ESSAY

THE RULER ANDTHE RULED

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THE ENGLISHMAN AND THE INDIAN

There is nothing like love and admiration for bringing people to a likeness with what they love and admire; but the Englishman seems never to dream of employing these influences upon a race he wants to fuse with himself. He employs simply material interests for his work of fusion; and, beyond these, nothing except scorn and rebuke. Accordingly there is no vital union between him and the races he has annexed; and while France can freely boast of her magnificent unity, a unity of spirit no less than of name between all the people who compose her, in our country the Englishman proper is in union of spirit with no one except other Englishmen proper like himself.

Matthew Arnold

In our ancient Puranas and histories it is written that unless some flaw be found in a man's character or conduct, the goddess of Misfortune can find no path by which to enter him. Unhappily, almost every nation harbours some such flaw. And it is a further misfortune that wherever a man's weakness lies, there too, generally, lies his tenderness for it. The Englishman seems to cherish arrogance within his own character as though it were a matter of some peculiar pride. That he remains so islanded and insular in his narrowness, that in his travels or in the exercise of dominion he makes not the slightest effort to mingle with those into whose company he is thrown—this quality the ordinary "John" seems privately to regard as something of a distinction. His attitude is precisely this: as the proverb says, "The pestle that will not bend, will not bend even in heaven"—so the Englishman is an Englishman everywhere, and by no means whatsoever can he be otherwise.

This absence of charm, this utter indifference to entering into the confidence of his dependents and subordinates and understanding their hearts, this habit of judging the whole world solely by his own preconceptions—this flaw in the Englishman's character is precisely the doorway through which Misfortune finds her entrance.

Wherever the Englishman senses a possibility of the enemy's approach, he guards that breach with meticulous care; wherever roads and pathways exist, he sets a

watch upon every one, and crushes underfoot even the first sprouting seed of apprehension. Only that one moral flaw within his own nature does he indulge, day after day, until it grows unmanageable—now and then he even reproaches himself for it a little—yet out of some strange tenderness he can never bring himself to lift a hand against it.

It is exactly as though a man, wearing heavy boots, went stamping about his own field of standing grain, anxious lest some bird should steal a single grain of corn—the birds do indeed take flight, but he has no notion how much devastation his hard boot-heels are wreaking beneath his own feet.

No enemy troubles us, no danger threatens us—only, that boot comes crashing down suddenly upon our breast. We are wounded by it, and it is not as though the wearer of the boot suffers no loss thereby either. But the Englishman remains everywhere the Englishman: nowhere is he willing to come and remove that pair of boots.

I need not rehearse here all the friction that has arisen between the Englishman and the Irish; even within subject India itself, it may be observed that a certain estrangement is gradually growing between the Englishman and those Indians who have received an English education. Given the slightest opportunity, neither side will let the other go. In place of a brick, a whole clod of earth flies back.

It is not that we always fling our clods with careful justice; in most instances we hurl them blindly, in the dark. It cannot be denied that in our newspapers we often raise unjust clamour and stir up groundless quarrels.

But there is no need to weigh each such instance separately. Some may be true, some false; some just, some unjust. The real matter for judgment is this: why has this tendency to fling such clods grown so violent of late? The ruling authority can, by declaring some particular newspaper article false, send the editor—and even the wretched printer—to prison; but what real remedy has been found for the countless small thorn-bushes that spring up daily, everywhere, along the path of the British Empire?

When the root of these thorn-bushes lies within the mind itself, then it is into that very mind one must enter in order to uproot them. But though the Englishman's rule has, by paved road and by dirt track alike, established its movement and traffic everywhere else, unfortunately, into that region of the mind it has never entered at all. Perhaps to enter that place one must stoop one's head just a little—but the Englishman's spine refuses to bend anywhere at all.

And so the Englishman is driven to persuade himself of this: that the harsh words spoken in the newspapers, the meetings that are held, the unwelcome criticism levelled at the government—all this has no connection whatsoever with "the People"; that it is merely the trickery of a handful of educated puppet-masters. He tells himself: within, all is well; if here and there some slight sign of disorder is visible upon the surface, it is only the colouring that a few cunning fellows have painted on. Then, surely, there is no need to go inside and look for oneself. One need only discipline the cunning fellow one suspects, and the whole matter is settled.

This precisely is the Englishman's fault—he will not, under any circumstance, come inside the house. But from a distance, from outside, avoiding all contact and connection by any means whatsoever—one cannot do business with a human being that way; the further one keeps away, the more surely one's efforts must come to nothing. Man, after all, is no mere machine that one may take the measure of from without; even fallen India has a heart, and she has not tucked that heart away inside her sleeve.

Even inert matter must be understood in its hidden depths through the aid of science before one can exercise complete mastery over material nature. Those who would wield lasting influence over the world of men must possess, among their many other qualities, this one special gift—the gift of truly knowing men from within. The capacity to draw very near to another human being is itself a rare capacity.

The Englishman possesses vast powers, but this one he lacks. He is not, indeed, unwilling to render a service—but he will on no account come close. Once the service is somehow discharged, he is glad enough to withdraw as swiftly as he can.

After which he goes off to his club, takes his peg, plays his game of billiards, and, applying to his beneficiaries some epithet expressive of contempt, keeps their alien existence as far removed as possible from his body and mind.

Such men do not show compassion, though they render service; they do not show affection, though they offer protection; they do not show reverence, though they strive to act with justice; they do not water the soil, and yet they are not sparing in scattering seed by the sackful.

But when, afterward, the harvest of gratitude that springs up proves far less than adequate, is the fault to be laid on the soil alone? Is this not a universal law—that unless the work is done with the heart, it bears no fruit in the heart?

Many among the educated classes of our country are labouring with all their might to prove that the benefits the Englishman confers are not benefits at all. Having received a service devoid of heart, they can find within themselves no satisfaction whatsoever. By whatever means they can, they seek to free themselves from the burden of gratitude. That is why, nowadays, one finds in our newspapers and journals, in speech and in writing, a great deal of sophistical carping directed against the Englishman.

In a word: the Englishman has made himself necessary to us, but has never felt it necessary to make himself beloved; he opens the road, but instils no relish in the journey; and at last, when the sickness of revulsion sets in, he glares and roars in fury.

Most of today's agitations spring from some hidden resentment of the heart. Every single utterance now becomes a matter of victory or defeat between two sides. Perhaps where five gentle words would serve the purpose better, we instead scatter sparks of fire in the sharpest language; and where compliance with a single request would cost little, there too the other side stands aloof and unyielding.

But no great undertaking can proceed without compromise. To govern two hundred and fifty million subjects in orderly discipline is no simple matter. When one must deal with so vast a governing power, restraint, experience, and judgement are required. This much must be understood: the Government cannot do whatever it pleases merely by wishing it; it is itself overwhelmed by its own vastness, bound within its own complexity. To move even a little, it must set countless levers turning from very far away.

Here, moreover, we have to deal with two utterly dissimilar communities—the Anglo-Indian and the Indian—whose interests are, in most respects, opposed to one another. Whoever steers the ship of state can afford to disregard neither of these two contrary forces; whoever tries to do so fails. When we press some proposal dear to our own hearts, we imagine that the Anglo-Indian's opposition to it, from the Government's standpoint, is scarcely opposition at all—yet in truth it is they who wield the greater power. What peril follows from disregarding a powerful force was made plain in the upheaval over the Ilbert Bill. Even to run a train along the path of righteousness and justice, one must first, by proper means, level the ground and lay the rails. If one waits out that necessary interval with patience, and allows that work to be completed, then afterward there is every convenience for travelling at great speed.

In England there is no such inequality between ruler and ruled, and there the machinery of government, having run so long, has become smooth and easy. And yet, even there, to bring about one beneficial change requires how much skill, how much perseverance, how many communities to be managed in how many different ways! And even there, no such fierce clash of opposing interests exists; there, once the benefit of a particular proposal has been demonstrated to all by reasoned argument, the general interest, or the interest of the majority, becomes united and the proposal is adopted. But in our country, where the matter concerns two opposing forces, and where we ourselves are weak in every respect, one cannot hope to move the Government merely by the force of language. Many far-reaching measures must be adopted.

In all matters of statecraft, diplomacy has its place, and nowhere is it more needful to us than in India. That I desire a thing, and that my desire is not unjust—these

facts alone do not make the achievement of anything easy in this world. When I am on my way, not to commit a theft, but to my father-in-law's house, and if a pond happens to lie across my path, I need not resolve that I shall walk straight across it and nowhere else—indeed, by such a resolve I might well never arrive at my father-in-law's house at all. In such a case it is far better to go round the pond. Our political father-in-law's house, where the cream, the curds, the choicest cut of fish await us, must likewise be reached by overcoming, through various means, the various obstacles along the way. Where transgression serves the purpose, one must transgress; where it does not, it is better to go round about than to sit down in anger.

By "diplomacy" one need not understand deceit. Its true meaning is this: to act not by being suddenly swept away by one's own personal feelings, but by understanding the rule of the matter and the opportunity of the moment.

But this is not the course we follow. Whether we gain our object or not, we cannot let a single word go unsaid. This betrays not merely our inexperience and lack of judgement, but reveals that our desire to hurl reproach, to win applause, to vent the bitterness of our hearts, exceeds our desire to actually accomplish the work. Given the least opportunity for this, we grow so elated that we forget entirely how much real harm has been done to the actual business at hand. And, after harsh censure has been administered, the Government itself grows hesitant even to grant a legitimate request, lest the subject's presumption should be thereby increased.

The chief cause of this is that a certain ill-feeling has taken root within the minds on both sides, growing sharper by the day, so that the discharge of duty on either side is becoming, little by little, more difficult. This ceaseless quarrel between ruler and ruled is in no way pleasant to witness. Whatever the Government may appear outwardly, it is hard to believe that it remains, in its own heart, indifferent to this state of affairs. But what is the remedy? British character, after all, is human character still.Considered carefully, this problem admits of no easy solution.

The very first obstacle concerns colour. Just as the colour of the body cannot be washed or scrubbed away, so the prejudice attached to colour is exceedingly hard to banish from the mind. For many thousands of years the fair-skinned Aryan has looked upon the colour black with abhorrence. I have no wish, on this occasion, to importune my readers by drawing forth, chapter and verse and page-number, the elaborate proofs on this subject to be found in the English translation of the Vedas or in the Encyclopaedia. The point will be understood by all. Between the white and the black races there exists, as it were, the difference between day and night. The white race is ever-wakeful as the day, active, industrious, given to inquiry; the black race is inert as the night, inactive, wrapped in the darkness of dream. Perhaps within this dusky nature there lies, as within the night, a certain depth, a certain sweetness, a tender compassion, a profound quality of intimate kinship. Unhappily, the restless and impatient white man has neither the leisure to discover this, nor does he set much value upon it even were he to discover it. Nor is there any use in telling him that even the black cow gives white milk, and that between differing races there exists a deep unity of heart. But there is no point in these Oriental similes and comparisons. The plain fact is this: the moment he beholds a black colour, the mind of the white race cannot help but recoil from it a little.

Beyond this, in every matter of dress, ornament, habit, and custom, there exist such glaring dissimilarities as continually serve to repel the heart.

That many virtues of the mind may be cultivated even while the body remains but half-clothed; that the qualities of the mind are not like some delicate shade-loving hothouse plant; that these qualities may be protected by means other than being wrapped in fine broadcloth—all such arguments are futile. This is not a matter for logic, but a matter of ingrained prejudice.

True, through close and constant association, the force of this prejudice may to some degree be overcome. But that very same prejudice again refuses to permit any such close association. In the days before steamships, when sailing vessels, rounding Africa, took a very long time to reach India from England, the Englishman used then to form, it seems, somewhat closer bonds with the people of this land. But nowadays, the moment a sahib is granted three months' leave, he flees at once to England, and there washes away, as it were, all the dust of India; and even in

India itself, the circle of their own kind has grown so extensive that it has become quite feasible for them, while dwelling in the very country they have conquered, to remain as far removed from it as possible, and to carry out their work of governing a people without needing to love that people at all. Where else in history is there such an example as this—of men who travel a thousand leagues across the sea to rule an entirely foreign kingdom, discharging that rule during the day exactly as though it were mere office routine, and then, of an evening, crossing the sea once more to go home and eat their supper hot?

For one thing, we are all too obviously foreign—our form, savour, scent, sound, and touch are naturally distasteful to the Englishman; and beyond this there exists yet another affliction. The longer the Anglo-Indian community endures in this country, the more firmly rooted certain of its customs and its inherited lore become. Even if some particular Englishman, by virtue of his own natural generosity and warmth of heart, should manage to overcome all these external barriers and find his way into our inner confidence, and should throw open the door to invite us within—the moment he arrives here he finds himself entangled in the net of Anglo-Indian society. Then his own natural inclinations, joined with the accumulated prejudices of his own community, together become an insurmountable barrier. The old-established foreigner, refusing to let the newly-arrived foreigner come near to us, keeps him hemmed about within the difficult fortress of their exclusive society by a hard, stony wall of aloofness.

Woman is, as it were, the very embodiment of society's strength. A woman, if she wished, could bring about the union of opposing sides. But unhappily, it is women who are most susceptible of all to such prejudice. We are, it seems, the cause of nervous disorder and headache to those Anglo-Indian ladies. For this what blame can we lay upon them—it is our own misfortune of fate. Providence has not fashioned us, in every respect, to be pleasing to their taste.

Beyond this, the manner in which Englishmen speak of us among themselves, the epithets they apply to us without a moment's thought, the calumnies they utter against us without truly knowing us at all, the deep-rooted antipathy toward us that betrays itself in their every casual remark—all this a newly-arrived Englishman cannot help but absorb, little by little, with his whole heart.

We must admit this much: that in the trials imposed by fate, we are far weaker than the Englishman, and can find no remedy against the dishonour the Englishman inflicts upon us. He who cannot recover his own honour receives no honour in this world. When a fresh young Englishman, newly arrived from home, sees that we bear insult with passive resignation, he can no longer hold us in any respect.

Who then is to explain to them that we are not indifferent to insult, but that we are poor, and that none among us is his own master—that each of us is the representative of a large family, upon whom depends the very livelihood not of himself alone, but of his parents, brothers, wife and children? He must live his life in constant self-restraint and self-sacrifice. This is his lifelong education and habit. It is not that he sacrifices his self-respect merely for the sake of some petty desire for self-preservation—rather, he offers it up before the larger family, before the very sense of duty itself. Who does not know with what profound resignation and what bitter self-reproach our poor Bengali clerks return home from their offices day after day—how unbearably burdensome their humiliated existence feels to them, a bitterness so extreme that even the most feeble of men grows dangerous in such a state? And yet, the very next day, at the appointed hour, he puts on his coat over his dhoti once more, goes and enters that same office, opens once more that great ledger bound in ink-stained leather, and silently endures the harsh insult of that tawny-skinned superior. Suddenly, in a moment of self-forgetfulness, could he possibly drown his whole vast household? Are we, like the Englishman, free and unencumbered by the burden of family? Should we be moved to give up our lives, a host of helpless women, a host of defenceless children, their arms raised in anguish, rise up before our mind's eye. This has been our habit through long ages.

But this the Englishman cannot understand. In his language there exists but a single word—cowardice. No word has ever been coined that distinguishes between cowardice for oneself and cowardice for another's sake. Therefore, the moment the word "coward" arises in the mind, the fixed, deep-rooted contempt attached to it arises too. We carry, all at once upon our heads, both a great family and a great humiliation.

Beyond this, the majority of English newspapers in India have taken up a stance hostile to us. Along with their tea, toast, and marmalade, abuse of us has become a regular part of the Anglo-Indian's breakfast. In English literature and fiction, in travel narratives, in histories, in geographies, in political essays, and in satirical verse, the Englishman's distaste for Indians—and especially for the educated "Babu"—goes on increasing without end.

Indians, sunk in their own poverty, try to take their revenge for this. But what revenge can we take? How much harm are we capable of inflicting upon the Englishman? We may grow angry, we may sit at home and hurl abuse, but should the Englishman apply even the slightest twist of two fingers to our tender ears, we must simply endure it. How many opportunities, great and small, they possess for administering such a twist is not unknown to the people of town and country alike. The more the Englishman grows averse to and disgusted with us in his heart, the harder it will become for him to understand our true nature, to judge us fairly, or to do us good. The English press, by its incessant vilification of the Indian and its display of contempt toward him, is making the task of governing India ever more difficult. And we, by reviling the Englishman in turn, are merely nursing our own helpless discontent.

The experience gained thus far in the administration of India has established beyond doubt that the Englishman has no cause whatever to fear the Indian. If there was scarcely any cause for fear even a hundred and fifty years ago, there is certainly none now. Those within the realm who once had the power to cause disturbance have had their claws and teeth drawn; and through long disuse they have grown so enfeebled that it has become increasingly difficult even to recruit troops for the defence of India itself. And yet the Englishman stands ever ready to suppress "sedition." The reason is this: seasoned statesmen never permit vigilance to relax under any circumstance whatsoever. Caution knows no ruin.

Granted—this is merely excessive caution. But on the other hand, should the Englishman grow steadily more hostile toward India, real obstruction to the business of government might indeed follow. One may discharge one's duty even

with indifference, but to discharge duty while harbouring genuine malice lies beyond human capacity.

And yet, even should every duty be, by some superhuman power, discharged with perfect correctness, that inward malice will continue to oppress the subject people all the same. For just as it is the nature of water to seek its own level, so it is the nature of the human heart to seek union with its own kind. Even through the bond of love does the heart seek to establish its unity with God. Wherever it fails to find the path to that union, no matter what other conveniences may exist, it continues to suffer greatly. The Muslim kings were tyrannical, yet between them and us there existed, in many respects, an equality of standing. Our philosophy, our poetry, our arts, our intellectual pursuits—in all these there was exchange between ruler and ruled. Thus the Muslim could oppress us, but he could not dishonour us. Our self-respect suffered no diminishment in our own eyes, for superiority achieved by mere force of arms can never truly overwhelm the spirit.

But we look upon the Englishman's railways, his factories, his ordered governance, and stand gaping, thinking: these men are the very offspring of Mayadanava himself. They alone are a race apart, nothing lies beyond their power—thinking thus, we climb aboard the train with easy mind, buy cheaply the goods of the machine, and imagine that in the Englishman's domain we have nothing more to fear, nothing more to consider, nothing more to strive for—only, what the dacoit once took by force, the police and the pleader now divide between them.

Thus, while one part of the mind grows thus complacent and inert, in another part—indeed, in the very depths of the mind—a sense of burden begins to weigh. Food is digested only when the essence of the food unites with the digestive essence of the body. The civilization of the Englishman is, for us, mere food-matter; but since it is utterly lacking in savour, our minds cannot supply from within themselves the corresponding digestive essence needed for it. We are receiving, but we are not truly gaining. We enjoy the fruits of all the Englishman's works, but I cannot make them truly my own, and even the hope of ever doing so is being extinguished.

There is glory and gain in conquering a kingdom; there is righteousness and profit in governing it well; but is there any greatness, any true benefit, in establishing a union of hearts between ruler and ruled? Is this not, after all, the most important subject for thought and discussion in the present-day politics of India?

The question is: how is it to be achieved? It has been shown, point by point, that formidable and difficult natural barriers exist between ruler and ruled. Even certain warm-hearted Englishmen have, for this reason, often felt anxiety and sorrow. And yet, what use is there in lamenting over what is impossible, what is beyond achievement?

But when has any great task, any noble undertaking, ever been easy or simple to accomplish? Are the qualities the Englishman has needed for this conquest and governance of India themselves easily come by? Is that courage, that indomitable perseverance, that spirit of sacrifice, the fruit of any small effort? And is the rare warmth of heart needed to win the affection of two hundred and fifty million foreign subjects not, likewise, worthy of cultivation?

English poets have shed tears over the sufferings of Greece, of Italy, of Hungary, of Poland. We are not entitled to quite so much weeping, but to this day, apart from the great soul Edwin Arnold, no English poet has, on any occasion, expressed affection for India. Rather, I have heard that certain great poets, unconnected by any tie whatsoever, in far-off France, have composed poetry drawing on Indian themes. Nothing reveals the Englishman's estrangement from us more starkly than this.

A great many English novels concerning India and Indians are now being published. I hear that among modern Anglo-Indian writers, Rudyard Kipling stands foremost in genius. English readers have been utterly charmed by his tales of India. I have read what impression these stories produced in the mind of one devoted admirer, an English poet. On the occasion of a review, Sir Edwin Arnold—no, rather, Edmund Gosse—was saying:

"Reading these stories one after another, the cantonments of India come to seem like so many islands scattered amid a boundless, uninhabited sea of sand. On every

side stretches India's measureless desolation—obscure, monotonous, vast. There, only the dark native, the pariah dog, the Pathan, the green parakeet, the kite and the crocodile, and the lonely wastes of tall grass. Onto this island amid the sea of desert, a handful of young men have been sent from far-off England, to serve as officers of a widowed Empress, and to guard, on her behalf, that barbarous eastern empire so richly stocked with martial resources."

Seeing this dry, graceless picture of India painted in the Englishman's brush, the mind fills with despairing sorrow. Our India, surely, is not like this. But is the Englishman's India really so very different?

Moreover, essays concerning India's relation purely to self-interest are frequently to be found nowadays. Lists are published showing how, as England's population increases year by year, the shortage of food correspondingly grows, and to what degree India fills that shortage; and how, by importing British manufactured goods, employment is given to countless labourers in England, providing them their livelihood.

England looks upon India, more and more, as the perpetually-tended milch cow of her own household. There is no negligence in keeping the cowshed clean and supplying the fodder; care is taken to protect this movable property from harm; should it ever prove unruly, there is no reluctance in rubbing down its horns; and when the milking is done twice daily, the emaciated calves are not left utterly deprived. But even so, it is this very relation of self-interest that is being made to blaze up ever brighter. In these very essays, the subject of England's other colonies is generally introduced alongside that of India. But how different the tone! What affection is shown toward them, what fraternal warmth! How often it is repeated that, although separated from the motherland, they still retain their unwavering devotion to her, that they have not forgotten the pull of blood-kinship—that is to say, in that context it becomes necessary to speak of love alongside self-interest. But as for luckless India, that she too has a heart somewhere, and that some small connection ought to exist with that heart—not even the faintest hint of any such thought is ever given. India is confined merely to columns of figures set down in an

account-book. To the practical men of England, India's only worth lies in maunds and seers, in rupees and annas. Will the writers in newspapers and monthly journals teach England nothing but this dry lesson? If England's connection with India strengthens only in respect of self-interest, then it is quite possible that this same dusky cow, who gives milk today, may one day—should the herd multiply needlessly and hunger increase—find even her tail and hooves disappearing. It is precisely because the matter is viewed through the eye of self-interest that Lancashire has clapped a tariff upon the helpless handloom-weavers of India, while sending in her own goods duty-free.

