formidable, but we wish to bar out, if may be, all that disease of the intellect & social constitution born of individualistic materialism which makes it so eminently miserable. If we are right, our spiritual and moral strength without which material greatness cannot endure lies in the use and development of our own religion and ideals. Otherwise, our whole aspiration is an unhealthy dream and there is no reason in Nature why we should not remain for ever the subjects and servants of European races with an occasional change of masters as our sole relief in the long monotony of servitude. It is therefore essential for us to know the truth. In the following pages I have sought to provide the materials for a correct judgment, aiming chiefly at a right presentation of the spirit and truth of our ancient philosophy, religion and ethics, which have hitherto been presented to the world by European expositors who show at every step their imperfect and often utterly erroneous understanding of what they pretend to explain. It is necessary to understand aright before we praise or condemn; and the ethical aspect of Hinduism is like everything Hindu so much a part and a thing of itself that it is only those of whose blood & bone it has become a part who can be trusted to put it before others from a right perspective and in the true proportions. Only then can the issue between the East and West be justly decided.

## CHAPTER I

## THE ETHICAL BASIS IN EUROPE

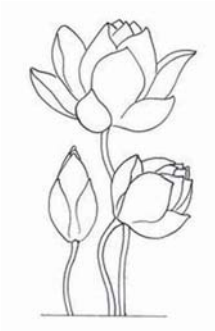
Morality is like all else in this world of perceptions, phenomenal in its nature; it is neither eternal nor unchanging, but depends on two things, that in which it lives & moves and the conditions that surround & work upon its receptacle. It is true that certain virtues, purity, humanity, truth, self-sacrifice are at present vaguely recognized

as moral standards by all civilized peoples; but they were not recognized at all times & places in the past and there is no guarantee that they will be recognized at all times and places in the future. Moreover the definite meaning and extent of these names and the limits within which men are willing to honour them in practical life, varies immensely in different countries. The standard of morality is determined not by the profession of the community, but by the actual though unwritten code of actions which the community as a whole strives to practise and which, even if it does not succeed in attaining, it honestly approves & honours in those who do attain it. Indeed the extraordinary variations & flat contradiction of the ethical standard as determined by place and time, has become so much a commonplace that it is hardly worth while to dwell upon it. The no less extraordinary variations and flat contradictions of the ethical standard as practised in the same place and the same time, have not received so much attention, and yet they are of even greater psychological value.

*Determined by time and place*. All things move indeed in space and time and are to a certain extent conditioned by them; but they are not determined by these mental abstractions. The determining forces are always two, the adhara or receptacle or field and the conditions which act on the receptacle. The field of morality is triple, the individual, the collective mind of the community, race, nation or body of nations that profess it and the collective mind of all humanity, the latter attaining especial importance in these days when all parts of the world are in some sort of touch with each other. The conditions which act on it are the various physical and other influences which have acted or are now acting on the individual and collective mind and most of all its spiritual history.

(S6: 93-95)

*A fragment from the opening of a proposed work of political philosophy.*



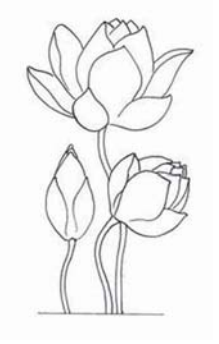
# RESOLUTION AT A SWADESHI MEETING

[*The first resolution of the meeting, proposed by Nagar Seth Haribhakti, was: "Kaka Joshi started the Swadeshi movement, but due to several reasons it became lifeless. Now however it is more alive than ever as a result of the life-giving medicine the Bengali physicians have given it."*]

The second resolution was proposed by Principal Aravind Ghose. It ran: "Kaka Joshi's efforts proved unsuccessful because the conditions were not favourable at that time. The present wave of support for the movement is very strong, and we should make comprehensive efforts to prevent the wave from receding. We must ensure that the movement is sustained." Such was the content of the second resolution put forward by Principal Ghose in his fluent English. The resolution was seconded by Seth Chimanlal Samal Becharwala in Gujarati, and by Rao Bahadur Sarangapani.

(S6: 96)

*A resolution proposed at a Swadeshi meeting in Baroda on 24 September 1905. The text was published in Marathi in the* Kesari *(Poona) on 3 October 1905. This English text has been retranslated from the Marathi.*



# A SAMPLE-ROOM FOR SWADESHI ARTICLES

*Objects*

1. I propose that a permanent sample-room should be maintained by the Baroda Industrial Association in its own offices, fulfilling the following purposes

(1) an ocular demonstration to the public and the merchants of the number and kind of goods they can have from their own country;

(2) a standing advertisement of Swadeshi articles procurable in the local market;

(3) a register of information available to all interested in the industrial development of the country.