Our own country, too, is just such a place. As is the sun, so is the heat. Nothing but the fan's breeze and iced water will keep the sahib alive. And unhappily, the very coolie who plies the fan often falls asleep with his own diseased spleen, and ice, moreover, is not everywhere to be had. For the Englishman, India is a land of sickness, sorrow, separation from kin, and exile—and so it must be compensated for with a very substantial salary. And on top of it all, that accursed Exchange wants its share as well. What, besides the satisfaction of self-interest, can India possibly give the Englishman?

Alas, luckless India—your husband did not find you to his liking, you were unable to bind him with the bonds of love. Now see to it, at least, that his comfort suffers no neglect. Fan him tirelessly, hang up screens of fragrant khus-grass and sprinkle them with water, that he may sit at ease in your house for these two watches of his stay. Open—open your treasure-chest, sell your very jewels, fill his belly with food and his pocket with revenue. Still he will speak no sweet word to you, still he will keep his face sullen, still he will revile your father's house. And you, forgetting all shame, have of late begun to sulk and take offence, answering back sharply, word for word. There is no use quarrelling; devote yourself, with singleness of mind, to whatever will keep your foreign husband content and at ease. May the iron in your hand never grow dull.

The English poet laureate Tennyson, shortly before his death, in his final volume, fortunately called India to mind, if only a little.

In that volume the poet published a poem called Akbar's Dream. Akbar, describing a dream of the night to his beloved friend Abul Fazl, expresses therein the ideal of his faith and the purpose of his life. He had striven to establish a unity among India's various faiths, and a bond of love and peace among her various peoples; in the dream he saw that his successors had overturned that endeavour, and that, at last, from the direction of the setting sun, a company of foreigners had arrived and, stone by stone, rebuilt his fallen temple; and that in that temple, truth and peace, love and justice, had once more established their throne.

I pray that this dream of the poet's may come true. To this day the stones of that temple have been laid, one upon another; no want of strength, of labour, or of skill has attended the work—and yet, even now, in this temple, the supreme deity of all deities—Love—has not yet been enthroned.

Love is a positive thing, not a negative one. The unity that Akbar strove to establish, reconciling the discord of every faith, was a positive unity. Within his own heart he had attained an ideal of oneness; with a generous heart, he entered, in reverence, into the inner spirit of every religion. With single-minded devotion and sincerity, he would listen to the theological discourse of Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and Zoroastrian scholars alike, and he gave Hindu women a place of honour within his own household, Hindu ministers seats in his council, Hindu warriors command of his armies. He wished to unite the whole of India—ruler and ruled alike—not merely through statecraft, but through love. That a foreigner, arriving from the land of the setting sun, does not interfere with our religion—this neutrality is one thing, but love and mere policy are separated by the distance between heaven and earth.

But that a lofty ideal attained by one extraordinary man, whose own life was but a fleeting moment, should be expected of an entire nation—this cannot be. It is therefore hard to say when the poet's dream shall come true. It is harder still to say this, because we observe that the path of intercourse which once existed between ruler and ruled is, day by day, being further hedged about with thorn-bushes by both sides. Fresh animosities are, day after day, overrunning the field of possible union.

We feel this absence of love within the realm so acutely nowadays that a certain apprehension and unrest stirs restlessly, deep within the minds of the people. One instance of this may be seen in how we speak among ourselves of the ever-worsening enmity between Hindus and Muslims. Do we not say, privately, that the chief cause of this disturbance is that the English make no genuine effort to prevent this discord? In their statecraft there is no place for a policy of love. Between India's two principal communities, they have sown more jealousy than love. It may not have been done deliberately; but because that same ideal of love by which Akbar sought to unite a fragmented India finds no place in English policy, the natural discord between these two peoples, rather than diminishing, shows every sign of increasing continually. Union cannot be achieved by law and administration alone; one must enter into the heart, understand its pain, love truly—one must come near of one's own accord and, hand joined to hand, bring about the union oneself. By merely stationing police and applying handcuffs to maintain peace, one gives proof of formidable strength—but that was not what lay within Akbar's dream. And should the poets of the land of the setting sun, setting aside their vain pride, teach that lofty ideal of love with humble affection and profound sorrowful concern for their own countrymen, then their own people too would rise, and this dependent people too would be benefited. Is the Englishman's self-conceit, his pride in civilization, his racial arrogance, not already sufficient? Must the poet offer yet more fuel to that very fire? Has the time not yet come for lessons in humility and the cultivation of love? Having climbed to the very summit of good fortune, must the English poet still do nothing but proclaim himself?

But such words as these scarcely become the mouth of one placed, as we are, in circumstances of some comfort, and so I feel shame even in uttering them. There is no baser thing than begging for love out of sheer necessity. And on this subject, we too must sometimes hear a word or two.

I recall that, not long ago, in reply to a letter from the venerable Protap Chunder Mozoomdar, the London Spectator remarked that the new generation of Bengalis possessed many good qualities, but that one fault was noticeable—their craving for sympathy had grown far too great.

This fault must be admitted; and indeed, by the very manner in which I have been speaking all this while, that fault stands proven before our own eyes. Our desire to receive affection from the Englishman has grown to a somewhat unnatural degree. The reason is that we are not, like the Spectator, in a natural state. When we, "athirst, cry out for a single pitcher of water," our ruler, in reply, "hastily brings us half a Bael fruit." Half a Bael fruit may, on occasion, prove most delicious—but it does not, by that means, quench both hunger and thirst together. The Englishman's well-ordered, well-considered government is excellent and highly desirable, but it may fail, even so, to quench the thirst of the subject's heart; indeed, like a heavy, over-rich meal, it might even, through that very administration, cause the thirst to increase without check. The Spectator, having gathered every kind of delicacy and every kind of drink from every land in abundant plenty, sits in the midst of a well-furnished dinner and cannot for the life of him understand why that foreign Bengali fellow standing outside his window, on the roadside, should wear such a hungry, beggarly expression.

But the Spectator may perhaps be glad to hear that his own exceedingly rare grapes of sympathy are, by degrees, growing sour to our own taste as well. Having gazed upward with covetous eyes for a long while, we are now, slowly, beginning to turn back toward home. Whatever remnant of manhood remained within our perpetually famished, hungering nature is, little by little, growing rebellious.

We have begun to say—are you truly so superior? You may have learned to run machines and mount cannon, but the true civilization of mankind is spiritual civilization, and in that civilization we are far superior to you. We could teach you the very alphabet of spiritual knowledge. That you scorn us as but half-civilized is due merely to your blind ignorance. You do not even possess the capacity to conceive of the greatness of the Hindu race. We shall close our eyes once more and sit down in meditation. From today, we shall turn our gaze entirely away from the childish antics of your pleasure-loving, restless European civilization, and fix it upon the very tip of our own nose. Go on, then—hold your courts, run your offices, keep your shops, dance and play, strike and seize, make your commotion, and build your paradise of luxury upon the mountain-peaks of Simla, and remain there, drunk with your own civilization.

Thus does the poor, deprived man try to console himself. A superiority devoid of love, he can on no account consent to bear. For within him lies a simple wisdom, by which he knows that to bear, under compulsion, such a barren superiority is to become, gradually, no better than a dumb beast of burden.

But who can say that this very mental rebellion is not itself what Providence intended? Just as He protects this small earth from the fierce attraction of the mighty sun—having implanted within it a countervailing force, by whose strength it enjoys the sun's light and heat while yet preserving its own independence, and, rather than striving to become as powerful as the sun itself, has become, through its own inherent power of tenderness, a gentle, green, grain-bearing, motherly presence—so, I think, Providence has undertaken to protect us too from the vast gravitational pull of the Englishman. I believe His intention is this: that we shall, in the very light of English civilization, make our own independence shine the brighter.

The fruits of this may already be observed. The friction with the Englishman has infused within us a certain heat, by which our dying vitality is once more growing conscious. Those particular faculties within us that lay blind and inert are, in this new light, coming to recognize themselves once more. Through independent reasoning and free debate, our own mental territory is being newly discovered by ourselves. It is as though, after a long night of deluge, at the break of dawn, we have gone forth to discover our own country anew. We have entered the ancient, dense forest of tradition, scripture, poetry, mythology, history, and philosophy—with the wish to reclaim, made new again, that buried ancient treasure. The shock of reproach that has struck our minds has, precisely through that impact, thrown us back with force upon ourselves. In this first response we have perhaps clutched at our own soil somewhat blindly—it is to be hoped that a day will come when, calmly and with untroubled mind, the time for weighing good and bad will arrive, and we shall be able to draw from this very shock a truly profound lesson and a lasting advancement.

There exists a certain kind of ink that, over time, vanishes from the surface of the paper, yet when the paper is later held near a flame, the writing reappears, line by line. Most of the world's civilizations are written in such ink; in time they fade away,

but it does not seem impossible that, by some fortunate turn, in contact with a new civilization, in the heat of new life, they should bloom forth once again. This, indeed, is the hope we cherish. And, encouraged by that vast hope, we are bringing all our ancient manuscripts and records near to that very flame, and holding them there—if the earlier letters flare into visibility, then our glory may yet be preserved in this world; if not, then to surrender the aged, decaying body of ancient India to the blazing pyre of civilization, and thereby attain migration and transformation into some other realm, some other form, is itself the better course.

There exists among us a certain generally respected class of people who wish to arrive at an easy solution to the present problem. Their view runs thus:

We have many external points of dissimilarity with the Englishman. It is that external dissimilarity which first strikes the eye, and it is from that very point that alien antipathy takes its rise. Therefore, this external disparity should, as far as possible, be removed. Those customs and outward appearances which, through long habituation, naturally draw the Englishman's respect—these it would be beneficial for our country to adopt. If our dress, our manner, even our language, were to become English, one major obstacle to union between the two peoples would be removed, and a simple means would be secured for the preservation of our own self-respect.

To my mind, this view is not wholly credible. There is one grave danger in erasing external dissimilarity: that a false hope is thereby instilled in the mind of the unwary observer, and, in order to sustain that false hope, one is driven, unwittingly, to take refuge in falsehood after falsehood. One gives the Englishman to understand: we are just like you—and wherever anything of a different nature happens to show itself, one longs to hastily conceal it by whatever means come to hand. Adam and Eve, before eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge, wandered about in a simple state of dress most fitting and pure; but after they had eaten of that fruit, until such time as a tailor's shop had been set up in the world, their attire would doubtless have been condemned in any assembly convened to prevent indecency. Our own new garments too are likely not to prevent shame, but rather to increase it. For no

tailoring establishment capable of clothing an entire nation has yet been opened anywhere. In trying to cover oneself, one may fail to be covered at all—and there is no mockery greater than that. Those who, out of temptation, have eaten this fruit of the tree of civilization are kept forever anxious and disturbed. Lest the Englishman should see that we eat with our hands, lest the Englishman should learn that we sit cross-legged upon our seats, they must forever be drawing curtains about themselves. The slightest lapse in etiquette, the smallest stumble in the English tongue, they count as a deadly sin, and when they observe any deficiency of "gentlemanly" polish among their own kind, they feel shame and contempt on their behalf. Considered carefully, it is in this incomplete covering, in this futile effort at concealment, that true indecency lies—herein lies the real self-degradation.

To adopt an English disguise, even in some measure, only makes the incongruity blaze forth the more. Its result is not at all becoming. It therefore strikes the sensibility with double the force. Because the Englishman's mind is drawn instinctively toward what is familiar to habit, it recoils with double the violence upon finding itself, as it thinks, wrongly deceived.

Young Japan has been thoroughly initiated into European civilization. Her education is no mere superficial education. Her factories, her system of governance, the whole spread of her learning—all this she conducts entirely with her own hands. Europe is astonished at her skill, and can find no flaw anywhere; and yet, even so, Europe cannot help but turn away in distaste on seeing this star pupil of her own school aping British dress and manners. Japan herself remains entirely blind to this strange lapse of taste, this laughable incongruity of her own. But Europe, despite its immense respect, cannot help but laugh at the sight of this disguised Asian.

And have we, in every other respect, become so utterly at one with Europe that erasing our external dissimilarity would not give rise to that grave defect of taste called incongruity?

That, then, is one point. The second point is this: even setting aside whatever gain might come by such means, our very capital would suffer harm. There already exists

dissonance enough with the Englishman—and now dissonance with our own countrymen would begin as well. If I, today, were to make myself resemble an Englishman in order to win favour in English eyes, then my own brothers who have not dressed themselves like Englishmen would naturally feel some hesitation in acknowledging me as kin. Nor could I help but feel shame on their account. I would be tempted to present myself as one who, by his own particular merit, has separated himself from such men and joined a superior race entirely.

This means nothing less than purchasing self-respect at the price of selling national honour. It amounts to telling the Englishman, in effect: Sir, treat those barbarians however you please—but since I have made myself somewhat resemble you, I cherish the great hope that you will not turn me away.

Suppose that, by such beggarly conduct, some small favour is indeed obtained. But does this preserve one's own honour, or the honour of one's people?

When Karna said to Ashwatthama, "You are a Brahmin—how should I fight with you?" Ashwatthama replied: "I am a Brahmin—precisely for that reason you cannot fight with me! Very well then, I tear off this sacred thread."

If the sahib, striking hands upon it and adding "Esquire" to my name, should write: "Very well, since you have done your best to conceal your nationality, we shall, this once, make you a member of our club, give you a place in our hotel, and even permit you, should you call upon us, to have your call returned once or twice"—shall I then instantly consider myself supremely honoured and swell with joy? Or shall I say instead—"Is it for this that I tore off my own disguise and cast it away? Not until I can make my entire nation truly worthy of respect will I daub myself with paint and, dressed as some pretence of a gentleman, come knocking humbly at your door."

I say, rather, that this alone should be our sole vow: I will not accept honour begged, but honour that draws itself toward me; I will feel that honour within myself. When that day comes, into whatever assembly in the world I wish to enter, I shall enter it without any need whatsoever for disguise, for a false name, for false manners, or for honour won by weeping and pleading for affection.

The method is not an easy one. But, as I have said before, what difficult task has ever been accomplished by easy means? It is precisely because it is so difficult that, setting all else aside, one must devote to it one's particular attention.

At the very outset of undertaking such work, one must resolve firmly: until I become truly worthy, I shall remain in obscurity.

In the state of formation, concealment is necessary. The seed lies hidden beneath the soil; the embryo is kept concealed within the womb. If a boy, during his years of education, is allowed to mix too freely with worldly society, then, in his misguided ambition to be counted among his elders, he apes them without real cause and ripens before his time. He comes to believe he has already become a person of consequence; that he no longer needs proper instruction—that humility, for him, is superfluous.

Before the Pandavas set out to reclaim their former glory, they lived for a time in obscurity, gathering their strength. In worldly affairs, obscurity precedes the season of great endeavour.

We too, standing now in the position of building ourselves and building our nation, are living through our own period of obscurity.

But it is precisely our misfortune that we have become far too visible, far too soon. In utter immaturity, we have impatiently broken from the shell before our time, and now, amid a hostile world, it has become exceedingly difficult to nourish this weak, unformed body to maturity.

With what weapons, then, have we come to stand upon the battlefield of the world? With mere speeches and petitions? What armour do we imagine will protect us? Mere disguise alone? How long can such a strategy possibly serve, and how much fruit can it possibly bear?

What harm is there in confessing plainly among ourselves, with sincere and open hearts, that the strength of our character has not yet matured? We are consumed by factionalism, jealousy, and pettiness. We cannot unite; we do not trust one another; we are unwilling to acknowledge leadership among our own kind. Our great undertakings burst like great bubbles: at the outset the affair rises up with tremendous energy, but within a day or two it grows first disjointed, then distorted, then lifeless. Until the time comes for genuine sacrifice, we remain, like children absorbed in play, excited over some new venture—but the moment a little real sacrifice is called for, we slip away, each to his own house, under one pretext or another. Let self-conceit be wounded in the slightest, on whatever pretext, and we lose all sense whatsoever of the true greatness of the purpose. Somehow or other, before the work has even properly begun, we must already have our names in print. Once the advertisement, the report, the fanfare, and a sufficient measure of renown have been secured, we feel so entirely satisfied that our very nature thereafter grows drowsy; we no longer feel much inclination to put our hand to work requiring patience, labour, and sustained devotion.

That we should have come forward into the world bearing so weak, so immature, so hundred-times-worn a character is itself a matter for astonishment and grave concern.

In such a state, one longs not to remedy one's incompleteness, but merely to conceal it. The moment anyone raises a criticism of some particular fault of ours, everyone joins in stopping his mouth; they say: Hush, hush—the English will hear it—what will they think?

And, to make matters worse, the Englishman himself is, in many respects, rather thick-sighted. Whatever special virtues exist among Indians, virtues genuinely worthy of high regard, he cannot sift out and appreciate; whether from contempt, or from whatever cause, he neither can, nor cares to, pierce through our foreign exterior. Consider this one example: while dwelling abroad, the German has studied our Sanskrit scriptures with far greater single-minded devotion than the Englishman has managed while actually residing in this country. The Englishman

lives out his life in India, and has taken complete possession of the country itself—yet he has failed to take possession even of its native tongue.

The Englishman, therefore, is incapable of truly understanding and respecting the Indian as an Indian. This is why we are driven, of necessity, to try to captivate the Englishman in an English manner instead. What we know in our hearts we do not speak with our mouths; what we actually do we exaggerate in our newspapers. Knowing that the Englishman regards a thing called "the People" with something like superstitious dread, we too, gathering together whatever handful of persons we can muster, dress ourselves up as "the People," deepen our voices, and set out to frighten the Englishman in turn. We say to one another: what else can we do, brother—if we don't act this way, they pay no heed whatsoever to anything we say; they understand nothing but their own manner of doing things.

Thus, through the Englishman's own peculiar nature, we are compelled to feign, to make a show, in order to extract respect and results from him. But even so, I say this: the best thing of all would be if we simply could not put on such performances. If, by refusing to perform, our rulers should choose to withhold even the smallest measure of rights, even the merest scrap of favour—then let them withhold it.

Nor is this said out of any grievance against the ruling authority. There is, rather, a deep apprehension in my mind—we are but earthen vessels; quarrel with a vessel of bronze as we may, even a friendly handshake carries the risk of shattering us.

For amid so much discord, self-preservation becomes exceedingly difficult. Precisely because we are weak, there is this fear: that if once we draw close to the sahib—if the sahib should, out of some kindness, shower a little gracious smile upon us—the temptation of it proves far too great for us; so great, indeed, that we might, in the very pleasure of that favour, forget our own true welfare altogether. If the sahib should laugh and say, "Well now, Babu, you don't speak such bad English after all"—from that moment onward, the cultivation of our own Bengali becomes exceedingly difficult for us. Whichever part of us happens to fall under the Englishman's approving gaze, upon that part alone do we lavish all our effort at polish; whatever part is unlikely ever to come within Europe's sight remains buried

in darkness, neglect, and refuse. Toward any reform of that latter part, we feel nothing but indolence.

One cannot really blame human nature for this; for one who is destitute and humiliated, such temptation is entirely natural—the favour of the fortunate can hardly fail to move him.

Today I may declare: I will embrace even the meanest, most soiled peasant of India as my brother, and that ruddy sahib driving past in his tum-tum, splashing mud all over my body, has not the slightest connection with me, not even the worth of a farthing.

But should that very ruddy sahib, at that very moment, suddenly halt his tum-tum and step into my own humble cottage to say, "I say, Babu, have you got a match?"—at once I long for all two hundred and fifty million people of the country to stand in a long row and watch how the sahib has come, this very day, to my own house to ask for a match! And should, by ill chance, at that very moment, my own poorest, most soiled peasant brother arrive at my door to pay his respects to the household deity—then I long to wipe that unsightly scene from the very face of the earth, lest the great sahib's imagination should conjure up any connection, any association, any distant kinship whatsoever between myself and that barbarian.

Therefore, when I resolve within myself never again to press close upon the sahib, I do not say it with pride, but with great humility, with great apprehension. For I know that in that very pride of good fortune lies my utter ruin—I shall no longer be able to sit quietly and perform my own duty; my mind will remain forever restless and yearning, and my own poor kinsfolk's humble, obscure household will seem to me all the emptier for it. I shall feel ashamed to treat as close kin those very people to whom I owe the duty of devoting my life.

The Englishman wishes to exclude us altogether, and keep the door firmly barred, from his amusements, his meals, his social intercourse, his friendship and affection; and yet, should we, by bowing, by submitting, by contriving, by scheming, obtain some small right of entry, catch even the faintest whiff of high society—we feel ourselves so blessed by it that the affection of our own countrymen seems trivial

beside that glory. In such circumstances, in such a weak state of mind, it is our positive duty to shun that ruinous nectar of favour altogether, as something not even to be touched.

There is yet another reason. To regard the Englishman's favour merely as an honour, and to enjoy it with entirely disinterested motive, is difficult for us as well. For we are poor, and the fire of an empty stomach is not quenched by the mere shower of respect. We wish to convert that favour into some practical advantage. Not favour alone, but some measure of food along with it, is what we hope for. Not merely a handshake, but employment, and a raise in salary, is what is needed. If, for the first two days, we call upon the sahib as a friend, by the third day we feel no shame at all in stretching out our hand like a beggar. Thus the relation sinks to something quite base. On one side we resent that the Englishman does not accord us equal respect; on the other, we do not scruple to go begging at his very door.

The Englishman cannot help but regard our native visitors as place-seekers, favour-seekers, or seekers of titles. For, in truth, we have no genuine social intercourse with the Englishman at all. Their doors remain shut, and ours are locked as well. Yet suddenly, today, here comes that fellow, dressed in turban and long coat, arriving with a nervous, hesitant air, offering an awkward and unpracticed salute like some flustered boor, uncertain where he ought to sit, stammering as he speaks—from what source has this man's sudden pang of longing sprung, that he should tip the doorkeeper a small gratuity merely to behold the moon-like countenance of the sahib?

He whose situation is inferior ought not, uninvited and unwelcomed, to force intimacy upon one more fortunate—no good comes of it to either side. The Englishman, upon arriving in this country, comes gradually to assume ever newer and stranger forms—and is not much of this due to our own abasement? For this very reason I say: since the state of affairs is already so poor, protecting the Englishman from too much contact and friction with us would prevent so rapid a corruption of his character as well. That would be to the advantage of both sides.

Therefore, weighing every aspect of the matter, the most effective means of keeping the mutual antipathy between ruler and ruled in check appears to be this: to remain at a distance from the Englishman, and to devote ourselves, single-mindedly, to the fulfilment of our own immediate duties. Begging alone can never bring true satisfaction to our minds. Today we imagine that once we obtain certain rights from the Englishman, all our sorrows will vanish. Yet even when we shall have obtained, as alms, every one of those rights, we shall find that the inward sting of humiliation refuses, even then, to depart—indeed, whatever small comfort we possessed while we still lacked those rights will no longer remain to console us either. Until the emptiness within us is filled, we shall find no peace whatsoever. Only when we can free our own nature from every bond of pettiness will our true poverty of spirit at last be dispelled—and then, and only then, shall we be able to move about in the presence of kings with vigour and with dignity.

I am not so foolish as to hope that the whole of India will abandon all thought of position, of influence, of currying the Englishman's favour; that she will renounce all outward bravado and outward show of fame; that, saving herself from the overwhelming spell of the Englishman's attraction, she will, with single-minded and untroubled devotion, accumulate strength of character, acquire knowledge and science, engage in independent commerce, travel the world to learn the ways of men, propagate truthful conduct and honest dealing within family and society, bear her own dignity aloft as naturally and effortlessly as a man bears his own head, and refrain from going, tongue lolling, to beg favour at another's door—and that she will grasp, fully and to its profoundest depth, the meaning of that saying: Dharma protects those who protect Dharma. It is well known that wherever the slope of convenience lies, there, imperceptibly, mankind gradually inclines. If some advantage is to be gained by donning hat and coat, adopting the English tongue, seeking the Englishman's patronage, and translating oneself into grand English phrases, then a small number of people, little by little, will indeed put on hat and coat, will, through great effort, teach their children to forget Bengali, and will establish greater intimacy with the sahib's doorkeeper than with their own father and brother. This tide is difficult to check.

Difficult, and yet the mind's protest must be voiced clearly nonetheless. Even should it prove but a cry in the wilderness, still it must be said: there is no true

benefit in flooding the country with English; the permanent progress of the nation can be founded only upon education in one's own tongue. There is no benefit in gathering favour from the Englishman; true glory lies only in awakening our own manhood to consciousness. Nothing is gained by extracting anything through trickery from another; genuine success in any undertaking comes only through wholehearted sacrifice and sincere devotion.

Just as Guru Gobind, the last of the Sikh Gurus, lived long in some remote and inaccessible place, studying the scriptures of many peoples, and, taking a very long period of retreat, first perfected himself, and only afterward emerged from his solitude to assume the office of Guru—so too, whoever is to become our own Guru must first spend his period of obscurity in some nameless, secluded hermitage; with the utmost patience and profound contemplation, he must shape himself through the knowledge and wisdom of many lands; he must, with immense effort, keep himself at a great distance from that blind attraction by which the whole country is being swept, inevitably and helplessly, along its present course, and must acquire and refine, in clear and unmistakable form, true discernment of benefit and harm. Only then, when he emerges and calls to us, and commands us, in the language we have known since childhood, will something happen—if nothing else, a sudden awakening: that all this while we had been under some delusion, that we had been walking, eyes shut, under the sway of a dream, straight toward the edge of ruin—and that this awakening itself is the valley from which our fall began.

That teacher of ours is not to be found amid today's frenzied clamour. He seeks neither honour nor position, neither reports in the English newspapers; he is, with great care, protecting himself from all this madness, from this whirlpool of the foolish, surging crowd. He does not hope that any real relief from our true distress will come merely from the amendment of some particular law, or from securing a seat in some particular assembly. He is teaching in solitude, and thinking in seclusion; he is raising his own life, steadfast and elevated, upon a supremely lofty ideal, and thereby drawing, imperceptibly, the multitudes on every side toward himself. He seems to be silently absorbing, with a generous, all-embracing heart, the four quarters of the earth, while the Goddess of Bengal gazes upon him with tender affection, praying fervently to the Divine that the false arguments and hollow words of this present age may never lead him astray from his purpose, nor

may the faithless, insincere devotion of the people of this land discourage him by making him believe his goal to be unattainable. Unattainable it may indeed be—but it is the very achievement of the unattainable that must be the sacred vow of whoever shall bring about this country's true advancement.

1300 (Bengali Era)

THE AMBIVALENCE OF POLITICS

Generally speaking, such great virtues as justice, compassion, and the like find fuller expression among one's equals than among those considered inferior. It is often observed that men who, among their own class, are as gentle as a doe reared within the household, become, before those of lower rank, a tiger of the wilderness, a crocodile of the waters, or some hawk of prey wheeling in the sky.

Just how civilized, how compassionate, how just the European nations truly are in Europe itself, as opposed to abroad, has by now been amply demonstrated. Those who are Christian toward Christians—that is, who, when struck upon one cheek, feel obliged on occasion to turn the other also—these very same men, once they set foot on foreign soil, deal the non-Christian a blow upon one cheek and command him to turn the other; and should the non-Christian, through some misguided folly, hesitate to comply with this request, they seize him at once by the ear, cast him out of his own house, install their own chair, table, and camp-bed within it, reap the harvest from his fields, extract gold from his mines, milk his cows, and proceed to slaughter his calves for their own kitchens.

I need not rehearse the ancient tale of what devastation civilized Christians wrought in America, nor what merciless slaughter they visited upon Australia. One need only carefully review the events of the Matabele War in South Africa to understand, in some measure, what is meant by a Christian blow upon a non-Christian cheek.

Complete accounts are never fully available, and even what is available cannot be entirely trusted as truth, since the drafting of war telegrams lies in the hands of that same Christian party. I would urge readers to peruse the several letters and articles concerning this war that have appeared in the well-known English weekly, Truth.

I cannot promise that any reader, upon perusing them, will be particularly reassured or find any cause for joy. But this much will become clear: that a civilized nation feels no shame whatsoever in sacrificing both its own civilization and that

very savagery alongside it, before one whom it deems less civilized than itself. The civilized code of conduct so long cherished through the nineteenth century slips away, like a briefly-worn disguise, the moment it steps beyond Europe's illuminated stage into the dark, unseen regions behind the scenes; and the primitive, naked man who emerges there proves in no way inferior to the naked Matabele.

I say this with some hesitation—not inferior; and were I to speak the truth boldly—in many respects, superior. The generosity and nobility of heart that the barbarian Lobengula displayed in his dealings with the English stands in such contrast to the Englishman's own cruel conduct that the latter pales in shame before it—and this very fact has been disclosed in none other than the Englishman's own newspapers.

Many will doubtless regard it as a matter of pride to the English that some among them are willing to acknowledge this, and I too count it so. But nowadays, many Englishmen no longer regard this as any matter of pride at all.

They believe that moral scruple has, of late, grown far too refined. One cannot conduct affairs by fussing over every trifling nicety at every turn. In the noonday of the Englishman's glory, he could leap clean over the finer subtleties of morality at a single bound. When necessity demands, injustice must be done.

When the Norman pirates roamed the seas plundering at will, they were hale and hearty; but now, that their English descendants should feel any hesitation in imposing their will upon other races is a sign of weakness, of a sickly constitution. What Matabele, indeed—what Lobengula! I am an Englishman; I desire your gold mines, your herds of cattle—why, then, all this pretence, all this scheming, why fabricate false reports, and why, should one or two acts of high-handedness happen to come to light, sit down to make such loud lamentation of repentance in the newspapers?

But what suits a child does not become a grown man. A wild, greedy boy, seeing sweets in the hand of a smaller, weaker child, will snatch and tear and plunder them, and stuff them into his own mouth in an instant, feeling not the slightest remorse at the sight of the helpless, cheated infant's tears. He might even, with a

resounding slap upon that infant's cheek, forcibly silence the crying—while the other boys, in their hearts, admire his strength of arm and firmness of resolve.

But should that same strong fellow, grown to manhood, still harbour such unchecked greed, he no longer resorts to slapping and snatching sweets outright—he resorts instead to cunning and deceit; and should he be caught, he feels some measure of embarrassment. By then he no longer dares to reach his hand into a familiar neighbour's house; but when, from some distant slum, he spies in the hand of an uncivilized mother's naked, emaciated child that one evening's sole sustenance, he glances about him and snatches it stealthily; and when the child's wailing rends the very sky, he winks at his passing countrymen and says: "I have taught this uncivilized black brat a fine lesson." But he will not confess that he snatched and ate it because he was hungry.

Between the brigandage of ancient times and the thievery of this modern age lie many distinctions. In the acts of plunder committed nowadays, that shameless, unabashed arrogance of former times can no longer openly persist. Self-awareness regarding one's own conduct has now taken root; consequently, one must now answer for every action before judgment. This makes the work no longer so easily accomplished as before, and abuse besides must be endured. Should some ancient brigand, by ill fortune, be born into the nineteenth century, his very appearance in this age becomes altogether untimely.

Such untimely appearances occur constantly within society. Many are born brigands, yet they cannot instantly be recognized as such—falling, out of season, into the wrong place, they often fail even to recognize themselves. Meanwhile, they ride about in carriages, read the newspapers, play whist, converse sweetly in polite society—no one suspects for a moment that beneath that white shirt and black coat wanders a new incarnation of Robin Hood.

It is only once they venture beyond Europe that these men suddenly reveal themselves in their full strength. I have already spoken of that grotesque, savage form stripped bare of every veneer of moral principle. But even within European society itself, considerable heat still smoulders beneath the ashes.

It is these very men who now declare that, though joining a policy of love to a policy of force might increase the moral standing of that policy, it correspondingly diminishes the might of that force. Talk of love and compassion sounds well enough to hear—but wherever we have established our own dominion through bloodshed, we harbour, deep within, a genuine contempt for the tender-hearted sentimentality of this morally enfeebled new century, which comes weeping over our deeds. Here, we have music, literature, art, and courtesy; there, the naked sword and unblushing absolute dominion.

For this reason, two distinct voices may now be heard among our ruling race. One party favours sheer force; the other wishes to spread love, peace, and justice throughout the world.

When a nation's heart is thus divided, it weakens the very strength of that force—it begins, of its own accord, to hinder itself. It is precisely over this that the Anglo-Indian community complains today with such bitter reproach. They say: whatever we wish to accomplish by some measure of force, our English brethren at home step in to obstruct, demanding a moral justification for every single act. When Drake, the pirate, went sailing the high seas conquering all before him, when Clive planted the British flag upright upon Indian soil, no square foot of English soil at home would have been forthcoming had a moral accounting been then required.

But however much one may lament in this fashion, there is no possibility whatsoever of returning to that age of undivided, unwavering strength. Now, whenever some act of oppression is contemplated, a certain hesitation arises throughout the whole land. Now, should some oppressed person appeal for justice, even at the risk of personal loss, at least a handful of people will rise up to see that justice done. Now, should even a single individual stand up invoking the cause of justice, unrestrained self-interest either shrinks back somewhat in shame, or else attempts to disguise itself as justice's own likeness. When injustice and iniquity could once display themselves shamelessly alongside naked force, force had no rival save itself; but the moment injustice tries to conceal itself, denying its own kinship with force, and instead seeks to draw justice to its own side in order to grow strong by justice's borrowed strength—in that very moment, it becomes its own

enemy. This is why the Englishman abroad today finds himself somewhat weakened, and why he perpetually displays such impatience.

It is for this same reason that we, upon discovering the Englishman's faults, grow bold enough to hold him accountable. And this vexes the English masters not a little. They say: when the Nawab ruled by whim, when the Marathas plundered at will, when the Thugs strangled travellers by the roadside, where then were your Congress presidents and your newspaper editors? They were nowhere to be found—and had they existed, it would have made no difference whatsoever. In those days rebellion was covert, the Marathas and Rajputs existed as they were, and there was no recourse against force save force itself. In those days it never occurred to anyone to lecture a thief on the tenets of righteousness.

The very reason Congresses and newspapers have flourished today is precisely this: that undivided force no longer prevails among the English. Now, even should a thief, upon being lectured on righteousness, refuse to accept the lesson, he still feels obliged to offer some justification consistent with moral principle—and should he fail to offer a satisfactory answer, he can no longer act with the same untrammelled force as before. Therefore, those Englishmen who complain of the excessive proliferation of Indian assemblies and newspapers are, properly speaking, lamenting the very existence of a moral conscience within the national character of their own countrymen. That their countrymen have come of age, that they have learned to feel shame for their own faults—this is precisely what strikes them as lamentable.

In one sense, there is indeed something lamentable in this state of affairs. On one side, the pangs of hunger remain unsatisfied; on the other, one can no longer simply seize another's food—this is indeed a grave predicament. For any nation, both self-preservation and the preservation of moral principle are equally essential. When wrong is done to another, it is not merely the other who suffers loss—one's own moral ideals gradually lose their foundation. Those who oppress their slaves destroy their own character. Unless moral principle is kept supremely strong above all else, the very bonds of national unity grow gradually loose. On the other hand, one's belly must also be filled. Population steadily increases, land grows scarce, and with the advance of civilization, the necessities of life multiply beyond measure.

Therefore, whatever fate may befall the two hundred and fifty million people of India, heaps upon heaps of rupees must be paid out, year after year, to compensate the highly-paid English official for the exchange rate's fluctuations. Should this create a shortfall in the royal treasury, then duties must be levied upon commercial goods. But should this cause Lancashire the slightest inconvenience, then the duty may instead be levied upon raw cotton. Failing that, one must make do by trimming Public Works expenditure somewhat and confiscating the famine relief fund.

On one hand, the sufferings of English officials cannot be witnessed with indifference; on the other, Lancashire's losses are equally unbearable to contemplate. Yet it is not that the misery of these two hundred and fifty million wretches evokes not the slightest sympathy either. To what a predicament does moral principle bring us even here!

At once the drums begin beating in the newspapers, a deafening clamour rises from the assembly hall like that of a flock of wounded birds, and the Englishman grows thoroughly indignant.

When the conscience whispers that a deed is unjust, yet there exists no way to avoid doing it even so, it is precisely then that the invocation of moral principle provokes the most violent anger. At such moments, having no weapon of argument left in hand, one longs simply to strike a blow outright. It is no longer merely the man one wishes to strike, but the very scripture of morality itself.

The President of the India Council, along with many an influential member, has expressed the general sentiment thus: that when laws must be framed with an eye not merely to India alone, but to the whole of the English empire, then local considerations of right and wrong can no longer be allowed to govern the matter, nor, even if they were, would they hold any real weight. Lancashire is no small matter. India's suffering is real enough, but Lancashire's profit is equally real—indeed, the latter carries rather the greater weight. It would be one thing were I, in the India Council, to abandon Lancashire and push through some law regardless—but why should Lancashire abandon me? A hired labourer is no trifling thing to dismiss—especially when that labourer commands considerable strength.

To pass some law hastily, disregarding the circumstances on every side, and then, caught later in difficulty, to find oneself unable even to retreat from it with dignity—while at the same time lacking any convenient justification to offer—this is truly a wretched predicament. One cannot, like some autocratic Nawab, simply declare: whatever I require, I shall fulfil exactly as I please; and yet, on the other hand, there stands an insurmountable obstacle to accomplishing what justice and reason demand—while shame forbids even confessing this predicament openly to the public. This is, in truth, a most pitiable state of affairs.

At such a time, when we begin to raise a commotion in our native assemblies and native newspapers, the sahibs sometimes chastise us; and even where the Government itself feels some hesitation in laying hands upon us directly, the lesser officials, given any opportunity to get us into their grip, will not let go easily, while the great English newspapers of India, like chained dogs baring their fangs, unleash upon us their ceaseless, thunderous barking. Very well—suppose we ourselves fell silent; but let us see you restrain yourselves first. Banish from among yourselves those who, setting aside self-interest, stand firm holding aloft the banner of moral principle; mock and tarnish that very ideal of justice which forms part of your own national character.

But that will never happen. Within your politics, moral conscience is a real and substantial force. Sometimes it triumphs, sometimes it is defeated—but it can never simply be dispensed with. When Ireland petitions Britain for some right, even as she sharpens on one side the assassin's knife, she strives, on the other, to enlist England's own moral conscience to her cause. When India ventures to lay her sorrows before the door of her foreign lord, she too is eager to secure the support of the Englishman's own moral conscience. And in between, the sheer bulk of red tape in English administration only continues to grow.

But so long as this conscious moral sense retains its influence anywhere within the English character—so long as there remains, within the Englishman himself, a judge to weigh his own righteous and unrighteous deeds—so long will our assemblies continue to multiply, our newspapers continue to spread. However restless our

powerful English overlords may grow with impotent rage at this, it will only serve to increase, all the more, the necessity of our own enthusiasm and endeavour.

REDRESS FOR INSULT

Once, an English college principal had been invited to the home of a certain high-ranking Bengali government official. At that time, agitation had arisen throughout the country over the proposed Jury Bill.

After dinner, when the invited ladies had withdrawn to an adjoining room, the subject of trial by jury arose in conversation. The English professor declared that in a country whose people were half-civilized, half-educated, whose standard of moral principle was not sufficiently advanced, the right of jury trial in their hands would only bear ill fruit.

Hearing this, I reflected that the Englishman had become so exceedingly civilized that he considered maintaining civility toward us to be superfluous. I know not to what degree our own moral standards have risen or fallen, but this much I know—that to insult, in coarse language, the countrymen of one whose hospitality one is at that very moment enjoying, falls far outside the bounds of what our own code of courtesy would ever sanction.

The professor made yet another remark—one which was not merely distasteful and improper, but which sounded utterly incongruous coming from an Englishman's mouth. He declared that the Indian's conception of the sanctity of life—that is, of the supreme wrongfulness of taking a human life—was far more limited than the Englishman's. For this reason, he said, the Indian juror's mind does not feel the appropriate degree of revulsion toward a murderer.

Those who belong to a flesh-eating race, who have cleared for themselves habitable space upon two newly-discovered continents of this earth through vast massacres, and who, quite recently, have begun cutting open, bit by bit, with the sword, the hidden breast of a third continent, contentedly devouring its harvest—should such people sit at ease in a dinner-party, perched with arrogant complacency upon the high seat of moral superiority, lecturing non-violent India on the sanctity of life and the wrongfulness of taking it—then one can only recall

the scriptural maxim, "Non-violence is the highest duty," and summon patience accordingly.

This incident occurred, I believe, some two years ago. All are aware that, in the two years since, numerous untimely deaths of Indians have occurred at English hands, and that in English courts, in not a single one of these killings has any Englishman's guilt been proven. One may read of such incidents, one after another, in the newspapers—and recalling them, one is reminded of that whiskered, sword-nosed English professor's fierce words of contempt, and of the proud sense of moral superiority regarding the taking of human life that he expressed. The recollection brings not the slightest consolation.

That an Indian life and an Englishman's life should be weighed as equal upon the immovable scale of the gallows is, I believe, regarded by the Englishman himself as a poor precedent in statecraft.

The Englishman might well reason thus: we, a mere handful of expatriates, govern two hundred and fifty million foreigners. By what strength do we do so? Not by force of arms alone, but by the force of reputation as well. It is therefore necessary always to keep firmly rooted in the foreign mind the notion: we are two hundred and fifty million times superior to you. The moment even the faintest notion takes root that we stand on equal ground, our strength suffers immense injury. A vast distance maintained between the two peoples, a certain undefined awe together with unreasoning fear planted in the mind of the subject race, accomplishes the work of a hundred thousand soldiers. That the Indian has never, on any occasion, witnessed an Englishman condemned by law to forfeit his life in exchange for an Indian's—this only strengthens that sense of awe within him; it fixes in his mind the notion that a vast gulf separates his life from an Englishman's, so vast that he hesitates to lay a hand upon an Englishman even to save his own life from unbearable insult, or in sheer self-defence.

Whether this policy exists clearly or only vaguely in the Englishman's mind is difficult to say with certainty. But this much may be inferred with fair confidence: that Englishmen privately hold the sanctity of their own countrymen's lives in exceedingly high regard. Should an Englishman kill an Indian, they no doubt feel

genuine sorrow. They may well consider it a "great mistake," even a "great shame." But they cannot, for all that, bring themselves to consider it fitting that a European's life be forfeited as punishment for it. Had some lesser punishment been prescribed by law for such an offence, the likelihood of an Englishman actually receiving punishment for killing an Indian would have been considerably greater. Where a race is considered far inferior to one's own, even should the letter of the law provide for impartiality, it becomes exceedingly difficult for that impartiality to be preserved within the judge's own heart. In such cases, the slightest flaw in evidence, the merest lapse in testimony, even the faintest crack in the wording of the law, naturally swells to such enormous proportions that the guilty Englishman may slip through it with ease and walk free.

The powers of observation and memory of events among the people of our country are admittedly neither very clear nor very robust; we must confess this fault—that a certain mental laxity and an unruly imagination exist within our nature. Even while present at an event, its entire sequence does not impress itself clearly upon our minds—hence our accounts often contain inconsistency and hesitation, and under the pressure of fear or cross-examination, we often lose the thread even of events we have genuinely witnessed. For this reason, it is always difficult for a foreign judge to determine, with fine precision, the truth or falsehood of native testimony. Beyond this, when the accused happens to be a foreigner, the difficulty multiplies a thousandfold. And when, moreover, the "sanctity of life" of the sparsely-clad, frugally-fed, humbly-mannered, physically-slight Indian appears, in the Englishman's natural estimation, but a fraction of that possessed by his own countrymen, it becomes wellnigh impossible for India to gather evidence sufficient to the purpose. Thus our testimony is already weak to begin with, and beyond this, numerous defects—such as those attributed to our supposedly diseased spleens and the like—are further discovered in our physical constitutions; consequently we are easily killed, and it becomes exceedingly difficult for us ever to obtain justice for it.

With shame and sorrow we must acknowledge these weaknesses; but alongside this, we must also declare this truth plainly: that these repeated occurrences have stirred the hearts of the people of this country into ceaseless agitation. Ordinary people cannot weigh the fine subtleties of law and evidence. This one fact alone—

that no Englishman is ever put to death for killing an Indian—repeated again and again within so short a span, gives rise in their minds to bitter suspicion regarding the Englishman's impartiality and sense of justice.

Why should we blame the ignorance of ordinary folk for this? What does the Government itself do in comparable circumstances? If they observe that some Deputy Magistrate is acquitting an unusually large proportion of the accused brought before him, they do not pause to consider that perhaps this Deputy Magistrate is simply more scrupulously just than his colleagues, that he is reluctant to convict an accused person without establishing the truth or falsehood of the evidence beyond all shadow of doubt with the utmost precision, and that therefore, for this conscientious moral sense and careful attention to justice, he ought promptly to be promoted; nor, if they observe that in some police officer's jurisdiction an unusually small number of criminals are apprehended relative to the number of crimes committed, or that an unusually large proportion of prosecuted defendants are acquitted, do they ever reason that perhaps this police officer is of a more upright character than his colleagues—that he does not send honest men to trial as thieves, nor manufacture false testimony with his own hand to patch up the holes in a prosecution's case, and that he ought therefore, by way of reward, to be promptly promoted in rank. The two hypothetical examples I have cited both lean, in probability, toward justice and righteousness. But it is well known to all that such unfortunate honest men gain neither honour nor advancement at the Government's hands.