*Means of providing the Sample-room at a minimum expense*

2. The sample-room should be begun on a modest scale and gradually enlarged in its scope. The Sub-Committee should see that no means of saving expense should be spared consistently with the usefulness of the institution.

3. The saving of expense may be effected in various ways.

In the first place the Committee should at first confine itself only to those articles which are in daily or common use and therefore essential to the needs or comfort of the general population.

4. Having fixed on the kind of articles to which it will limit itself, the Committee will first inquire what goods, e.g. clothes etc. can be had through the local merchants and obtain samples from them gratis. As the sample-room will be in its secondary character a free advertisement for the merchants, they will probably be glad enough to seize the opportunity.

5. Again the Committee should draw up a circular (type-written) stating the objects of the sample-room, pointing out that it will be a free advertisement introducing all goods sent there to the local market, and inviting manufacturers to send samples. This announcement may also be made in the local papers as well as one or two widely circulated journals outside. The circular may, if necessary, be franked by responsible persons holding good positions in order to assure the manufacturers etc. of the *bona-fides* of the institution. If so assured, they will probably be quite willing to secure an advertisement by sending their samples gratis; for it must be remembered that the goods will be mostly of a common order and therefore cheap.

6. Still farther to lighten the burden, the Association may approach the authorities to make an exception as to *Jakat* in the case of articles sent for the sample-room and certified by responsible officers of the Association.

7. In the case of samples required which are not sent by the manufacturer on the general invitation, a special request may be made to him to afford this facility to the Association.

8. Only in case these methods fail, the Committee will be entitled in case of necessity to purchase samples. In this way the cost of providing the sample-room will be kept at a minimum.

9. It will be the business of the Information Committee to see that the sample-room is kept up to date.

10. Outside the limits laid down in Para 3, the Committee will gladly accept samples but will not buy them.

11. This rule however should not prevent the extension of the scope of the sample-room when funds & opportunity permit.

*Establishment*

12. The establishment of the sample-room should consist of at least one clerk and one servant.

N.B. The undersigned hopes after some time (if the scheme be adopted) to provide a clerk either gratis or for a minimum pay covering only his food and lodging, but until then or failing this, he is ready to pay at least Rs 12 monthly for the purpose.

13. The sample-room will remain constantly under the inspection of the General Secretaries and especially of the Secretary for the Information Committee.

*Means for the Better Fulfilment of the First Object*

14. For the better fulfilment of object (1) in Para 1, the samples should be carefully classified by the Committee and arranged on a clear system, labels & numbers with the descriptive name of the article, its ordinary price and place of production affixed.

(2) Any considerable changes in price may occasionally be entered, but the Committee will not hold itself responsible for accuracy in this respect.

*Means for the ditto of the Second Object*

15. For the better fulfilment of object (2) the following arrangement may be made

A small placard may be affixed to goods procurable [*incomplete*]

(S6: 97-99)

*An incomplete proposal to establish a place in Baroda where Swadeshi products could be exhibited; undated but certainly 1905 or 1906.*

# ON THE BARISAL PROCLAMATION

[*This essay was written after an incident that took place in Barisal, east Bengal, on 7 November 1905. Its first page or pages are not available.*]

[. . . .] nettle firmly in the hope that prompt measures might crash if not root out the growing evil. With a Fraser and a Fuller holding the bureaucratic sceptre there could be little doubt which of the two alternatives would recommend itself to the authorities. Sir Andrew Fraser, hampered with the traditions of legality and bureaucratic formalism, has begun cautiously, thundering loudly but sparing the lightning flash. M[r] Fuller, violent, rude & truculent in character and accustomed to the autocracy of a non-regulated province, has rushed like a mad bull at the obnoxious object; his violence may or may not temporarily defeat itself by compelling the Government of India or the Secretary of State to intervene, but even should this happen it will make little difference. The policy of repression is a necessity to the Government and will only be foregone, if the national leaders on their side desist from the new Nationalism.

This being the situation, what must be the attitude of the nation in the face of this crisis in its destinies? The result of the first violent collision between the opposing armies of despotism and liberty, has not been encouraging to the lovers of freedom. No Bengali can read the account of the interview between M[r] Fuller and the Barisal leaders, without a blush of shame for himself and his nation. A headstrong and violent man, presuming insufferably on the high position to which an inscrutable Providence has suffered him to climb, summons the leaders of a spirited community, men of culture, worth and dignity, strong in the trust and support of the people, and after subjecting them to insults of an unprecedented grossness compels them at the point of the bludgeon to withdraw a public appeal which their position as leaders had made it their mere duty to publish and circulate. What ought these men to have done in reply? Surely they should have repelled the insults with a calm and simple dignity, or if that would not serve, with a self-assertion as haughty, if less violent than the self-assertion of the unmannerly official before them, and to the demand for the withdrawal of their appeal they should have returned a plain and quiet negative. And if as a result M[r] Fuller were immediately to send them to the prison, or the whipping post, or the gallows itself, what difference would that make to their duty as public men & national leaders? But the Barisal leaders instead submitted as meekly as rebuked & beaten schoolboys to a hectoring pedagogue cane in hand. The citizens of Rungpur showed at least a firmer spirit.