Nor is the general public any more subtle in judgment than the Government; it too judges matters in a fairly crude fashion. It says: I do not understand all this fine legal and evidentiary reasoning, but how can it be that not a single Englishman ever receives due punishment for killing an Indian?

If, through repeated blows, a grievous wound is being inflicted upon the hearts of ordinary subjects, then to keep that wound concealed is not loyalty to the crown. This is why those of our own party, styled "Babus," consider it their duty to bring such matters into the open and speak of them plainly. We are merely the thermometer set within the "boiler" of the great steam-engine that governs the Indian empire—we possess no strength of our own; we hold no power whatsoever

over the working of that vast and intricate mechanism of wheels large and small; it is only in accordance with some hidden scientific law that our restless mercury bead suddenly rises upward from time to time. But the engineer sahib ought not, on that account, to grow angry with us. With a single blow of his fist he might well shatter this small, fragile object and scatter all its mercury into nothingness—yet the measurement of the temperature within the boiler remains one of the principal elements of the engineering work itself. The Englishman, often assuming a contrary and fierce posture, demands: who are you, presuming to speak in the name of the common people? You are nothing but a handful of glib, English-educated products of our own schools.

Sir, we are indeed nothing at all. But from your scorn, your irritation, and the fire of your anger, we surmise that you do not, in truth, consider us so very insignificant—nor ought you to consider us so. However small our numbers, it is only within this scattered community of the educated classes of India that education and unity of heart yet exist; and it is this very educated class alone that can give clear voice to India's inward suffering and disseminate it abroad through various means. To give careful and attentive consideration to what wounds and shocks are being inflicted, moment by moment, upon the hearts of this educated public ought to form a principal element of the Government's own statecraft. And, so far as can be observed, the Government does not appear entirely indifferent to this matter either.

We suffer injury from the matter under discussion for two reasons. First, the moment we hear of some act of oppression, the heart grows restless, anticipating its due and proper punishment. For whatever cause, when the guilty go free, the heart is wounded. Second, in all such incidents, we feel our national dishonour with acute intensity, and are wounded to the very core by it.

That the guilty should go unpunished is indeed a fault—but fatalistic India expects nothing so very extraordinary from the judgment of the courts. Law is so intricate, evidence so slippery, and knowledge of native character so rare among unsympathetic, contemptuous foreigners, that a lawsuit of uncertain outcome comes to resemble something very like a game of chance. And just as gambling carries its own seductive excitement, so too does litigation possess, for many of our

countrymen, a similar intoxicating quality. Therefore, when there already exists a general perception of the uncertainty of legal outcomes, and when our own natural failings bear no small share of responsibility for that very uncertainty, then the occasional persecution of the innocent and escape of the guilty, however lamentable, must be recognized as, to some degree, inevitable.

But the repeated acquittal of European offenders, together with the indifference displayed by the authorities in such matters, betrays the Englishman's genuine contempt for the Indian. And the sting of that particular insult lodges permanently in the heart, like a barb that never withdraws.

Had the exact opposite occurred—had numerous Europeans, within a short span, been killed by natives, and had every single accused escaped conviction at trial—a thousand devices would swiftly have been conceived to eliminate every possibility of such a recurrence. But when the Oriental Indian dies pointlessly from bullet and boot, not the slightest sign of misgiving is to be observed among the Western authorities. Nor is any question even raised as to how such disturbances might be prevented.

But for this very contempt shown toward us by the ruling race, we ourselves bear the chief responsibility, and deserve the greater share of reproach. For this truth must never be forgotten by us: that respect cannot be obtained through the agency of law; respect lies in one's own hands. The manner in which we have taken, of late, to whining continually in a nasal, plaintive tone has done nothing but continually diminish our own self-respect.

As an example, we may cite the incident of the clerk beaten by the Magistrate of Khulna. But it must first be stated that the District Magistrate, Mr. Bell, is a man of great kindness, elevated character, and warm-heartedness, and harbours no indifference or contempt whatsoever toward Indians. We believe that in striking the clerk, he displayed merely the impulsive rashness natural to a fiery English temperament, not any hatred of Bengalis as such. When the fire of the belly burns, the fire of anger too is easily kindled by the slightest cause—this holds true equally for Bengali and Englishman alike. There is therefore no occasion, in connection with this incident, to raise the subject of racial antipathy.

But the Bengali barrister representing the plaintiff's side has repeatedly declared, in the course of this case, that the act of striking the clerk was unworthy of an Englishman, because Mr. Bell knew, or ought to have known, that the clerk could not strike him back.

If this be true, then the matter for genuine shame belongs to the clerk and to the clerk's own countrymen. For while a man who, in sudden anger, strikes another displays weakness, it is likewise weakness—the weakness of cowardice—to weep without retaliation after receiving a blow. One might indeed say that had the clerk struck back, Mr. Bell, being a true Englishman at heart, would have privately come to respect him all the more for it.

That a clerk, however grievously insulted, cannot strike an Englishman in return—to accept this as an unshakeable truth without the least flush of shame, and upon this very basis to heap further reproach upon the Englishman, seems to us a wholly unnecessary and shameful mode of conduct.

That the clerk should not be deprived of whatever legal remedy is his due on account of having been struck is a matter to which our attention might properly be directed; but we can see no reason whatsoever why the whole country should join together in an outpouring of endless lamentation over his pain and humiliation, laying the blame solely upon the foreigner. Mr. Bell's conduct is not to be commended—but the conduct of the clerk, and of all those around him, is contemptible; and the conduct of the Bengali Deputy Magistrate of Khulna, combining as it does both baseness and injustice, has proven the most repulsive of all.

A similar incident occurred not long ago in Pabna. There, a certain Brahmin employee of the municipal ferry-ghat, having attempted to collect the proper toll from a police sahib's punkah-bearer, was taken by that police sahib into his own quarters and subjected to the most extreme abuse. Yet the Bengali magistrate, without imposing any punishment whatsoever upon the offending Englishman, dismissed him with a mere caution. And yet, when the punkah-bearer subsequently

lodged a complaint of assault against that very Brahmin, the same magistrate did not let him go without a fine.

The very reason that leads a Bengali magistrate to merely caution a powerful English offender while fining a helpless Bengali defendant has penetrated to the very marrow of our national character. The very respect that we ourselves do not know how to accord to our own countrymen is the respect we hope and demand that the Englishman will, of his own accord, willingly bestow upon us.

When one Bengali silently endures a beating, and another Bengali watches it merely with curiosity; and when it is openly acknowledged, without the slightest embarrassment, that a Bengali cannot even be expected to redress an insult with his own hands—then it must be understood that the fundamental cause of our being struck and injured by Englishmen lies within our own character. No law, no court of justice, can ever remedy this on the Government's part.

We often lament, upon hearing accounts of insults inflicted by Englishmen, that no Englishman would ever treat a fellow Englishman so. True enough—but far more is to be gained by turning our anger upon ourselves than by sitting in judgment upon the Englishman. Were the same conditions present among us that make one Englishman hesitate to lay hands upon another, we too would receive comparable treatment, and would have no need to weep and wail so excessively in that whining, plaintive tone.

We ought first of all to examine closely how Bengali treats Bengali. For it is upon this that our entire education depends. Do we not beat our own servants, show arrogance toward those under our authority, and constantly express contempt toward those of lower rank? Our society is divided, layer upon layer, into higher and lower; whoever stands even slightly above expects unlimited submission from whoever stands below. Should any inferior display even the slightest trace of independence, it becomes unbearable to those above him. To the gentleman, the "wretched peasant" scarcely counts as human at all. Should any powerless person fail to remain in complete submission before one who holds power over him, an effort is made to crush him utterly. Just as we observe the constable lording it over the watchman, the police inspector over the constable—not merely extracting the

government's due work from them, nor merely accepting the proper degree of respect owed to superior rank, but demanding, beyond this, outright servility—the constable becomes, to the watchman, an absolute despot, and the inspector likewise to the constable—so too, throughout our society, there exists no limit whatsoever to the demands of the superior upon the inferior. As the burden of domination presses down layer upon layer, servility and fear come to permeate our very marrow. Our daily habits and examples thoroughly prepare us for blind obedience; and thereby we learn to become tyrants toward those beneath us, envious toward our equals, and abject slaves before those above us. Within this moment-by-moment education lies buried the root of all our personal and national dishonour. One may show devotion to one's teacher, service to one's master, and due respect to one's elders, while yet preserving that fundamental human dignity which every human being ought rightfully to retain. But should our teachers, our masters, our rulers, and our elders seize from us even that last vestige of self-respect, then this amounts to nothing less than an assault upon our very humanity itself. For all these reasons we have truly fallen into a state devoid of manhood—and for this same reason, the Englishman does not treat us as he would treat a fellow Englishman.

Once we succeed, through education in the home and in society, in acquiring that essential humanity, the Englishman will be compelled to respect us, and will no longer dare to insult us. We may reasonably expect much from English rule—but even they cannot overturn the natural law of things. That contempt and injury fall upon baseness is the natural law of the world.

1301 (Bengali Era)

THE RIGHT TO JUST JUDGMENT

Readers of the newspapers will be aware that, not long ago, in the town of Sitara district, thirteen respected Hindu gentlemen were sent to jail. They may indeed have committed some offence, and under the letter of the law they may even deserve punishment—but the incident has struck a wound in the heart of every Hindu, and there exists just cause for that wound.

The Hindu population of the said town far exceeds the Muslim, and no sign of any discord between the two communities has ever been observed there at any time. Even a Muslim witness has testified that, in that place, there exists no dispute whatsoever between Hindu and Muslim—the dispute lies between Hindu and Government.

Suddenly, fearing disturbance, the Magistrate ordered the Hindus to refrain from playing music on the occasion of a certain religious festival. Caught between conflicting obligations, the Hindus, in attempting to preserve both obedience to the ruler's command and reverence toward their deity, succeeded in preserving neither. Suspending the traditional musical fanfare sanctioned by long custom, they somehow observed the festival with but a single, modest instrument. Whether the deity was thereby satisfied, I cannot say; the Muslims, at any rate, expressed no dissatisfaction whatsoever. But the Magistrate assumed a wrathful countenance, and had thirteen respectable Hindu gentlemen of the town sent off to prison.

The magistrate is formidable indeed, the law exceedingly strict, the administration most rigorous—but whether lasting peace is thereby established remains doubtful. In this fashion, discord arises where none previously existed, and wherever even the merest seed of animosity lies dormant, it is thereby made to sprout and flourish. In the very act of establishing peace through overwhelming display of power, disorder itself is awakened with great pomp and ceremony.

Everyone knows that among many uncivilized peoples there exists no other form of medical treatment save the exorcism of evil spirits. They roar, they dance, they

beat and torment the patient, and thereby bring about a veritable apocalypse. Should the Englishman attempt to treat the malady of Hindu-Muslim discord by such a primitive method, the patient may well perish, though the disease itself is unlikely to be cured. And the very spirit that the exorcist, in the act of exorcising, succeeds in summoning up, becomes exceedingly difficult afterward to pacify.

Many Hindus believe that resolving this discord is not, in fact, the Government's genuine intention. Fearing that, through the efforts of the Congress and similar bodies, Hindus and Muslims might gradually advance along a path of unity, they wish, it is thought, to keep alive the religious antagonism of both communities, and desire, by using the Muslims, to crush Hindu pride and thereby satisfy the Muslims while subduing the Hindus.

And yet, from Lord Lansdowne down to Lord Harris, all have declared that whoever gives voice to such a suggestion is a base liar. They have utterly repudiated, as entirely without foundation, the charge that the English Government shows greater favour toward Muslims than toward Hindus.

We too do not disbelieve their words. It is entirely possible that the Government harbours no deep affection for the Congress, and equally possible that they would prefer Muslims not join with Hindus in strengthening that body—yet, even so, no far-sighted, thoughtful government could possibly intend to transform the disunity between the two principal communities of the realm into outright hostility. Disunity may persist, that is well enough—but it ought to remain in a peaceful state under the good governance of the authorities. Just as gunpowder lies cold and inert within the government's magazine, though its power to ignite has not been extinguished—so too it is not impossible that the Government might intend that the internal ill-feeling between Hindu and Muslim be similarly preserved, cool and dormant, within the political armoury of the state.

For this reason, the Government displays no eagerness whatsoever to witness scenes of Hindu-Muslim embrace and reconciliation, while yet growing distinctly irritated at any scene of actual violence between them, regarding it as detrimental to their good governance.

We invariably observe that whenever discord arises between two parties, and fear of a breach of peace presents itself, the Magistrate, rather than proceeding to a careful examination of the merits, attempts instead to suppress both sides equally. This follows the general principle that it takes two hands to clap. But in the matter of Hindu-Muslim discord, a firm and widespread belief has taken root among the public that suppression falls chiefly upon the Hindu majority, while indulgence is chiefly enjoyed by the Muslims. Such a belief, once established, only serves to inflame jealousy the more fiercely between the two communities. And even in places where no discord has ever occurred, the authorities, by raising baseless alarm in advance and stripping one party of its long-established rights, only increase the boldness and defiance of the other side, thereby sowing the seeds of perpetual discord.

It is entirely possible that the Government harbours no particular animosity toward Hindus specifically—but a government does not run solely according to its stated policy; there exists a natural law at work as well. In the celestial realm, the wind-god himself can harbour no dishonest intent, and yet, bound by the laws of atmospheric pressure, his ministering breezes upon this mortal earth often suddenly whip themselves into storms. We cannot speak with certainty of news from the Government's celestial sphere—such intelligence belongs to Lord Lansdowne and Lord Harris alone—but we do sense a certain disturbance in the very air that surrounds us here below. From that celestial abode come murmurs of "all is well, all is well"—yet among the lesser divine functionaries nearer to us, unmistakable signs of considerable heat are becoming apparent. The Muslims too are aware that an angel of glad tidings awaits them; and we likewise feel, with trembling in our very bones, that the angel of death sits mace in hand beside our door—and, what is more, that we ourselves must supply, from our own resources, the very upkeep of that angel of death.

It seems unlikely that this sense we have of shifting winds is entirely without foundation. Not long ago, in the Statesman, a certain respected English civilian bearing a high governmental title declared that a mood of anti-Hindu prejudice has, of late, become widespread among Englishmen throughout India generally, along with a sudden upsurge of affectionate warmth toward the Muslim community. Should genuine cream be forming in the Englishman's breast toward our Muslim

brethren, that would indeed be a matter for rejoicing—but should only whey be forming toward us, it becomes difficult to preserve that joy with any sincerity.

It is not merely through love or hatred that partiality and injustice may arise—fear too can cause the delicate needle of the scale of justice to tremble and deviate considerably from true. We are led to suspect that the Englishman harbours, deep within, a certain fear of the Muslim. For this reason, the rod of state, brushing closely past the Muslim's side, falls with some considerable force squarely upon the Hindu's head.

This might be termed the politics of "beating the maidservant to teach the daughter-in-law a lesson." The maidservant, even should she be beaten unjustly, endures it; but the daughter-in-law, being a girl from another household, might not tolerate even a justly-intended chastisement should a hand be raised against her. And yet the business of governance cannot simply be abandoned altogether. Where resistance is weakest, the application of force yields the quickest results—this is scientifically established. Therefore, in the conflict between Hindu and Muslim, it becomes the easier solution to suppress the peaceable, disunited, law-abiding, long-suffering Hindu. I do not say that this is the Government's deliberate policy—but the natural course of administrative practice may, even unconsciously, incline toward this very path—just as a river's current, bypassing hard soil, naturally carves its way instead through the softer earth.

Therefore, however much we may invoke the name of Government a thousand times over, we do not believe the Government itself capable of remedying this. We have joined the Congress, we agitate in England, we write essays in the Amrita Bazar Patrika, we freely criticize the conduct of English officials from the highest to the lowest throughout India, we have often succeeded in exposing them to disgrace, and, with the support of impartial Englishmen resident in England, we have even managed to have various administrative regulations amended against the wishes of the Indian authorities. Through all this conduct, the Englishman has grown so thoroughly exasperated that, even from the great mountain-peaks of the Indian political landscape, the politically-mandated silence is sometimes breached, and volcanic eruptions burst forth here and there. On the other hand, the Muslims, in their excessive loyalty to the crown, have stood as an obstacle in the path of the

Congress's objectives. For all these reasons, a certain distemper has arisen in the Englishman's mind—in which the Government itself plays no direct part.

Nor is this all. The Cow Protection Society stirred up far greater agitation in the English mind than even the Congress did. They know that the Hindu race, which throughout the entirety of recorded history has never once managed to unite even for the sake of its own self-preservation, might yet, remarkably, unite for the sake of protecting cows. And so, naturally enough, when Hindu-Muslim discord arose from this very cause, the Englishman's sympathy shifted markedly toward the Muslim side. In such a situation, the Englishman possessed very little capacity to judge, calmly and impartially, which party bore the greater fault, or whether both parties shared blame in varying degree. In their anxious state of mind, they concentrated their attention chiefly upon how best to avert a political crisis. In our essay titled "The Englishman's Terror" in the third volume of Sadhana, we cited the example of the suppression of the Santals to demonstrate that, when seized by fear, one loses the patience necessary for fair judgment, and a harsh, savage disposition arises toward whoever, whether knowingly or unknowingly, becomes the source of that fear. For this reason, however impartial the machine called "Government" may claim to be, the smaller and larger instruments of that Government have, time and again, proven themselves entirely swayed by circumstance—however much they may repeatedly deny it, this has been plainly evident, and remains evident even now. And once such a distemper has taken hold, for various natural reasons, in the mind of the general body of Englishmen in India, its consequences will inevitably follow their natural course—just as Canute could not command the ocean's tide to obey him, so too the Government cannot obstruct this natural law.

The question may well be asked: then why raise this agitation at all, and what need was there for me to sit down and write this essay?

That there is no need whatsoever to write an essay addressed to the Government in tones either plaintive or reproachful, whether as petition or complaint, I concede a thousand times over. This essay of ours is intended solely for our own countrymen. Redress for the injustice and unfairness done to us lies within the power of none but ourselves.

Where Canute commanded the ocean's waves to halt, they did not halt—bound by the law of inert matter, the wave proceeded to its appointed place and struck there regardless. Canute could not, by mere word of mouth or incantation, turn back that wave—but he could have built a dam, and thereby resisted it.

If we wish to halt, midway, this chain of blows that follows its own natural law, then we ourselves must build that dam. All must become one; all must feel, with a single heart, a shared and common sorrow.

It is not that we must build a united front in order to stage some revolution—we possess no such power. But there exists a certain greatness and strength that comes from unity of purpose, which people cannot help but respect. And where respect cannot be commanded, justice is far more difficult still to obtain.

But how is a dam of mere sand to be built? Those who have been struck down and defeated again and again, and who have never, at any point in their history, learned to unite; among whom a thousand seeds of discord lie buried within their own society—by what means can such people ever be bound together? It is precisely the conviction that the Englishman cannot feel our inward suffering, and that, rather than attempting to heal us with medicine, he seeks instead to quadruple our heart's anguish through harsh blows—it is this very conviction that is, quietly and unseen, day by day, drawing together the hearts of the entire Hindu race, from north to south and from east to west.

But this alone is not sufficient. Our own countrymen have not yet become, for our own people, a firm and steadfast refuge. For this reason, we fear the sandy foundations within our own household far more than we fear the storm that rages without. One must avoid not so much the swift midstream current of a river as its loosely-bound, crumbling banks.

We know that, crushed beneath long ages of subjugation, our national manhood and courage have been shattered. We know that, should we ever be called upon to stand against injustice, our greatest fear must be of our own countrymen. He for whose benefit we might strive with all our might becomes, in fact, our chief source

of danger; from him whom we set out to help, we shall receive no help in return—cowards will deny the very truth; the oppressed will conceal their own suffering; the law will extend its iron fist, and the prison-house will gape its iron jaws to devour us. And yet, should even two or three men among us, by virtue of genuine greatness and an innate love of justice, remain steadfast to the very end, then the beginnings of our national bond shall take root, and then, at last, we shall have earned the right to just judgment.

I do not know whether what we surmise and feel regarding the conflict between Hindu and Muslim, or between Indian and Englishman, is indeed true; nor whether the injustice we fear is well-founded or not. But this much I know for certain: that one cannot secure the right to just judgment merely by resting the burden of justice upon the goodwill and conscientiousness of judges alone. However advanced a system of government may be, if the condition of its subjects remains utterly degraded, that government can never sustain itself in true elevation. For it is by human beings that kingdoms are governed—not by machines, and not by gods. Only when we prove ourselves, before them, to be truly human, will they, at all times, treat us as human beings deserve to be treated. When India produces, at the very least, a body of men who establish among us an unshakeable devotion to truth and a fearless standard of justice; when the Englishman comes to feel, within his own heart, that India does not accept injustice passively but actively demands justice, and stands ready to risk everything to prevent wrongdoing—then never, even by mistake, will they neglect us, nor will they, by their very nature, be inclined to relax their commitment to justice where we are concerned.

1301 (Bengali Era)

THE STRANGLED VOICE

(Read at the Town Hall on the eve of the passing of the Sedition Bill)

The language in which I am about to attempt to read this essay today—though it be the language of the Bengali, the language of the vanquished, the language of a conquered race—is nonetheless a tongue our rulers hold in dread. One reason for this is simple: they do not know it. And wherever the darkness of ignorance reigns, there too the phantom of blind apprehension keeps its haunt.

Whatever the cause, I fear all the more to address, in that very tongue, those who neither know nor understand it, and whom, in their heart of hearts, they dread. For from what feeling we speak whatever we speak—whether our words well up from unbearable anguish or are wrung forth by insufferable insolence—the judgment of this lies wholly in their hands, and the consequence of that judgment is by no means trifling.

I am no rebel, no hero, nor—I believe—a fool. I harbour no wish to be struck down suddenly by the fall of the uplifted royal rod and to perish by violence. But exactly where the sceptre-bearing guardian of our king has planted his foot and sits in silent watch over the frontier of speech, I do not clearly know; nor is it clear even to that authority himself at precisely what point my footfall will bring his cudgel down upon me and lay me low—for to him my language is obscure, and I too am utterly obscure to him; and so it is only natural that his rod of chastisement, driven blindly by a merely conjectural dread, transgressing the just measure of the Penal Code, may fall like a sudden meteor out of season and startle some frail creature's inmost faculties into terror. In such a case, the wisest course would be to remain wholly and silently mute; and this very good sense, I foresee, most people in our unhappy land will now adopt, keeping themselves at a safe distance from the field of duty—two or three signs of it may already be seen. Our own doughty orators, who by their lion-roars in the English tongue can conjure sudden confusion even in the minds of pale Europeans, will take shelter in their many burrows and settle into the practice of silence—so grim a season is now upon the land. In that season, it will be hard indeed to find a patriot reckless enough to advance to the palace gate bearing the country's own voiceless grief. Though the scripture says, "A friend stands by you even at the burning-ground and the palace gate," yet now that the burning-ground has drawn so terribly near the palace gate, timid friends must be forgiven somewhat.

Of course, it is not our nature to take fright merely because the king turns his face from us; but the very question of why the king has begun to show such fear toward us has thrown us into the deepest disquiet.

Though the English are our sole sovereign and their might beyond all measure, yet in this land they dwell in constant fear—again and again we are struck with wonder to see proof of it. We have felt with sorrow how startled they become at the mere rumour of a Russian footfall sounding from afar. For at each such flutter of their heart, an earthquake seizes the nearly empty granary of our Mother India; in a moment the grain of our poverty-stricken, famine-wasted land is transmuted into hard iron cannon-balls—and that is no light fare for our digestion.

There may well be legitimate grounds for such startled vigilance regarding a powerful enemy abroad; of that hidden intelligence and intricate reasoning, we know nothing.

But we know ourselves. Our very conviction is that in no respect are we terrible. And so long as that conviction remains firm and unshaken in our own minds, our capacity to inspire terror stands wholly dispelled.

Yet in recent days, through a rapid succession of astonishing events, we have suddenly discovered that, without effort, without cause, we are producing fear. We are terrible! Astonishing! This we ourselves had never so much as suspected before.

In the meantime, one day I saw the Government, in the utmost fluster, dragging from its old armoury a quantity of disused, heavy iron chains and sitting down to scour off their rust. The stout rope of the everyday law can no longer suffice to bind us—we are exceedingly terrible!

One day I heard that, unable to trace and arrest a certain offender, the enraged Government, without the smallest delay for evidence or trial, straightway clamped the crushing stone of the royal rod upon the breast of the entire city of Poona. We thought: Poona must be a fearsome city indeed! Who knows what dreadful doings must be brewing beneath its surface!

To this day, no trace of that dreadful doing has ever come to light.

While I sat astonished, wondering whether the whole affair was truth or dream, word came by telegraph that from the secret spire of the royal palace some unknown, unfamiliar, monstrous law had fallen like lightning and snatched away, none knew whither, a pair of dancing brothers. Even as we watched, a black cloud gathered thick, as before a heavy monsoon, over the whole of the Bombay

province, and amid the pomp of frequent thunderbolts and hailstones of stern governance, we thought—we know not what has happened within, but plainly this is no trifling matter; the Marathas must be a fearsome race indeed!

On the one hand, the rust of the old chain of law was being scoured clean; on the other, in the royal workshop, at the terrible hammer-blows of a new iron chain being forged, all of India was set trembling. A tremendous commotion arose. We are indeed so very terrible!

Till now we had believed this vast earth to be immovable; and however much we have leaned upon, however much we have burdened, this mighty Earth, she has borne it all with unstinted, boundless strength. One day, in the misfortune of the New Year, beneath a clouded afternoon sky, suddenly that eternally dependable ground of ours began to tremble with some unfathomable dread. We saw that, in that single moment of her tremor, our long-cherished, ancient dwellings were reduced to dust.

If the Government's settled policy, thrown into sudden disorder by some slight or indefinable panic, rises ready to devour us, then our long-standing faith in the strength and firmness of that policy suffers a violent shock. In that shock, terror may well be born in the subject's mind, but it is equally natural that sudden and excessive attention should be drawn to oneself as well. All at once, this question rises unbidden: I know not what I am!

Herein, then, lies a small consolation. For it is as needless to use force against a wholly inert, spiritless people as it is impossible to hold such a people in reverence. When we see extravagant preparation made to subdue us, setting aside all argument of justice and injustice, we naturally come to feel that perhaps there dwells within us some potential strength which, from sheer obtuseness, we ourselves cannot always perceive. When the Government is planting cannon on every side at once, this much at least is certain—that we are no mosquitoes, or at any rate, not dead ones.

That a living spark, a possible stirring of strength, dwells within our own people is a matter of the deepest joy to us; to deny it would be so transparent a hypocrisy that, as policy, it would be needless, and as pretence, futile. Therefore, if we should see, from the Government's side, in any quarter, some acknowledgment of that strength, a despairing heart cannot but feel a certain swell of pride.

But alas, such pride is perilous for us; it is a disease rather than a glory. Some fitting fisherman-king will drive his hard blade into our belly and draw out this pride entire,

to set it upon his own crown. The unwarranted honour the Englishman, measuring us by his own yardstick, bestows upon us may, for us, be at once mockery and death. The strength which, suspecting in us, the Government now employs force to suppress—if that strength be not truly ours, we shall perish beneath the Government's chastisement; but if it be genuine, then under that very goading it will grow ever firmer, and, in secret, ever more powerful.

We at least know ourselves; but the Englishman does not know us. A hundred and one reasons account for this ignorance, which need not be examined here. The essential point is this: they do not know us. We are of the East, they of the West. What may become of what within us, from what quarter a blow struck may raise smoke—this they cannot rightly discern. That is why they fear us. There is no other sign of dreadfulness in us; there is but one—that we are unknown. We are milk-drinking, herb-eating creatures, calm, long-suffering, indifferent. Yet still we may not be trusted, for we are Oriental, we are inscrutable.

If this indeed be true, then, O King, why make us ever more inscrutable still? If you suspect a serpent lurking in a rope, why hastily extinguish the lamp and thereby spread the terror all the wider? What use is there in obstructing the one and only means by which we might reveal ourselves, by which we might make ourselves known to you?

Before the Sepoy Mutiny, the loaves of bread passed hand to hand bore not a single written word upon them—was not that mute, illiterate message truly terrible? A serpent's movement is secret and its bite silent—is that not, for that very reason, the more dreadful? The more numerous and unrestrained the newspapers become, the less, by the natural order of things, will the country be able to conceal itself. If ever, in some pitch-black moonless night, our helpless motherland, driven mad by wild hope and desperate daring, should set forth upon a journey of revolt, the watchdog at the palace gate may fail to bark, the king's sentinel may fail to wake, the guarding constable may fail to recognize her—but she herself, in every limb, with her anklets and bangles all a-jingle, with her newspapers of strange and varied tongues, will surely set up some sound that no prohibition can silence. If the sentinel, with his own hand, should stop the ringing of those clamorous ornaments, his own sleep might grow easier thereby, but what advantage this brings to the watch itself, I cannot say.

But as to how the man entrusted with the watch should devise his method of watching, he himself must decide; to offer him sagacious counsel on this point

would be, on my part, the height of impertinence, and perhaps not even safe. Hence, in this feeble endeavour of mine in my mother tongue, there is no such ill intent. Yet why, then, this slight, futile, and perilous garrulity of mine? Only to remind the powerful how terrible they can seem to the powerless.

A small instance of this will not be out of place here. Some time ago, a group of low-class, thoughtless Muslims attempted an assault with brickbats upon Calcutta's public roads. The strange thing about it was that their target was directed chiefly at the English. They were punished enough for it. There is a saying that whoever throws a brick must expect a stone in return; but these fools, having thrown their brick, received in return something many hundred times harder than a stone. They committed the offence, they received the penalty; but to this day it has never quite become clear what the matter really was. These low-class Muslims neither read newspapers nor write in them. A small affair occurred, and yet from this mute, voiceless community nothing whatsoever of what was in their minds could be understood. Because the matter remained wrapped in mystery, it acquired in the public eye an unwarranted and artificial grandeur. Curious imagination, starting from the edge of Harrison Road, went branching all the way to the crescent-topped palace of Turkey, weaving conjecture upon conjecture, possible and impossible. Because the affair remained shrouded in mystery, one panic-stricken English paper called it the beginning of a national revolution in league with the Congress; another said the Muslim quarters should be razed and burned entirely; yet another said that at such a dire hour of crisis, it ill became His Excellency the Viceroy to sit so coolly composed upon his snow-capped peak.

Mystery is the chief refuge of uncertain fear, and to the powerful, uncertain fear is death itself to the weak. To remain wrapped in the darkness of mystery amid our throttled press is, for us, a most perilous condition. It will make all our doings appear, in the eyes of authority, exceedingly black through the shadow of their suspicion. Through the distrust bred of distance, the royal rod will grow sharper still, and the subject's heart will go on growing heavier with grief, torn by voiceless despair. We are the wholly subject people of the English, but the law of nature does not accept his dominion. If he strikes, we shall feel the pain; though the Englishman turn his eyes bloodshot a thousand times over, he cannot banish this law from the land. In his anger he may increase the measure of the blow, but the measure of pain will increase along with it. For that is the ordinance of Providence; the Penal Code contains no prohibition against it. If the fire within finds no expression in

words, it goes on smouldering. In such an unhealthy, unnatural state, we grow fearful imagining how distorted the bond between king and subject must become. But this state of undefined suspicion is not the chief evil among our troubles. There exists, for us, a graver misfortune still.

That dependence exerts a degrading effect upon human character we have learned from none other than the English themselves. Falsehood and hypocrisy, becoming the self-defensive weapons of a subject race, surely and utterly destroy its self-respect, destroy its very manhood. The freedom-loving English, striving to remove as far as possible from their subject peoples the stain of that degradation belonging to dependence, once set about teaching us manhood. They never, at every turn, reminded us that we were the conquered and they the conquerors, that we were weak and they strong. To this extent they let us forget ourselves so far that we came to believe freedom of expression was our natural human right.

Today we awaken with a start to find that the weak possess no rights at all. What we had thought the due of every human being is, for the weak, merely the arbitrary favour of the strong, granted at will. That I stand today upon this platform uttering but a single word carries, in itself, no cause for manly pride. Nor is there any glory in the fact that, before offence is proven or trial held, I do not find myself already confined within a prison.

This is true, in a sense. But it is not wholesome for either king or subject to feel this truth at all times. Amid the disparities of human condition, it is by forging a bond of the heart that man, even amid inequality, strives to preserve his own manhood. If the chain of governance stretching between the ruled and the ruler is not made forever to clank and jangle, but is veiled instead under the guise of kinship, then the burden of a subject nation grows lighter.

The freedom of the press is just such a veil. It has kept hidden the degradation of our condition. Though stripped of a thousand powers belonging to the conquering race, we were yet, through this bond of freedom, drawn inwardly near to them. Forgetting our weakness, our degradation, our fear and hypocrisy, we were learning, with open hearts and lifted heads, to speak the truth, to speak plainly.

Though we had no freedom in the higher affairs of state, yet by counselling fearlessly, by criticizing openly, we counted ourselves part of this vast work of governing India. There is no time here to weigh its other consequences, but through it our self-respect had grown. We knew we were not incapable, not inert, in the great task of governing our own land; that here too lay our duty, our responsibility.

When, upon this business of governance, our joy and sorrow, our weal and woe, chiefly depend, then if no bond of comment, of statement, of duty binds us to it, our meanness, our degradation, knows no bound thereafter. Especially since we were educated in English schools, since English literature planted deep within our hearts the example of English men of action, we came to feel what supreme glory lies in having, in every sphere, one's own free right to work for one's own good. If today we should suddenly be stripped of that freedom of expression, if the slender thread of comment joining us to the conduct of the state should be severed at a single stroke, and if we then sink either into inert indifference or, through hypocrisy and false words, sacrifice our manhood wholly at the feet of power—then, with all the degradation of servitude compounded by the wordless, futile anguish of minds that have tasted higher learning, our wretchedness will reach its utmost extreme; the narrow path of exchange that once lay open between king and subject will be blocked by fear; and that fear, felt by subject toward king, brings no glory, while the fear felt by king toward subject is more lamentable still.

Were this freedom of the press stripped away, the whole hard skeleton of our subjection would stand exposed in a single moment. Some blustering English writer nowadays declares that truth, when inconvenient, is best left unspoken. But we ask: is this hard, dry skeleton of subjection under English rule the sole truth, and is all the loveliness of life laid upon it—all the varied play, the beauteous grace of free movement—nothing but falsehood, nothing but illusion? Is this, after two hundred years of acquaintance, to be the whole remainder of our human bond?

1305

IMPERIALISM

A certain intoxication has taken hold in England—that of Imperialism. Many in that country are given over to the dream of drawing together dependent lands and colonies until they swell the British Empire into one vast, immoderate bulk. Vishvamitra once undertook to create an entire new universe; a king spoken of in the Bible, defying heaven itself, attempted to raise a tower; even of Ravana such a legend is told.

It is plain that such vast ambitions have, time and again, been secretly nursed by many a man upon this earth. Most such schemes do not endure; but before they perish, they seldom fail to work some measure of harm upon the world.

This very fancy, this wave now stirring in Lord Curzon's mind, he himself gave hint of, in an ill-omened speech, the other day. I have noticed that some of our own newspapers occasionally express a certain enthusiasm on this very subject. They say: well spoken—grant India the right to become one with the British "Empire."

But mere play of words secures no right. Indeed, even where matters are set down on official paper, it remains hard for the weak to recover what is theirs. For this reason, when we see that those who govern us are themselves possessed by this wind of Imperialism, we can find no ease of mind in it.

Readers may say: what need have you to fear so much? Let him in whose hand power lies mouth the slogans of Imperialism or not, as he pleases—should you wish to obstruct it, you could surely do so with ease.

We cannot do so with ease. For however hard-hearted a man may be, cruelty is not something to be cast off all at once—there remains some shame in it. But once a grand, resounding slogan takes hold of a man, cruelty and injustice become easy to him.

Many people feel pain at causing needless suffering to an animal. But give that suffering a name—call it "sport"—and the same man will joyfully and with pride keep tally of the wounded and slain among harmless birds. Surely, one who breaks a bird's wing without any pretext is more cruel than the sportsman—but the bird finds little comfort in that distinction. Rather, for the whole helpless kingdom of birds, the tribe of sportsmen proves far more terrible than the naturally cruel man.

That those under the spell of Imperialism can be pitilessly ruthless toward the separate existence and rights of the weak admits of no doubt. Examples of it may be found on every side of the world.

Everyone knows to what lengths Russia presses in her effort to swallow Finland and Poland whole into the vastness of her own body. This could never have gone so far had Russia not persuaded herself that erasing by force the natural distinctions of her subject lands was necessary for some all-embracing greater interest called Imperialism—an interest she counts, in turn, as being Poland's and Finland's own.

Lord Curzon says precisely the same thing: forget the claims of nationality, and make the Empire's interest your own.

Spoken into the ear of some powerful nation, such words would cause no fear, for mere words would not beguile it; its own interest would have to be proved to the last farthing. That is to say, to draw such a nation into the fold, one's own interest must be sacrificed in sufficient measure, or its heart cannot be won. Hence, in such quarters, much honey must be poured, much oil expended, before the thing can proceed at all.

England's colonies are proof of this. The English endlessly chant into their ears, "As is my heart, so be thine"—but the colonies are not to be beguiled by mantras alone; they reckon the cash value of the bargain and watch closely.

For us unfortunates, there is no need even of the mantra, let alone the price of the bargain.

The matter to be weighed, in our case, is this: that a sense of distinction from the foreigner is necessary for nationality, but runs counter to Imperialism—and therefore whatever gives rise to this sense of distinction ought to be rooted out.

But to accomplish this, it is best that the unity now taking shape among the different parts of the country be prevented, by whatever means, from ever fully taking root. If it remains fragmented, shattered into pieces, it is easy to absorb.

There is a certain glory in uniting so vast a land as India into one. To strive to keep it forcibly divided would be, for a proud nation like the English, a matter of shame. But under the name of Imperialism, that shame vanishes. Since India's own ultimate advantage lies, supposedly, in becoming one with the British Empire, to grind her in the mill for that lofty purpose and call it "Humanity"!

To deny any part of India the chance to nurture its own free strength is, by the standard of English civilised policy, certainly shameful; but should the same thing be called by the incantation "Imperialism," then what is utter shame to manhood may rise to become the very summit of statecraft's glory.

That it is a monstrous wrong, a towering cruelty, to render countless people of a vast land powerless and without recourse, forever, for the sake of one's own secure

and undivided dominion—this needs no elaboration; but to shield one's own conscience from the taint of that wrong, one must take shelter beneath the shadow of some grand phrase.

Cecil Rhodes was a man possessed by this very wind of Imperialism; that is why everyone knows with what strange eagerness his party laboured to wipe out the independence of the Boers in South Africa.

Whatever acts, in private dealings, would be called theft and treachery, whatever would be named forgery and murder—once dressed with the suffix "-ism," is cleansed and elevated into no small glory; abundant proof of this can be gathered from the lives of respected figures in British history.

For this reason, when we hear even the faintest hint of Imperialism from the mouths of those who rule us, we cannot rest easy. If, beneath the wheel of so vast a chariot, our very vitals are to be crushed, then no invocation of religion will reach anyone's ear—for, fearing that it might spoil the enterprise, men do not wish to let religion intrude upon their grand designs.

When the mighty Athenians of ancient Greece set about seizing the island of the weak Melians with unjust cruelty, a harsh exchange took place between the two sides; the Greek historian Thucydides has left us a specimen of it. Below I have quoted a portion of it. From this, readers will understand how ancient in Europe is the doctrine of Imperialism, and what merciless cruelty lies concealed within the very politics upon which European civilisation is built.

Athenians. Let you and us not deal in words, but say what we really think, and aim only at what is possible, for we both alike know that in the discussion of human affairs the question of justice enters only where the pressure of necessity is equal, and that the powerful exact what they can, while the weak grant what they must. … And we will now try to show that we have come in the interest of our empire, and that what we are about to say is spoken only for the preservation of your city. For we wish to make you ours with the least trouble to ourselves, and it is for the good of us both that you should not be destroyed.

Melian. It may be your interest to be our masters, but how can it be ours to be your slaves?

Athenians. To you the gain will be that, by submission, you shall avert the worst; and we shall be richer for your preservation.

1312

LOYALTY TO THE KING

The Prince arrived. All the sons of the kingdom's great houses gathered round him, forming a ring so tight that not the smallest gap remained for any man to slip through. To narrow that gap yet further, the Kotwal's son himself stood guard—and for this service he was decorated. And after that? After that, having burnt away vast sums in fireworks, the Prince boarded his ship and sailed off—and so my tale is told, my little curtain rolled up.

What, then, was the whole affair? A story, merely. This most rare of unions between kingdom and prince was made as distant, as brief, as barren of meaning as it could possibly be made. To see the whole country while knowing it least, to permit the smallest possible bond between land and ruler—this was accomplished at vast expense, with great artistry, and much pomp and ceremony.

Surely the men of government perceived in all this some policy, some purpose—else why would they spend so lavishly on so little? In the fairy tale, the Prince crosses seven seas and thirteen rivers to wake some sleeping princess; our own Prince, I suppose, set out on his journey to awaken a slumbering loyalty to the crown. But was the golden wand ever found?

It is plain from many an event that our rulers place far greater trust in the iron wand than the golden one. They flash the sheer pomp of their power before our eyes, again and again, like lightning from a thundercloud, and pass on. Our eyes are dazzled, our hearts may even pound—but the inward bond between king and subject grows no firmer for it; the distance only widens.

Such a state is inevitable, given India's present circumstance. For those who occupy the throne here do not hold their tenure long, while the concentration of royal authority here exceeds even that enjoyed by the Emperor of India himself. In truth, there is no scope for real kingship in England, since there the subjects are free. That India is a dependent realm, the Englishman grasps the instant he sets foot upon her soil. Hence, in this land, the arrogance of office, the intoxication of sudden power, comes upon petty natures too abruptly for them to bear its elevation with composure.

A hereditary king cannot be made drunk by royal splendour. For the overnight king, this intoxication is sheer poison. Most who come to wield authority in India are unaccustomed to this wine. The change from their homeland to this country is, for them, immense. Those who, in their own land, were never anyone of consequence,

become here, in a single moment, lords over all. In such a state, dizzy with intoxication, they come to prize this newly won grandeur above all else.

The path of love is the path of humility. Even to enter the heart of the humblest man, one must bow one's head to the measure of that heart's threshold. For one who, like an overnight nabob, remains ever conscious from head to foot of his own pomp and prestige, such humility becomes well-nigh impossible. Had English rule here been one of continuous, renewing presence—had Englishmen settled permanently and been made to bear, in some measure, the burden of authority's rough edge—they would surely have been compelled to seek a bond of the heart with us. But under the present arrangement, men come from some obscure English county for a handful of years and can never for a moment forget that "we are the masters"; and to keep that petty dignity ever visible, they hold us always at arm's length in every matter, seeking to keep us subdued by force alone. They are reluctant even to admit that our wishes or our griefs might touch their policy at all. Indeed, whatever pain we may feel or express under some measure of theirs, they count as insolence.

But however hard a husband may be, it is not mere obedience he seeks from his wife; deep within, he craves the devotion of her heart as well. And yet he cannot bring himself to take the true path toward winning it; his own unbending arrogance stands in the way. If he comes to suspect that his wife merely endures his mastery without loving him, he only increases his harshness the more. That this is scarcely the finest way of engendering affection needs no saying.

Just so, the English rulers of India cannot relinquish their claim upon our loyalty to the crown. But loyalty is a matter of the heart; in such a bond there is give and take—it is no mechanical relation. To establish it, one must draw near; it cannot be won by force alone. Yet they will neither draw near nor give their heart, and still they demand our loyalty. And when at last doubt arises over that very loyalty, they seek to extract devotion by the Gurkha's bayonet, the lash, and the prison cell.

While running the machinery of English rule, they now and then grow suddenly anxious for some display of loyalty—of this, an example was given in Curzon's time. For want of natural nobility, Lord Curzon had grown intoxicated with the wine of power—this was plain to see. He could in no way bring his mind to relinquish this seat. Withdrawn now from that royal pomp, his inmost soul remains, I daresay, in the state of a man suffering the aftermath of drink. Could we but rightly grasp this, perhaps we Bengalis might today feel some pity for him. No other ruler of India, I

believe, has ever displayed such naked hunger for dominion. This viceroy resolved to hold a durbar in the manner of India's ancient emperors, and defiantly fixed its site at Delhi itself.

But every Oriental sovereign once understood that a durbar exists not for the display of arrogance, but as a festival of joyous communion between king and subject. That day is meant not merely to overawe the people with royal splendour, but to draw them near through royal generosity. It is the fitting occasion for forgiveness, for gift-giving, for adorning and beautifying the machinery of rule.

But this overnight nabob of the West, setting the history of the East before him while stunting his own generosity with a merchant's parsimony, produced nothing but an intensified show of raw power. In truth, England's royal glory gained no honour thereby. The very purpose of the durbar was left wholly unfulfilled. Under the insufferable arrogance of that occasion, the Oriental heart was wounded, but the country as a whole was drawn no nearer. If that vast extravagance bore any fruit at all, it was the memory of an insult. To attempt with an iron wand the work proper to a golden one is not merely futile—it produces the very opposite result.