Nevertheless the Barisal leaders have strong excuses for their failure of nerve. Decades of selfish ease & comfort, of subservience to officialdom, of traditional meekness & docility have taken the strong fibre out of the middle-class Bengali and

left him a mass of mere softness and pliability. Out of such material champions of liberty cannot be made in a single day, nor has the national movement as yet reached that stage of high pressure surcharged with electricity & fiery vitality when weaklings are turned into giants and the timid into martyrs & heroes. Confronted with the formidable & frowning aspect of M^r^ Fuller, deafened with the thunders of this self-important Godling, cut off from the accustomed inspiration of cheering crowds, what wonder if the citizens of Barisal were browbeaten, [ . . . ] & cowed into submission.

Moreover, the Calcutta leaders are not without blame for their failure of courage. It should never have been left to an out of the way township like Barisal to issue the proclamations which have awaked the Fullerian thunders; that was the duty of the leaders of the nation in the metropolis. A small locality cannot be strong enough to fight the battles of the nation unaided, and if local leaders feel themselves in the critical moment, too weak & isolated to resist violent oppression, they are to be more pitied than blamed. We are suffering for our defective organisation. Had the Calcutta chiefs organized these local Committees throughout the land before the Partition became an accomplished fact, had Barisal felt that it had not only the enthusiasm but the organized strength of the nation behind it, the present situation would have soon been made impossible.

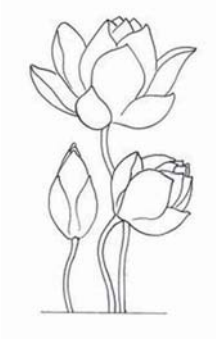
Enough of the past; let us turn to our duty in the future. The one thing that would be impossible and intolerable is any kind of submission to the Fullerian policy. Whatever form of public activity has been stopped by the threat of the Gurkha rifles, must be recontinued. If the Barisal proclamation has been withdrawn, it must be reissued and this time not by the Barisal leaders to their district but by the national leaders in Calcutta to every district, town and village whether in West, East or North Bengal & in order to constitute the Barisal committees, let Babu Surendranath Banerji go down in person aided by M^r^ A. Chowdhury & Babu Bipin Chundra Pal, who, if summoned by M^r^ Fuller or any Government official, shall refuse to have any dealings with them, until the former shall have publicly apologised for his disgraceful & ungentlemanly conduct and given guarantees against its recurrence. We will see whether even M^r^ Fuller in his madness, will dare to touch these sacred heads guarded as they are by the love & trust of a nation of 40 millions. And if to punish this popular self-assertion, the rifles of England's mercenaries be indeed called into play, if Indian blood be shed, with those who shed it shall rest the guilt and on those who commanded it shall fall the Divine Vengeance. It will not come to that, for Heaven has not as yet deprived the British Government so utterly of its reason as to command or the British nation as to condone such an outrage. But the possibility of it should have no terrors for men vindicating their legal rights & the small measure of freedom the laws have allowed to them. The words Bande Mataram must be written — printed, would be better, — on every door in Barisal. Public meetings must be held as before & if they are dispersed by the police, the people must

assemble in every compound where there is room for even fifty people to stand and record an oath never to submit or crouch down before the oppressor.

The actions of Mr. Fuller have throughout been characterized by the most cynical violence & disregard of legality. Illegally he has terrorised the people of Barisal, illegally he has abolished the right of public meeting, illegally he has banned the singing of the national anthem and sent emissaries to erase its opening words from the doors of private houses, illegally he has forbidden organisation for a lawful object. Let the authorities remember this, that when a Government breaks the Law, by their very act the people are absolved from the obligation of obeying the Law. But let the people on their side so long as they are permitted to do so abstain from aggressive violence, let them study carefully to put their oppressors always in the wrong; but from no legitimate kind of passive resistance should they shrink. This much their Mother demands from them. For what use to cry day and night Adoration to the Mother, if we have not the courage to suffer for the Mother?

It is a sweet & noble thing to die for motherland; and if that supreme happiness be denied to us, it is no small privilege to suffer illegal violence, arbitrary imprisonment & cruel oppression for her sake.

(S6: 100-03)



*"Generosity is to find one's own satisfaction*
*in the satisfaction of others."*

*THE MOTHER*