This time, the Prince was brought to India. From the standpoint of policy, the counsel seems sound, for a certain inclination of the Indian heart toward royal lineage is, generally speaking, of long standing. It was for this very reason that, at the Delhi durbar, though the Duke of Connaught himself was present, it struck every Indian as strange that it was Curzon who accepted the durbar's chief honour. In such circumstances, the Duke ought scarcely to have been present at all. Indeed, the public had formed the impression that Curzon, purely to advertise his own eminence, had deliberately arranged for the Duke's presence at that durbar. We may not fully understand English ways, but especially since the very matter of a durbar is peculiarly an Eastern one, this public slighting of the royal house was, at the very least, ill-suited to sound policy.

Be that as it may—in order to rouse loyalty to the throne in India, someone must have reasoned that a prince ought once to be brought and paraded across the length of the land. But the English in India have never, in all their years, had true dealings with the heart. They have never given India their heart, nor sought India's heart, nor do they trouble to know where that heart lies. They contrived to make even this visit of the Prince as barren of consequence as possible. Today the Prince quits India's soil and boards his ship, and it feels to us as though a dream has

broken, as though a fairy tale has come to its end. Nothing whatever came of it—nothing was left worth remembering; all remains precisely as it was.

That loyalty to the crown is inherent in India's nature is indeed true. Hindu India's loyalty has, moreover, a peculiar character of its own. Hindus regard the king as the equal of a deity, and count loyalty to him a form of religion itself. Westerners cannot properly grasp the true sense of this. They imagine that such prostration before power betrays our inherently servile nature.

The Hindu cannot but regard the majority of worldly relations as, at bottom, divine relations. To the Hindu, almost nothing is a mere accident of connection. For the Hindu knows that however varied and manifold the manifestations before him, the root power behind them all is one and the same. In India this is not merely a philosophical doctrine—it is religion; not something to be set down in a book and taught in a college, but something to be reflected, along with knowledge, in the realisation of the heart and in the daily conduct of life. We call our parents divine, we call our husband divine, we call the chaste wife the goddess of fortune. By honouring our elders we fulfil our religious duty. The reason is this: from whatever relation we derive our good, within that very relation we wish to acknowledge the primal source of all good. To sever that good from its occasion, and, placing the source of good far off in some distant heaven, worship it there alone, is not India's way of religion. When we call our parents divine, we do not for a moment harbour the falsehood that they are lords of the universe or possess supernatural powers. We know full well their poverty, their weakness, their humanity in every particular; but we know, with equal certainty, that the welfare they, as parents, work for us is itself a manifestation of that very same universal parenthood present throughout the cosmos. This is precisely why Indra, Chandra, Agni, and Vayu were acknowledged as deities in the Vedas. India has never found satisfaction without feeling, in every manifestation of power, the presence of a mighty being. For this reason, on countless occasions and in countless forms throughout creation, India's devotion, humbled in worship, has been offered up. To us, the world is ever alive with divine power.

It is wholly false to say that we worship might merely out of our own baseness. Everyone knows that India has even worshipped the cow. It is not that she does not know the cow to be an animal. Man is strong, the cow indeed is weak. But Indian society derives manifold benefit from the cow, and the arrogance of thinking that man extracts this benefit from a beast by his own bodily strength alone is not India's

way. Only by acknowledging, at the root of all such benefit, the grace of the divine, and by establishing through it a bond of kinship with all things, can one truly abide in peace. The carpenter reveres his tools, the warrior his sword, the musician his lute. It is not that these men do not know a tool for a tool; but they know equally that the tool is merely an occasion—the joy or benefit derived through it is no gift of wood or iron, for the soul can be touched by no mere material thing except through kinship. For this reason, gratitude and worship are offered to Him who is the Master-Craftsman of this universal machine, through the very medium of the machine's working.

If India comes to feel this whole business of state governance not as a person but as a mere mechanism, nothing could be more painful for her. Even amid dead matter, one who cannot feel the bond of soul finds no satisfaction; how, then, in so vast a human affair as the machinery of the state, can one live without seeing the heart's direct presence embodied within it? Wherever a bond of kinship exists between soul and soul, there one may bow with grace; where it does not, to be compelled to bow endlessly brings only insult and pain. Therefore, if amid the very machinery of the state we can behold the power of the divine, the visible embodiment of that good, we can bear the immense burden of governance with ease; otherwise the heart will go on breaking at every turn. We wish to worship—we wish to breathe life into the body of the state and feel our own life in communion with it—we cannot endure mere force as mere force.

Thus it is true that loyalty to the king is inherent in India's nature. But that is precisely why, for her, the king is no mere mock-monarch, no figurehead of empty theatre. She takes no pleasure in seeing the king as an ornament of needless pomp. She wishes to feel him as a true and living reality. She has grown ever more distressed at being so long denied such a king. Under the crushing weight of a succession of transient rulers, how this vast country has been wounded to its very marrow, how helplessly it heaves its sighs day after day—none but the Indweller of all hearts can see. Those who are mere sojourners here, whose hearts are set only on their furlough home; who, for their bread's sake, pass their exile in this land; who draw their wages and keep this machine of governance turning; with whom we share no bond of society whatever, who are forever changing—to endure the rule of such indifferent, heartless officialdom, unconnected to the very heart of the community, is a suffering only India herself can know. India, initiated into loyalty to the crown, cries from the depths of her heart in prayer: "O Fate, so averse to

Bharat, I cannot endure these petty kings, these fleeting kings, these many kings—give me one king. Give me a king of whom it can be said, India is my very own kingdom—not the merchant's, not the miner's, not the tea-planter's, not Lancashire's. Give me one whom India may call, from her very heart, my own king—not the king of Hallidays, not the king of Fuller, not the king who edits the Pioneer." Let the Prince come, let him take the throne of India as her ruler; then naturally, in his eyes, India shall become primary and England secondary. Therein lies India's good and England's lasting gain. For to govern men like machinery, keeping no bond of the heart, no bond of society, with them—this arrogance the Lord of Righteousness can never, in the end, suffer to endure; it is unnatural, and it wounds continually the ordinance of the universe. That is why neither good governance nor mere peace, by any means, can fill this dreadful famine of the heart. The Law, hearing this, may grow enraged; the serpent of the Police may raise its hood. But that hungering truth wailing in the very marrow of thirty crore subjects cannot be uprooted by force. No human hand possesses the means of such governance—nor does any demon's hand possess it either.

It was to bring some small comfort to this ever-wounded heart of India's subjects that the Prince was brought here. We were shown that we too have a king. But a mirage cannot quench a real thirst.

In truth, it is not royal power we long to feel directly, but the royal heart—it is to the visible, living king that we wish to offer our own hearts. Do not imagine, O rulers, that the ultimate fulfilment of a subject people lies merely in the safety of their wealth and their lives. Because you utterly disdain us, you say among yourselves, "These people live in peace—what more can they possibly want?" Know this: that when man's heart is won through the heart, he can willingly renounce wealth and life itself—of this, India's history bears witness. It is not peace but fulfilment that man craves; and however hostile fate may be toward us, we too are human. Even to appease our hunger, real food is needed—not a heart won by flowers, by punitive police, and by force and coercion.

Be it god or man, Lord Sahib or common Jack, wherever there is only the show of might, only the excess of force, there, to bow down out of fear is nothing but self-degradation, an insult to the Indwelling God, and nothing more. O India, there, in your own eternal, magnanimous, fearless knowledge of the Absolute, keep your head unbowed above every such humiliation; deny with your whole inmost being all these grandly named falsehoods; let them not, though masked in terror, shrink

your inner soul by the smallest measure. Before the divinity, the brilliance, the supreme strength of your own soul, all this thunder and roaring, all this arrogance of high office, all this pomp and preparation for exploitation, are but trifling child's play. Though they wound you, let them never be able to make you small. Wherever the bond of love exists, there alone lies the glory of bowing down; where it does not, whatever may befall, keep your inner being free, keep it upright, do not confess to your own degradation, forsake the beggar's posture, and hold your faith in yourself unshaken. For assuredly you have your own indispensable purpose in this world—that is why, through so much suffering, you have not been destroyed. That you should, after so long an age, striving merely to imitate others outwardly, have survived only to enact some historical farce—that can never be. What you shall become, what you shall do, has no precedent in the history of any other land. In your rightful place, you are the greatest of all in the whole universe.

O my motherland, at the foot of the great mountain range, girded by the great ocean, your throne lies spread wide. Before this throne, Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, drawn by the call of the Divine, have long waited in expectation. When you take up this throne of yours again one day, I know for certain that many a conflict of knowledge, of action, of faith, shall find resolution in your utterance, and at your feet the venomous serpent-hood of this pitiless, modern, political Kali-age shall be stilled at last. Be not restless, be not covetous, be not afraid. You—

Atmanam viddhi.

Know thyself.

And:

Uttishthata jagrata prapya varan nibodhata.

Kshurasya dhara nishita duratyaya durgam pathastat kavayo vadanti.

Arise, awake, and having attained the best, become enlightened;
The true path, say the sages, is sharp as a razor's edge, hard to tread, difficult of passage.

1312

THE RULE OF MANY

We are never done comparing the age gone by with the age now upon us. Since the past cannot answer for itself, a one-sided judgment yields whatever result the judge's own temper allows—sometimes fame falls to the old times, sometimes victory to the new. But no reliance can be placed on judgments of this kind.

Whether Mughal rule was, on the whole, more pleasant for us, or English rule more pleasant, cannot be settled by a handful of blunt testimonies. Man's happiness and sorrow depend on so many subtle threads that it is impossible to examine them all. And the age now gone has carried off most of its own witnesses along with it.

But between the old age and the new there is one vast difference that towers above all lesser and greater ones. Just as this difference is the greatest of all, so surely its consequences are, for our country, the gravest of all as well. In this brief essay, let us try to touch upon that one difference alone.

Formerly, upon India's throne there sat an emperor; after him, a Company came to sit there; now, a nation sits there. Before, there was one; now there have come to be many. This is so plain a point that no subtle argument is needed to prove it.

When the emperor reigned, he knew the whole of India to be his; now, the English nation knows India to belong to all of them together. Not merely a royal house, but the entire English people, has grown prosperous upon India's wealth.

The emperor's tyranny, in all likelihood, was considerable enough. Now there is no tyranny, but there is a burden. A mahout seated upon an elephant's back may goad it now and then with his hook—not pleasant for the elephant, certainly. But were the elephant made to bear, in place of the mahout, the entire weight of another elephant upon its back at all times, the mere absence of the goad would hardly seem to it its sole good fortune.

If flowers are heaped upon the worship-platter of a single deity, the pile may look considerable, and the labour of the one who gathered them plain to see. But should a single petal be offered to each of thirty-three crore deities, however small it looks to the eye, taken all together the sum is by no means slight. Yet since it is hard to gather such an account of single petals into one place, one is inclined to blame no one but one's own fate.

But here it is not a question of blaming anyone in particular. There is little profit in judging whether the Englishman is better or worse than the Mughal. Still, it is well

to know the true state of things—doing so saves much futile hope and fruitless effort. That, too, is a gain.

Consider this: we lament that the great offices of our country fall, for the most part, to Englishmen—where lies the remedy for this? We imagine that if we go to England and lay our grievance at every door, some redress might follow.

But this must be remembered: it is precisely against the one we intend to complain of that we would be going to complain.

Under the emperor, we became ministers, we became generals, we held charge of governing the land—that this now lies beyond our hope, what is the cause of it? Setting aside other hidden or open reasons, there is one plain, obvious cause visible enough to all. England cannot feed her entire people; hence the door of India's granary must be kept open for them. The burden of feeding a whole nation has fallen, in no small measure, upon our shoulders; and that food must be supplied in every shape, in every vessel.

Were the Seventh Edward truly seated as king upon Delhi's throne, we might go to him and say: Your Majesty, if every great morsel of food falls to the plate of foreigners, how then shall your kingdom endure?

Then the emperor too might say: True indeed—whatever I take from my own empire for my own enjoyment is fitting; but that is no reason for a dozen strangers to come spread their plates and sit down to feast as well.

Then he would feel tenderness for it as "my kingdom," and would restrain the greedy hands of others. But today, every Englishman knows India as "my kingdom." Should there be the least curtailment of their enjoyment here, they will all together raise such an outcry that no lawmaker of their own land will ever be able to make the smallest change in the matter.

That to go and petition at the court of this our vast, thousand-mouthed king, in hope of a portion of what fills that multitude's mouths, is a fruitless errand—this becomes clear the moment one gives it thought.

In sum: that an entire, unbroken nation should dwell in its own land and rule another country is a thing that has never before happened in history. Even were such rule the best imaginable, to bear its weight under these conditions is exceedingly hard for any land to endure. A country that must be managed chiefly for another's benefit, and only secondarily for its own, is in a most lamentable case. A land whose centre of gravity lies so far outside itself—how shall it ever lift its

head? Let theft and robbery be checked, let the courts render the most scrupulous justice—still, where is the burden to be set down?

Therefore, if the Congress has any reasonable prayer to offer, let it be this: whether it be the son of Emperor Edward himself, or Lord Curzon or Kitchener in person, or even the editor of the Englishman or the Pioneer—good, bad, or middling, let Parliament choose some one Englishman and set him upon the throne of Delhi as our king. However rich in resources a country may be, it can support one king; it cannot support an entire nation as king.

1312

THE PATH AND ITS PROVISIONS

Every day the fisherman casts his net, and fish rise in it. One day, upon casting his net, a jar suddenly came up—and the moment its mouth was opened, from within it, taking the shape of billowing clouds of smoke, emerged a giant demon. There is such a tale in the Arabian Nights.

Our newspapers bring us news every day; but that one day such a jar should come to their net, and that from within it so monstrous and terrifying an affair should emerge—this we could never have anticipated.

When such a mystery, lying so near the very threshold of our home, is suddenly laid bare in the twinkling of an eye, and the whole country's mind is thrown into such agitation, it becomes difficult, in that far-reaching turmoil, to preserve the truthfulness of one's words and conduct. When waves rise upon water, the reflection there becomes distorted of itself, and for this no one can be blamed. In moments of great fear and anxiety, our thought and speech easily fall into disorder—yet it is precisely at such times that undistorted, unwavering truth is most needed of all. Everyday falsehood and half-truth do us less grave harm; but in a time of crisis, there is no enemy like it.

Therefore may God grant that today, overcome by fear, by anger, by sudden calamity, by the excessive lamentation of a weak heart, we do not lose ourselves so far as to raise, for our own comfort or another's, mere clouds of futile words, further clouding our already turbid sky. Sharp words serve only to inflame agitation; fear tends only to make truth cower and tremble somehow. Therefore, restraining today the excitement of expressing our heart's turmoil, if we do not judge the present events as calmly as we can, if we do not discover and proclaim the truth, then our deliberation will not merely fail—it will do actual harm.

It is precisely because of our degraded condition that, in times of crisis such as this, there arises in us a certain excessive eagerness to rush forward and declare in a loud voice: "I have no part in this; this is merely the doing of such-and-such a party, this is merely the wrongdoing of such-and-such persons; I have been saying all

along that things were not going well; I knew that something like this would happen."

After some dreadful mishap, to raise such unseemly anxiety, laying blame upon others or taking pride in one's own foresight, seems to me a mark of weakness, and therefore a matter for shame. Especially since we live under the rule of the powerful, when we try, in the days of the rulers' displeasure, to set ourselves up as good people by reviling others, a certain baseness inevitably creeps into it. It is better, therefore, that the weaker side not display excessive zeal in matters of this kind.

Further, toward those who have committed offences and been caught, upon whom the merciless rod of the state has already been raised, it is also cowardice to display harshness merely because, without further deliberation, they have brought about calamity. The scales of their judgment rest in such hands that mercy or compassion will not deflect that hand one hair's breadth toward leniency. Therefore whatever further we might add on this score would only reveal the cruelty of a timid nature. However harmful we may consider the affair to be, why should we, in our eagerness to voice an opinion about it, violate the dignity of our own self-respect? When over the heads of an entire people a wrathful, blood-red silence hangs in the sky, our irresponsible flippancy before that wielder of thunder is not merely unnecessary—it is somehow unseemly.

However far-sighted anyone may consider himself, we must all admit that most people in this country never imagined events could go so far. We all possess some measure of intelligence, but we cannot expect that intelligence to reach its full flowering before the thief has fled the scene.

Of course, now that the event has occurred, it is easy to say that it occurred because it was bound to occur. And by the same token it is easy to reproach those among us who are by nature somewhat more excitable, saying: "If only you had not carried things so far, it would have been better."

That we Hindus, and Bengalis especially, express all manner of agitation in words but can never be roused to any daring act—this shameful charge has been

proclaimed at home and abroad. On this account, the babu class in particular has endured relentless mortifying taunts from the English. That all manner of inflammatory language was, at least in Bengal, perfectly safe—of this neither our friends nor our enemies had the slightest doubt. Hence, up to this time, the excess we have displayed in words and rhetorical flourishes has often caused strangers, and sometimes even our own kin, to grow irritated, to grow angry, and has not spared them from mocking our lack of restraint as mere theatrics. Indeed, whenever unrestrained words of defiance issued from a Bengali newspaper or from the mouth of some Bengali orator, I have felt shame for my own people particularly on this account—that those not renowned for deeds of daring only made the poverty of their words shine the more brightly. In truth, having borne for so long the unbearable weight of the accusation of cowardice, the Bengali race had grown so bowed under it that, quite apart from any judgment of right or wrong, benefit or harm regarding the present events, a certain joy at this vindication from insult could not but arise in the Bengali heart.

It is true, therefore, that as we have watched the burning in Bengal's heart gradually assume its fiery form, no wise man of our own country or any other ever supposed it inevitable. It is not, therefore, fair judgment to seize now, in this day of our sudden awakening of understanding, upon whatever displeases us and hold it responsible for negligence. Nor do I wish, in these confused days, to bring accusations against any party. But how it all came to happen, and what its consequences are—these we must judge dispassionately in order to set our own path right; and if, in that endeavour, my opinion should differ from that of one person or of many, I beg that it be remembered that though my intelligence may be feeble, though my powers of vision may be weak, it is never true that I am erring in judgment out of indifference to my country's welfare or any hostility toward its well-wishers. So even if my words are not accepted, I ask that patience and respect be shown toward my intent.

Without a minute examination of how much each of us Bengalis has contributed to what has been unfolding in Bengal for some time now, this much can certainly be said—that each of us, in deed or in mind or in word, has in some way or other supplied fuel to it. Therefore, if this fire of unrest, which has not remained confined within measured bounds, has by its very nature spread into this strange

arrangement of secret revolution, then the responsibility and the sorrow for it must be borne by every Bengali. When a fever has taken possession of the entire body, the warmth of the hand or the relative coolness of the forehead cannot, at the hour of death, claim themselves blameless and lay the whole blame upon the coldest part. What we should do, what we wish to do—these questions we never thought through clearly; all we knew was that a fire had been kindled in our hearts. That fire, following its own nature, spread and set damp wood smouldering, then caught the dry wood ablaze, and somewhere, in some corner of the house, there was kerosene that could not contain itself and, bursting the confines of its tin casing, wrought a horror.

Be that as it may, however the mutual bonds of cause and effect may have brought about this mutual expansion, still, when a fire grows into a conflagration, all argument must be set aside and it must be extinguished—on this there can be no difference of opinion.

Especially since the cause is not far removed from the country; the minds of the people remain agitated. The agitation is so intense that events which we would have considered impossible in our country have become possible. The spirit of opposition is so deep and so widely spread that the authorities, by trying to root it out forcibly here and there, can never wholly extinguish it—they will only make it more violent and more monstrous.

If one must speak on what the rulers ought to do in this present crisis, I have little hope they will listen with respect. We harbour no vain hope of sitting at the door of their punishment-hall to teach them political wisdom. And what we would say is very ancient, and hearing it, it will seem we speak out of fear. Yet truth, though ancient, remains truth, and though mistaken for weakness, remains truth nonetheless. The saying is this: Forgiveness is the ornament of the strong—and there is a little more to it: forgiveness is not merely the ornament of the strong; at times it is even the thunderbolt of the strong. But since we are not counted among the strong, further discourse upon this pious teaching does not become us.

This affair concerns two parties—yet the bond of mutual understanding between the two has grown extremely weak. On one side, disregarding the pain of the

subject, force has taken on an utterly overwhelming form; on the other, the despairing purpose of the weak, finding no path to success, grows daily more desperate. In such a state, the problem is not a small one. For, in this affair of two parties, whatever effort we can make concerns only one party—that alone is within our compass. On a stormy day, the helmsman steers according to his own whim; we who hold the oar must do what little we can to save the ship regardless—if the helmsman lends his aid, well and good; if not, we must still strive at the impossible task. For when we come to be drowning, we shall find no comfort in reviling others.

In such evil times, to try to smother the truth is mere child's play performed on the very brink of doom. We are trying to tell the government—all this is nothing, this is merely the disordered thinking of a few boyish minds. I myself see no worth whatsoever in such hollow words of consolation. First, by such mere puffs of wind we shall not turn the government's policy one inch from its course. Second, that we know for certain what is happening in the present state of the country—to say this would be to utter a falsehood already fully proven false. We must, therefore, work with full acknowledgment of the possibility of danger. Petty words uttered without any sense of responsibility cannot ward off any real crisis—now only truth is needed.

Now it must be said plainly, from sincere well-wishing, to the people of our country: whatever course the government's policy of rule may take, and however the personal conduct of Englishmen in India may continue to wound our hearts, self-forgetful suicide is no remedy on our part.

The time that has come upon us makes it false now to invoke the name of religion. For anyone who declares with full conviction that ethical principle has a place in statecraft is regarded by people as either devoid of common sense or afflicted with moralistic delusion. The dominant party, in time of need, regards adherence to ethics as a weakness fatal to accomplishment—the history of the Western continent offers abundant illustration of this; and yet, if in the interest of expediency we counsel the weaker party to observe ethics, they answer, in their agitated state, that this is not observing ethics at all—it is merely submitting to fear.

Some pious Englishmen themselves have admitted that in the Boer War, which occurred not long ago, the goddess of victory did not follow closely on the heels of righteousness. To arouse fear in the enemy's mind during that war, their villages and hamlets were laid waste, their homes burned, their food and provisions plundered, countless innocent men and women left indiscriminately homeless—all this came to be counted as a mere feature of the business of war. The very meaning of the term "martial law" is a decree that banishes the faculty of just judgment, at times of necessity, as a supreme obstacle, and proclaims instead the unrestrained brutality of vengeful human nature to be the chief instrument of expediency. The merciless barbarity of forcibly imprisoning the entire population of helpless villages through punitive police is of the same order. By all such measures it is proclaimed that in matters of state, pure and just principle is not sufficient for the achievement of practical ends.

This faithless statecraft of Europe is today poisoning ethical sensibility the world over. In such circumstances, when, through some particular event and particular cause, some subject nation suddenly beholds the naked form of its own subjection and is afflicted to its very core, while burning at the same time under the insult of its utter helplessness—then, when a group of impatient, intolerant individuals among them resorts to secret methods and abandons not merely ethical but even rational judgment, to hold the country's agitating orators responsible for this is nothing but the blind stupidity of might backed by force.

Therefore, those in the country who have settled upon secret conspiracy as the sole means of serving the state will gain nothing by being reviled, and if preached to about ethics, will only laugh it away. In this age in which we live, when religion has become openly cowed before the interests of the state, all humanity must bear, in various forms, the sorrow of this decline of ethical principle; king and subject, strong and weak, rich and poor—none shall escape it. The king too, out of expediency, will wound his subjects through wrongful means, and the subjects too will try, out of expediency, to wound the king through wrongful means; and those third parties not directly involved in these matters will also have to bear the conflagration of this unrighteous conflict. Indeed, when in crisis a man comes to understand clearly that in paying wages to unrighteousness he is not merely enslaving himself to one side but, having taken money from both, has made every

side equally fearsome to him—then, distrusting its assistance, the imperilled society begins to make peace among its members to banish it altogether. It is in this very manner that the King of Righteousness is, even out of the most terrible conflict, slowly winning and rescuing Righteousness herself. Until this is fully accomplished, the whole of human society shall continue to burn in the struggle of suspicion against suspicion, of hatred against hatred, and of deceit against deceit.

Therefore, in the present circumstances, if anything is to be said to the agitated people of this country, it must be said from the standpoint of expediency itself. They must be made to understand well that however grave the necessity, it is only through the broad path that it can be satisfied—if one tries to shorten the work by following some narrow track, one day, having lost one's bearings, one will find in the end neither the path nor the accomplishment of the work. Because the urgency of my heart is so very great, the world does not, on that account, ever shorten its roads for me, nor does time make itself abbreviated.

Let us not, in some momentary regret, forget how vast a thing is the welfare of a country, and into how many directions its countless branches and offshoots extend. In a land as diverse and riven with conflict as India, the problem is exceedingly difficult indeed. God has laid upon us the charge of so sublime a labour, has given us the mandate to untie the hundred thousand knots of so vast and intricate a net of human society, that we ought never for a moment, forgetting its grandeur, allow ourselves any kind of frivolity. Since the dawn of time, of all the great streams of power that have awakened in the world, some great current of each has come and merged into this land of India. In the mists of historical memory, on that day when, driven by the irresistible urge of some hidden necessity, the Aryan race, like a river suddenly loosed from its mountain cave, poured forth upon the paths of the world, and one branch of them, chanting the mantras of the Vedas, kindled the sacrificial fire in the forest shade of India—on that day began, in this meeting-ground of Aryan and non-Aryan in India, a vast epic whose opening verses are not yet complete even today. Has Providence, then, suddenly and carelessly shattered it, as a child demolishes a house of mud it has built? Thereafter, from this very India, the missionary message of Buddhism resounded like the deep thunder of a monsoon cloud filled with compassion, and awakened all the Mongolian peoples dwelling along Asia's eastern seaboard, uniting, from Burma to distant Japan, peoples of

different tongues and no kinship into oneness of religion with India—has that great flowering of power, in the field of India, come to nothing but a fruitless completion for India's own destiny alone? Thereafter, from the westernmost edge of Asia, another mighty power of mankind, awakened by divine impulse from its slumber, bearing the message of unity, rushed forth with tremendous force to flood the earth; that stream of power was summoned by Providence not to India alone—here, indeed, He has given it shelter for all time to come. Is this event in our history merely some accidental catastrophe? Is there no eternal truth's abiding meaning within it? Thereafter, in the great arena of Europe, when human power, in exuberance of life, in scientific curiosity, in the greed for gathering merchandise, set forth turned toward all the world, a great and powerful current of that too came into this very India and, bearing the summons of Providence, has been awakening us through blows. When, after the flood of Buddhism had receded from this land of India, the fragmented religious communities of fragmented regions had made every quarter thorny with the bitterness of sectarian strife, Shankaracharya, in his effort to bind together all that fragmentation and pettiness into a single indivisible whole, gave proof of India's very genius. At last, when philosophical knowledge as the dominant discipline began to divide the learned and the ignorant, the privileged and the unprivileged of India, Chaitanya, Nanak, Dadu, Kabir, in various regions of India, poured forth the nectar that unites the diversity of scriptures into the supreme unity of devotion. Not only did they seek to dissolve, through love, the divisions among India's regional faiths—they were building a bridge of religion between the very natures of Hindu and Muslim in India. Even now India is not inert—Rammohan Roy, Swami Dayananda, Keshab Chandra, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Vivekananda, Shivnarayan Swami—these too have dedicated the labour of their lives to India's hand, that the One might be established amid diversity, the Infinite amid the finite. From ancient times to the present day, each of these chapters of India's history is not some scattered, disconnected raving—they are woven together, none of them has vanished utterly like a dream—they all endure, and whether through harmony or through struggle, through the clash and counter-clash of forces, they have been weaving the intention of Providence into a wondrous, variegated pattern. Nowhere else on earth has so vast a construction been undertaken; never in any single sacred ground have so many peoples, so many faiths, so many powers gathered together; nowhere else in the world has so clear a mandate resounded—to bind utter difference and diversity into a

magnificent harmony, and to make triumphant in the world the ideal of union even amid conflict. Let mankind elsewhere extend dominion, extend trade, extend power—let the people of India, through arduous austerity, acknowledging the One as Brahman in knowledge, in love, and in action amid all diversity and all conflict, radiate the pure, liberating light of freedom into the harsh narrowness of humanity's workaday world—this discipline has been proclaimed to us from the very beginning of Indian history. White and black, Muslim and Christian, East and West—none is against us; it is precisely because all conflict is to labour, through hundreds upon hundreds of centuries of the hardest discipline, toward becoming one in this sacred ground of India, that in this very remote antiquity, in its forest hermitages, the Upanishads proclaimed the doctrine of the One with such wondrous and simple wisdom that history, explaining it from every angle, has not yet exhausted its meaning even today.

Therefore I was urging that we should not, by the example of the partial development of humanity elsewhere, narrow our view of India's history—that seeing the many apparent contradictions manifest within it, we should not, in despair, engage ourselves blindly in some petty endeavour—and if we do, know for certain that we shall in no way succeed. To harmonize one's own will with the will of Providence is the only way to success; to rebel against it is only to be deceived by momentary success and drowned in terrible failure.

That India which, through all the mighty powers of humanity, has thus been slowly assuming its colossal form, which every blow, every insult, every sorrow has driven forward toward this supreme manifestation—who among us shall knowingly and consciously render service to that great India, who, with utterly unwavering devotion, dissolving all irritation, impatience, and pride into this great endeavour, shall offer up his own pure life as an oblation at the feet of India's Providence? Where are those priests of ours, of India's great national awakening? Wherever they may be, know this as unshakeable truth—they are not fickle, they are not intemperate, they are not turning the heart's agitation of the people into an ever-spreading epidemic of frenzy through defiant words devoid of any direction for action; know for certain that in them a rare union has come to pass of intellect, of heart, and of devotion to duty—in them exists the sublime harmony of the

profound peace and patience of knowledge together with the unconquerable momentum and perseverance of will.

But when we see that, driven by the excitement of some particular event, in the fury of some momentary conflict, many people of the country suddenly rush headlong in a single moment believing they must do good to their country—we must recognize surely that, taking the heart's impulse as their sole resource, they have set out upon a difficult path. They are incapable, by their very situation, of judging calmly and truly the country's distant and vast welfare. They feel their immediate suffering so intensely, and hold so fiercely to their effort at its redress, that it becomes not impossible for them, incapable of self-restraint, to strike a blow at the entire welfare of their country.

It is very difficult to judge correctly the lessons of history. In the history of every country, whenever some great event takes shape and becomes visible, we find, immediately preceding it, a violent shock and upheaval. The burden of disharmony in state or society, accumulating silently over a long period, one day suddenly breaks apart in revolution under some single blow. At that time, if favourable materials lie ready in the country, if the treasury of knowledge and strength has already been secretly accumulated beforehand, then that country, overcoming the terrible shock of that revolution, builds and shapes its new life into fresh harmony. Because we cannot see that inner reservoir of the country's vitality that has been secretly accumulated within its inner chambers, we imagine that the country achieved success through revolution alone; that revolution itself is the root cause and the principal means of its welfare.

Looking at history in this superficial manner, one must not forget that a country whose creative power at its very core has grown feeble can never overcome the shock of destruction. In those in whom a natural instinct to build and to bind together remains vividly alive, the shock of breaking only rouses that very life-instinct, that very creative power, to fuller consciousness. It is precisely because it rouses creation itself with new strength that destruction has its glory. Otherwise, mere breaking, indiscriminate revolution, can in no way be beneficial.

When a sudden strong gust of wind alone dispels the inertia of a ship and sends it rushing swiftly forward, one must certainly understand that, whatever else may be lacking, there was no gap among the planks of that ship's hull—or if there had been such gaps before, then surely at some point the ship's carpenter, deeming them intolerable in the darkness of the hold, had repaired them. But for a decrepit ship which, given the slightest shake, sets one loose plank knocking against another loose plank—is not that same gust of wind, for its sail, the most calamitous thing possible? In our country too, does not the slightest shake set Hindu against Muslim, upper caste against lower caste, in conflict? When within there are such gaps, is it truly the broadest path to salvation merely to turn agitation into frenzy in order to weather the storm, ride the waves, and reach the harbour of self-rule?

When a country suffers insult from abroad, when the moment we wish to expand our rights we begin receiving from the authorities the charge of unfitness, then it becomes exceedingly difficult for us to acknowledge any weakness, any fault, in our own country. It is not merely that we then display our grandeur solely to save face before others—wounded pride blinds our judgment even regarding our own condition; we become desperately eager to prove, in the twinkling of an eye, that we are not deserving of contempt. We can do everything, we say, we are ready for everything—it is only outward obstruction that has rendered us powerless—this is not merely an unnatural cry raised aloud; our humiliated heart grows wild with the desire to act upon such a belief. It is precisely in such moments of extreme mental agitation that we misread history. We conclude that whatever subject countries have become free did so because they revolted; whether any other qualities besides this are necessary to seize freedom and to hold it fast in one's grasp—this we do not wish to think through clearly, or we hastily assume that we already possess all such qualities, or that when the proper time comes they will somehow supply themselves.

When thus the heart of man, wounded by insult, strives to prove its own glory, utterly denying, as though it were mere illusion, every hard obstacle, and undertakes self-destruction in an impossible endeavour—what more tragic, more pitiable spectacle exists in the world than this? Such misguided efforts will inevitably end in failure, and yet we cannot mock them. In them lies that most sorrowful perseverance of human nature which, everywhere and always, on

various pretexts and various impossible hopes, in the pursuit of the unattainable, leaps blindly, again and again, like a moth into the flame of certain destruction.

Be that as it may, however it may have come about, that the pride of strength, wounded, should awaken—one cannot say this is without benefit to the nation. Yet precisely because this vehemence has arisen suddenly, out of the fierce passion of conflict, some among us harbour in their hearts the misguided notion that the country's strength should be expressed only in the form of conflict. But those who, in ordinary circumstances, have never through natural affection grown accustomed to the gradual development of their country's welfare works, who have never prepared their own nature, through the long patience of many days, for the task of building lofty resolves through countless materials and countless obstacles, who, deprived for so long by ill fortune from the great arena of statecraft, have carried on the work of life narrowly in pursuit of petty self-interest—that such people, suddenly seized by a violent rage, should in a single moment accomplish some great good for their country, is in no way possible. We did not go near the boat on days of calm; that on a day of storm we should suddenly seize the helm and, as extraordinary helmsmen, win applause at home and abroad—such a wondrous thing is possible only in dreams. We too, therefore, must begin our work from that very foundation. This may cause delay—but by the opposite method, the delay would be far greater still.

Man creates vast good through austerity. Wrath or desire breaks that austerity, and destroys in a single moment the fruit of that austerity. Surely our country too has been striving in silent austerity for a beneficial end; it has not the greed of swift success; it has restrained the wrath of momentary disappointed hope; and now, suddenly, an impatient frenzy is undertaking, in the very field of sacrifice, to pollute and destroy with a rain of blood the fruit of that austerity, accumulated through so much sorrow.

The passion of wrath does not believe in austerity at all. It regards austerity as inertia, hates it as the chief obstacle to the fulfilment of its own immediate purpose; through violent upheaval it rises up, determined to render that discipline of austerity fickle and hence fruitless. It regards letting the fruit ripen as mere indifference; it knows only the wrenching away of the unripe fruit as true

manliness; it thinks that the gardener who daily waters the roots of the tree lacks the courage to climb its branches, and this is the source of his meanness. In this state of mind, one grows angry at the gardener, regards the watering as trivial work. In its agitated state, man knows agitation itself to be the greatest truth in the world; wherever he sees his own deficiency there, he can see no success at all.

But the difference between the spark and the flame is the very difference between agitation and power. The spark that flies out when flint strikes flint does not dispel the darkness of a room. Its preparation is slight, and correspondingly slight its usefulness. The preparation of a lamp is considerable; its vessel must be shaped, its wick twisted, its oil supplied. Only when, at appropriate cost, everything has been bought, and through labour everything made ready, can the lamp, when needed, transform the spark's touch into a steady flame and illuminate the room. When the effort to prepare such a lamp through proper endeavour has not yet begun, when we all become overwhelmed with joy merely at the frequent striking of flint against flint, then, for truth's sake, it must be acknowledged: in this way a room will never be lit—but it is not impossible that the house will catch fire.

But in trying to make power cheap and readily available, man takes refuge in agitation. It is forgotten that this unnatural cheapness, while lowering the price on one side, extracts payment on the other in such a way that had one acknowledged, from the very outset, its true costliness, one might have obtained it at comparatively less expense.

In our country too, when this rare and priceless substance called the will to serve the nation appeared, in unimaginable abundance, through a sudden wave of agitation among people of every age, it filled a poor nation like ours with the utmost delight. At that time we did not even think to consider that so easy an abundance of good things is not natural. Unless this vast substance can be bound and consolidated under the discipline of work, its true worth cannot be realized. If, seeing common people in the street rise up wanting to fight, we regard them as soldiers and take delight in the hope of thus cheaply accomplishing our task, then when the time comes for real battle, we shall not be freed from the terrible cost of this sudden cheapness even by giving up all our wealth and life.

The plain truth is this: just as a drunkard wishes only to keep increasing the intoxication in himself and in his company, so too, once we came to feel the intoxicating power of agitation, our impulse became disordered in the desire only to increase it further. Yet without acknowledging that this was the compulsion of an intoxication, we began to say: at the root, what is needed most is the excitement of sentiment; once that has properly matured, it will of itself rush toward action—hence those who complain, day and night, that mere talk, talk, talk is tiresome, are people of petty vision, they are not men of true feeling—we shall simply intoxicate the country with sentiment. Throughout the entire country we set up the great cauldron of sentiment for common drinking; the mantra ran thus:

"Drink, drink, and drink again, though one fall to the ground; rise up and drink again—there is no rebirth thereafter."

Not effort, not action, not the building of anything whatsoever—only the outpouring of sentiment as the discipline, only intoxication as liberation.

We called upon many, we gathered many together, we rejoiced at seeing the crowds swell, but we prepared no field of action in which the awakened power could bear fruit for all. We went on giving only enthusiasm, we gave no work. There is nothing so unwholesome for the human mind as this. We thought enthusiasm makes men fearless, and that once fearless, men do not hesitate to transgress the obstacles of action. But is the urge to transgress in this manner truly the principal element of accomplishment? Greater than that is the power of judgment guided by steady wisdom, the power to build through discipline. It is for this very reason that a man, drunk, can commit murder, but a drunk man cannot wage war. It is not that there is no element of intoxication in war; but it is sobriety that rules and directs it as master. That same steady-minded, far-sighted, work-devoted master has been sought and summoned by the country in these days of present agitation; but, owing to the misfortune of this ill-fated country, he does not seem to answer the call. We who rush forward pour only wine into the winecup. We keep raising the engine's throttle. When the question arises as to who will level the road and lay down the rails, we answer: there is no need to bother our heads with all these trifling matters of mere logistics; in time, everything will come of itself; the

labourers' work will be done by labourers—but as for us, since we are the drivers, we shall simply keep raising the engine's throttle.

Those who have thus far maintained their patience may perhaps ask me this question: do you mean, then, that no beneficial result whatever is to be expected from the agitation that has arisen among the common people of Bengal? I never think this at all. This agitation was needed in order to rouse fully to consciousness a power that had lain torpid. But having roused it to consciousness, what then is to be done with it? Must it be set to work, or must it simply be made drunk? Beyond a certain measure, the intoxication that awakens feeble vitality to fitness for work destroys, in still greater measure, that very fitness for work; in tasks requiring the patience and perseverance of genuine action, the power and inclination born of intoxication turn away. Gradually agitation itself becomes its goal, and, driven by that compulsion, it goes on creating, in the name of work, such acts of non-work as can only serve to further its own drunkenness. These disturbances they use, in fact, essentially as intoxicants, while yet, giving it the name of patriotism, they bind agitation ever tighter and louder. When the thing called "heart's passion" is not turned outward through appropriate work but merely accumulates and swells within, it acts like poison; its unproductive vigour distorts our nervous system and turns the assembly-hall of action into a dance-hall.

To awaken from sleep and to know one's own dormant power as real, the first shock of some agitation was indeed necessary for us. We had firmly resolved in our minds that the merit of a foreign birth and the benevolence of favourable stars would, of themselves, place all good fortune in our idle, folded hands. That destiny prescribed for us of unearned fortune we sometimes praised, and sometimes quarrelled with, and so passed our days. And so it went on, until, at midday, when the whole world was busy at its work, our sound sleep was growing deeper still.

At such a time a blow fell from somewhere, and the drowsy spell was broken—no wish remained to close our eyes again for sweet dreams as before; but the strange thing is, a certain point of resemblance remained between that dream and this waking.

Then we were contented that, without effort, we should go on reaping the fruits of effort; even now we think that we ought to be able to sufficiently shorten the necessary application of effort along the accepted path to obtaining results. Even in sleep we clung to the impossible; even awake, we could not let go of that same impossibility. Because the agitation of our power had grown so excessive within us, essential delay began to feel unnecessary. Outside, that same ancient poverty remains as before, while within, the pride of newly-awakened strength has raised its head; how shall we harmonize the two? Slowly? By degrees? By bridging with stone the vast chasm between? But pride cannot bear delay; vanity declares, "I need no stairway, I shall fly." Anyone can achieve the achievable given time, but we have become excited by the fantasy that through the unachievable we shall astonish the world this very instant. The reason is this: when love awakens, it wishes to perform every task from its very foundation, it disdains nothing however small in favour of something great, it never loses its fear lest some duty be left incomplete. Love wishes to fulfil itself; it is not anxious to prove itself. But when merely wounded pride alone awakens, driven by the sting of insult, it puffs out its chest and declares, "I shall not walk, I shall leap." That is to say, it has no need of what serves every other person in the world; it has no need of patience, no need of perseverance; taking aim at a distant goal and adopting a correspondingly long-term means is deemed unnecessary. As a result, we find that just as we sat blindly expecting favours from the strength of others, we are now, with equally blind expectation, boasting before our own strength. Even then there was an attempt to cheat legitimate work, and that same attempt persists even now. In the fable, the farmer's idle sons, so long as their father lived, would not go near the edge of the field. The father used to farm, and they ate well. When the father died, they were forced to go down into the field—but they resolved, not to farm, but to dig up the earth all at once and obtain the divine treasure outright. In truth, it took them much wasted time to learn that the harvest of farming itself is the true divine treasure. If we too do not easily learn that divine wealth cannot be secretly obtained by some marvellous method—that we, exactly like everyone else on earth, must earn and enjoy that wealth in the same manner as they do—then the blows and the sorrows will only go on increasing, and the further we advance upon the wrong path, the longer and more difficult will become the road of return.

When, out of impatience or ignorance, distrust of the natural path and an excessively strong desire to bring about something extraordinary take hold, man's moral sense is destroyed; then every instrument seems an instrument, every means seems a means. Then no hesitation arises even in ruthlessly sacrificing little children to this frenzied desire. Like Somaka, the king of the Mahabharata, tempted by the prospect of extraordinary attainment, we have offered up our own tender little boy into the sacrificial fire—this indiscriminate cruelty's sin has not escaped the sight of Chitragupta—its atonement has already begun; for the sake of these children the heart of the whole country is being torn asunder with sorrow. I do not know how much more sorrow remains to be borne.

To bear sorrow is not so difficult, but to restrain wrong-mindedness is exceedingly hard. If we once come to regard injustice and oppression as aids to the achievement of our purpose, then all the natural power to protect the heart from corruption slips away; once the fixed centre of righteous principle is abandoned, the ruin of judgment follows, action loses its stability, and then a terrible collision becomes inevitable in order to reconcile our fallen life once more with the universal moral order.

We must admit, with humble heart and sorrow, that this very process has been at work in our country for some time now. This discussion is utterly unwelcome to us; but that is no reason why it is anyone's duty to silently conceal it, or to cover it with exaggeration and let the harm grow to catastrophic proportions.

That we should try our utmost to protect and improve indigenous industry by refraining, as far as possible, from using foreign goods—do not fear that I shall say anything against this. Long ago, when I wrote—

"With your own hands, serve the vegetables and rice onto the plate, / let that be your taste—— / weave coarse cloth with your own hands if you can, / let shame thereby depart——"

—at that time we had no cause whatsoever to be angry with Lord Curzon, and long before that, when we tried, by establishing swadeshi stores, to propagate

indigenous goods, we had to stand against the very unfavourableness of the times themselves.

Nevertheless, I can in no way accept that however great a task the propagation of indigenous goods in place of foreign goods may be, it must be supported by even the slightest degree of injustice. Delay is good, adversity is good—these transform an immature endeavour into mature accomplishment; but no illusion is good which builds a mansion in a single night and offers the assurance, "There is no need to give me the proper price in ready funds." But alas, it seems there lurks a fear in the mind that unless we can bring Manchester's mills to a halt within a single moment, we lack the strength to bear this arduous purpose with unwavering resolve for any length of time; and it is for this reason, and out of the urge somehow to take revenge for Partition with our own hands, that we have refused entirely to distinguish path from wrong path. Thus, bewildered by the deafening clamour of momentary urgency from every side, distrusting and disrespecting our own weakness of nature, disregarding sound judgment, we wish to reap the harvest with excessive haste, and afterward spend an exceedingly long time settling the account of the loss; that we shall gain welfare by afflicting welfare, that we shall win freedom by striking at the very root of freedom—this can never be so, and we do not even wish to bring this thought to mind.

Many of us do not fully know, and many are unwilling to acknowledge, that the affair of boycott has, in many places, been accomplished through the oppression of one countryman upon another. Whatever I consider good, if the delay in making others understand it through example and persuasion is unbearable, and if the habit of considering forcible interference in another's rightful entitlement to be wrong keeps disappearing from the country, then it becomes impossible to keep excess confined within any limit whatsoever. When, in the name of duty, undutifulness grows dominant, we see before our very eyes the whole country become unnatural. It is for this very reason that, invoking the pretext of gaining freedom, we have rebelled against true freedom's own principle; such wrong-mindedness has arisen that we would forcibly level and merge, by force, the divergence of opinion and will that exists in the country. This misguided notion has taken hold—that whatever I do, everyone must do; whatever I say, everyone must say—and by this forcible imposition we have decided that the violent death of all

diversity of opinion, will, and inclination in the country constitutes national unity. We oppress those of differing opinion within society; we abuse them in print in the most disgraceful manner; we even threaten to discipline opposing opinion through physical assault. You surely know, and I know with even greater certainty, that such anonymous threatening letters are received, from time to time, by many people in our country, and that even respected elders of the country are not spared from insult. Many great men in the world have sacrificed even their own lives for the propagation of their opinions amid hostile communities; we too wish to propagate our opinions, but, setting aside every other example, we have chosen Kalapahar alone as our guru.

I have said before that whatever lacks within it the power to build, destruction is death to it. I ask: where is that constructive quality manifesting itself in our country? What creative power is working within us, binding us and making us one? On every side are only the marks of division. When disunity within ourselves is so dominant, we can in no way establish our own authority. When we cannot do that, others will surely rule over us—nothing whatsoever can prevent it. Many think that this country's subjection is not an inner malady like a headache, but rather like the weight of a burden pressing down upon our head from outside, in the form of the English government; and that if we could only somehow fling that weight off, we would instantly become light. It is not so easy. English rule is not our subjection—it is merely the proof of our deeper subjection.

But we no longer have the leisure or the mental disposition today to attend to these deeper causes. When the question arises as to how, despite so much division into peoples, India shall become one great nation and establish self-rule, those among us who are especially hasty dismiss the matter briefly by saying: has not Switzerland too seen the gathering of more than one people, yet has self-rule been obstructed there on that account?

By pointing to such examples we may deceive ourselves, but we cannot cast dust in the eyes of Providence; in truth, whether self-rule can function despite diversity of peoples is not really the point at issue at all. Diversity, after all, exists in many forms—in a family of ten members there are ten diversities. But the real question is whether, amid that diversity, the thread of unity is at work or not. If Switzerland

remains united while embracing many peoples, then this must be understood: that there, diversity has been transcended and unity has been able to rise up as ruler. In that society there exists such a principle of unity. In our country there is diversity, but for lack of the principle of unity, mere fragmentation—assuming manifold forms through language, race, religion, society, and custom—has kept this vast country divided a hundredfold into countless small and large fragments.

Therefore, by citing examples, I see nothing to be reassured about. It will not do to shut one's eyes and declare that everything else about us has already been set right, and that now, if we can somehow just get rid of the English, Bengali, Punjabi, Marathi, Madrasi, Hindu, and Muslim will all merge together in one mind, one spirit, one interest, and rise up free.

In truth, whatever unity we see in India today, on the strength of which we consider the attainment of self-rule to be imminent, is mechanical, not organic. That unity among India's diverse peoples has not come about through the workings of shared life—it is the single rule of a foreign people that has bound us together externally in a common yoke.

Living matter, in many cases, though joined together mechanically for a long time, comes eventually to unite organically. In just such a way one must graft branch to branch of different species to make the graft take. But until, in the course of time, that living union actually takes hold, the outer, hard binding cannot be released. Of course, that binding cord is admittedly not a part of the tree itself; for this reason, however it may be, whatever good it does, it will certainly cause the tree pain—but when diversity must be bound into unity, there is no alternative but to accept that binding cord. It may well be true that it has bound tighter than was strictly necessary, but the one remedy for that is this: to give, with all of one's inner strength, one's own sap and blood at the site of that binding, joining life to life, and to complete the union through utter dedication. This much can certainly be said—once the graft has truly taken, whoever is our gardener will then cut away all our binding cords. We must accept the outer bond called English rule, yet, rather than depend upon it inertly, through service, through affection, through the removal of all artificial barriers, we must bind this fragmented India together by the bond of the very blood in its veins. In this task of a thousand kinds of creation aimed at

unified construction, we must, with our own hands, shape this geographical land-mass into our motherland, and, through our own effort, compose the disunited populace into a single nation.

I have heard some even say that hostility towards the English, felt by the people of the whole country, will itself unite us. Through its natural harshness toward subject Eastern peoples, English indifference and arrogance have caused pain to great and small alike throughout India. As the days pass, the sting of this hurt has been penetrating deeper and ever deeper into our nature. It is this very unity of ever-spreading pain that is beginning to bring together India's various peoples. Therefore, this hatred itself must be adopted as our chief support.

If this is truly so, then when the cause of that hatred passes away—when the English at last leave this country—the artificial thread of unity will be severed in a single instant. Where, then, shall we go looking for a second object of hostility? We shall not need to search far, nor go abroad—through blood-thirsty hatred, we shall go on lacerating one another.

Whoever says, "somehow or other, by the time that day comes, some opportunity or other will surely present itself—for now, let things be as they are," forgets that the country is not his alone to dispose of; though he himself, with his personal likes and dislikes, his wishes and disinclinations, may pass away, this country will remain. Just as a trust cannot employ entrusted wealth as it pleases except through the broadest and most careful means, so too, when a country belongs to many people and to many ages, none of us has the right to hand over its welfare, with eyes shut, into the hands of some doubtful arrangement of short-sighted, momentary judgment, driven by some passing agitation. To perform, under the pressure of the present moment, so utterly careless an act of deliberation as might endanger the very future of one's own country, can never be the duty of any person. For the fruit of this action is not mine alone—the sorrow, too, belongs to many.

Therefore I have said, and will say again and again—rather than trying to feed the fire of agitation, day and night, by offering into it all our accumulated inner resources merely to keep our hostility perpetually raised against the outside world, turn away that scowling, frowning face turned toward others; rather, as the clouds

of the rainy season descend in abundant torrents of rain upon the parched, thirst-stricken earth, so descend in the midst of every people, every person of this country; bind the motherland, in every way, within the great net of a many-directioned effort at welfare; spread the field of action everywhere—so broadly,

so far and wide, that here the high and the low of the country, Hindu, Muslim, and Christian, all may gather together, heart joining with heart, effort joining with effort. The King's suspicion and hostility toward us will try, moment by moment, to obstruct us, but it can never restrain us permanently—we shall be victorious—not by dashing our own heads against obstruction like madmen, but by surpassing it, little by little, with unwavering perseverance. Not only shall we be victorious; we shall accumulate, for all time to come, within this country, the true fulfilment of achievement; we shall open up, one by one, all the paths of empowerment for our descendants.

Today, in that prison-house where the harsh clang of iron chains is heard, where the trembling royal highway resounds beneath the tread of armed men—do not think this to be of overwhelming importance. If you listen closely, you will hear how, within the great symphony of time, this all dissolves away into nothing. Through how many ages the whirl of revolution, the churning of how much oppression, through the entrance and exit of how many great imperial powers at this land's very threshold, has the fullness of India been gradually expressed; will even the small history of this small present day, once merged into the whole, be visible anywhere at all after a while? Let us not fear, let us not be agitated; let us perceive, in the serene meditative eye of the devoted seeker, the undivided form of that supreme glory of India which, through all this harsh clash of sorrows, is being expressed, bearing within it the creative joy of the World-Poet. Amid the tumult and the scattering of thought on every side, let us keep our discipline steadfastly directed toward the highest purpose. Let us know for certain that in this India have converged all the aspirations and longings of humanity's thought across ages upon ages—here shall the churning of knowledge with knowledge take place, here the union of people with people shall come to pass. Diversity here is exceedingly complex, division here is exceedingly powerful, the confluence of opposites here is exceedingly fraught with conflict—so much multiplicity, so much sorrow, so much strife, no other country could have borne and survived for so long a time—yet the

supreme intention of one immensely vast, immensely great confluence has held together all these utterly conflicting elements, has never let any one of them be swept away by the blows of the others. All these various and diverse materials, gathered here from across the ages and across the lands—should we try to strike at them with our own petty strength, we ourselves alone shall be wounded, and shall accomplish nothing whatsoever with them. I know that injustice and insult from without are inciting in us that impulse which knows only how to strike, which acknowledges no patience, which, even accepting destruction, deems its own self-assertion to be fulfilment. But will not India grant us that inner strength which infuses within our hearts a profound self-respect, capable of restraining the intoxication of that self-pride? Shall the momentary voices of those who scorn to draw near and acknowledge us, of those who from afar pour forth their hostility toward us—the discordant clamour of those newspapers swollen with the wind of the moment, the hostile, shrill voice of the London Times, or of this country's Times of India—shall these, like the goad's sting, drive us blindly along the path of conflict? And shall the eternal voice of truth, which has been uttered in this land through the sacred mouths of our forefathers—the voice that bids us bring the distant near, that summons us to make the stranger our own—shall all those serene, everlasting words of blessing be defeated today?

In India we shall unite and we shall bring others into union; we shall accomplish that most arduous achievement by which the very distinction between friend and enemy shall dissolve; that which is the highest truth of all, filled with the fire of purity, the valour of forgiveness, the unconquerable power of love—we shall never deem it unattainable; we shall accept it as our certain welfare and bear it upon our heads. Setting forth through the utter affliction of sorrow and pain, let us today, in the joy of liberation, banish from our minds every trace of rebellious feeling; knowingly and unknowingly, the humanity of the world is striving, in this land of India, to build that most wondrous temple of humanity through the confluence of many faiths, many scriptures, many peoples—let us join in that very endeavour; let us transform all the power within our hearts into pure creative power alone, and devote it entirely to this work of construction. If we can do this—if, in knowledge, in love, and in action, we can dedicate ourselves wholly and with our entire being to this great purpose of India—then, with a vision purified of all delusion, we shall

behold, within the history of our own country, that one truth, that eternal truth, of which the sages have spoken:

"He is the bridge that upholds these worlds"—

He is the sustainer of all the worlds, He is the bridge across all separation; and of Him it has been said—

"That which is His, and that of Brahman, is Truth"—

That Brahman who is the bridge preserving unity amid all the differences of the universe—His name is Truth.

1315 (Bengali calendar)

THE PROBLEM

In an essay entitled "The Path and the Provision," I discussed our duty and the means of its fulfillment. I did not expect that everyone would receive that essay favorably.

As to what is desirable and what is the best means of attaining it, no country on earth has yet seen the end of debate. In the history of mankind this debate has again and again turned to bloodshed, vanishing from one quarter only to sprout anew from another.

In our country, disagreement concerning the nation's welfare has, until now, moved about merely from mouth to mouth and from page to page—merely in printing-houses and on public platforms, in the guise of a war of words. It has spread only like smoke; it has not burned like fire.

But today, it seems, everyone feels that the opinions of others touch closely upon the good and ill of the nation; they no longer regard such opinions as mere ornamental jingling of phrases. For this reason, when the language of protest from those with whom my views differ betrays a certain harshness, I cannot in fairness call it unwarranted and take offense. That in such times no one can speak lightly and escape unscathed—this, without doubt, is itself a wholesome sign of the age.

Yet however intense the fervor of debate may become, I see no reason why my faith should be shattered—my faith that those with whom my opinions differ on this point or that possess a sincere devotion to the nation's welfare. When we must, at such a time, understand clearly what we are saying to one another and what we intend, it becomes necessary to grasp this with precision. To grow angry at the very outset, or to doubt the intelligence of the opposing side, is perhaps to deceive one's own intelligence. It is not always true that a difference of opinion arises from a difference in the degree of intelligence; in most cases the difference springs from difference of nature itself. Therefore, to show respect toward diversity of opinion is by no means, as some would have it, a disrespect toward one's own faculty of reason.

Having offered this much by way of preface, I now proceed to continue the discussion I raised in "The Path and the Provision."

In this world we must sometimes compromise with reality and sometimes contend with it. By ignorance or by cunning we cannot accomplish even the smallest task by transgressing what is real.

Therefore, when we debate the nation's resolve for its own welfare, one principal consideration in that debate must be this: however great the resolve, however admirable, does it accord with reality? That a certain number of figures are written upon the pages of a man's chequebook is no cause for hasty rejoicing; what matters is whether that man's cheque will actually clear at the bank.

When counsel must be offered to someone in crisis, it will not do to offer counsel that is merely commonplace. When a man sits with his head in his hands, brooding over an empty purse and wondering how his stomach shall be filled, to tell him that eating well satisfies hunger is no unkindness—yet it is for want of precisely such counsel that he has not been sitting all this while with his head in his hands. Whatever great truth we may utter, if it transgresses the true matter at hand, is nothing but empty talk.

In discussing what is the principal need of India, if we entirely obscure her present real want and her real condition beneath some very grand moral platitude, then, like a cheque drawn on an empty account, that platitude has no value whatsoever. It may serve, for the present, as a device to quiet the creditor's demand, but in the end it can bring no benefit whatsoever to either debtor or creditor.

If in "The Path and the Provision" I have attempted such a deception, then I cannot expect mercy from the court of judgment. If I have concealed or denied reality and fabricated merely a false deed of sentiment, then it deserves to be torn utterly to pieces before all. For when sentiment appears severed from reality, it renders men, like opium or wine, incapable of action and utterly bewildered.

But it is no easy matter to determine, in a given circumstance, what is truly real. For this very reason men often think that whatever meets the eye is the greatest reality of all; that whatever lies at the lowest level of human nature is the actual truth. Some English literary critic, in proving the superiority of the Iliad over the Ramayana, has said that the Iliad is more "human"—that is to say, it acknowledges more fully the reality of human character—because in that poem Achilles binds the corpse of his slain enemy to his chariot and drags it through the dust of the roads of Troy, while in the Ramayana Rama forgives his defeated enemy. If the meaning of the claim that vengeance is more real to human character than forgiveness is simply that vengeance occurs more frequently in quantity, then this might be granted. But that mere gross quantity is the sole measure of reality—this, man can never accept; and it is for this very reason that man honors a single small flame in the corner of a room more than the darkness that fills the entire house.

Be that as it may, this much is true: among the countless materials of human history, which is principal and which subordinate, which is essentially real for the present and which is not—this cannot be settled merely by a glance of the eye. We may of course admit that in moments of passion, the passion itself seems the greatest truth of all. In anger, nothing seems real that stands ready to check that anger. At such a time a man readily cries out, "Away with your sermonizing!" He says this not because sermonizing is truly unsuited to real necessity and hot-headed folly better suited to it, but because at such a moment he does not wish to attend to real utility at all; he wishes only to honor the satisfaction of unchecked impulse.

But in the satisfaction of impulse, the reckoning of reality must be kept slight; in true utility, it must be made far greater. Those Englishmen who, after the Mutiny, counselled the merciless trampling of India, had prepared their reckoning of human reality upon an extremely narrow basis. That such a narrow reckoning is natural in a moment of rage—that is, that most men, in their mental arithmetic, do exactly this—may be true; but the reckoning of reality which Lord Canning made, on the side of mercy, calculated reality in a far vaster measure, far more profoundly and far-sightedly than any reckoning of vengeance.

Yet those who were enraged doubtless felt no shame in calling Canning's policy of mercy "sentimentalism"—that is, fantasy devoid of reality. It has ever been thus.

The faction that regards a mere numerical host of troops as the greater truth, by the pride of mere counting, is content to leave Narayana out of its reckoning, holding Him in contempt. But if victory be known as the final proof of reality, then however solitary Narayana may stand, however humble a form He may assume, it is He who shall bring about the triumph in the end.

My purpose in saying so much is this: in which direction true reality actually lies cannot be determined by the intensity of momentary passion nor by the abundance of a head-count. We shall not concede that some statement is deficient in reality merely because it is couched in tranquil terms, nor that whatever drives men forward with such violence as to allow no leisure to look upon the path is, for that very reason, more honoring of reality.

In "The Path and the Provision" I discussed two matters. First, what is the essence of the nation's welfare, so far as India is concerned—that is, is it merely the wearing of homespun cloth, or the expulsion of the Englishman, or something else? Second, by what means must that welfare be achieved.

The obstacle to understanding what constitutes India's supreme good is not merely one that we ourselves present; indeed, its foremost obstacle is the treatment we receive at English hands. The Englishman will by no means consent to regard our nature as human nature at all. He believes that, being ruler, accountability rests wholly with us; with him there is none whatsoever. A certain former high official of Bengal has expressed no end of indignation regarding the unrest in India, laying all of it at the door of the people of India. His view is this—suppress the newspapers, crush Surendranath Banerjee and Bipin Pal. That men such as this, who can without hesitation or scruple conceive and proclaim such a singular means of "cooling" the country, were established in the seat of our governance—is this not, at the very least, one principal cause of the heating of the nation's blood? Is it, then, wholly unnecessary for the Englishman, merely because strength lies in his sinews, to acknowledge human nature at all? In the matter of quelling India's unrest, has Sir Valentine Chirol's uncle, that pensioner upon India's bounty, not a single word to say? Must those in whose hands power is boundless alone exercise self-restraint, while those who are by nature powerless alone bear the entire burden of the arrangements for order and discipline? He has written that vigilance must be

exercised so that those in India who raise their hand against an Englishman shall by no means escape unpunished. But is there no need for vigilance concerning those Englishmen who, having slain Indians and been repeatedly acquitted, are branding upon the heart of India, as with fire, an eternal stain upon the name of British justice? Does not such arrogant, blind, unrighteous insolence corrupt both British rule in India and the English who are its subjects there? While one side burns and burns in an agony that scorches to the very marrow, while the desire for requital, hand for hand, for every insult admits of no higher claim of human duty whatsoever, God has surely not granted the Englishman's Penal Code, harsh-eyed as it is, sufficient power alone to bring peace to India. The Englishman can imprison, can hang; but having himself kindled a conflagration, he cannot then extinguish it by trampling upon it with his foot—where water is needed, there, even a king, water must be poured. If he does not do so—if he deems his own royal sceptre greater than the ordinance of the universe—then by that same terrible blindness, the burden of sin heaped up in the country cannot but, on some day, turn that most dreadful discord into a devastating revolution. Day by day the anguish accumulating in the heart's-core of the nation—the self-satisfied Englishman may dismiss it as artificial; the toady may deem the refusal to acknowledge it sound statecraft; and Sir Valentine Chirol may, even in his old age, regard it merely as the presumption of a subject race and attempt the futile gesture of tooth grinding upon tooth—but do not imagine that the powerless keep no reckoning of this grief either. When the strong man resolves that he will not restrain his unbridled right to do wrong, but wishes to remain wholly complacent by making the sole culprit that inevitable struggle for redress which smoulders and flares ever more within the human heart against that very wrong—then it is by his own strength that the strong strikes at the root of his own strength. For then he strikes not the weak, but hurls his clenched fist against that very thunderbolt-force which lies at the root of the universe. If you should say that the resentment which today makes even the unarmed dreadful, which overwhelms even the patience of the powerless and drives them toward certain self-destruction, has in it no hand of yours—that you nowhere oppress justice, that you do not, by your inborn contempt and arrogance, render your own benefactions daily more distasteful to those you benefit—if, looking only toward us, you say merely that the discontent of the unfulfilled is India's baseless crime, and the anguish of insult India's unbroken ingratitude—then, though you seat that false assertion upon the throne itself, it will yet fail; and

though your leader-writer of the Times, your correspondent of the Daily Mail, and your editor of the Pioneer and the English man join together and inflate it into the fearsome roar of the British lion, by that falsehood you shall gain no good result whatever. You have strength in your sinews, true; but you have not strength enough to redden your eyes even against truth itself. By new laws forging new iron chains, you cannot bind the hand of Providence.

Therefore I have no such vain hope that, by remembering the terror of the whirlpool now churning in the collision of human nature under the world's law, I can, by this small essay, arrest it. When evil counsel awakens, this must be remembered—that at the root of that evil counsel lie accumulated causes, manifold and long in the gathering; it must be remembered that where one side has been rendered utterly powerless and without resource, there the deterioration of judgment and the decay of righteousness on the other side become altogether inevitable. Man can never keep his self-respect bright in his dealings with one whom he constantly disrespects and dishonors; in the company of the weak the strong grows savage, and in the company of the subject the free grows unrestrained—who can arrest this law of nature? Does this, growing and growing, have no consequence anywhere at last? When, under unchecked authority, the unrestraint of character brings blindness of judgment, does it become the loss of the poor and the sorrow of the weak alone?

That, through this outward assault, an agitation has for long been growing ever more inflamed within the country—this altogether manifest truth none can deny. And there is no doubt that the Englishman's entire policy of governance and vigilance, weighted upon one side only, upon the side of the weak, has created such an inequity that it keeps all the intelligence, all the imagination, all the sensitivity of the Indian people continually and excessively provoked toward this outward direction alone, toward this one incidental calamity.

Therefore, in such a state, it is nothing to marvel at if we should forget entirely what is the greatest question for our country. But what is natural, though it may be irresistible, is not always for the best. That we often fall into a terrible delusion in regarding the intensity of emotional impulse as the greatest reality in the world, greater than all other realities—of this we have had proof, step by step, in worldly

affairs and in our own personal lives. That this holds truer still, many times over, in the history of nations, is something we ought to consider with a tranquil mind.

I am well aware that many will ask me, with some measure of irritation, "Very well then—which do you consider the country's most pressing need?" Even acknowledging this irritation, I must be prepared to answer.

The problem which Providence has set before India may be exceedingly difficult, but the problem itself is not hard to find. It lies utterly before us; we shall not find it by searching among the precedents of the history of other, distant lands.

What is it that, from the mountain-boundary of India to her sea-coast, strikes the eye most clearly of all? It is this: that no other single country in the world contains so many different races, different languages, different customs.

In none of the histories of Western lands that we have studied in school do we find any parallel to such a problem. In Europe, the various differences among which conflict arose were never absolute; there existed among them some such simple principle of union that, when they at last came together, it became difficult even to find the seam of their joining. In ancient Europe, among peoples such as the Greek, the Roman, the Goth, however great the external disparity in culture and refinement, they were in truth one race. They were of themselves inclined to mingle their languages, their learning, their blood, and become one. Through the heat of conflict they melted and merged, and it was then understood that they were cast of the very same metal. In England, there occurred at one time a collision of Saxon, Norman, and Celtic peoples; but among these there was such an inherent principle of unity that the conquering race could not remain separate as conqueror; in the very course of their strife they became one, without their even knowing when it happened.

Thus the unity that European civilization has forged between man and man is an easy unity. Europe even now acknowledges only this easy unity—within its own society it will not grant a place to any deep-rooted difference; it either destroys

that difference or drives it out. Whatever nation of Europe one considers, the gate of entry into the English colonies stands open to it; but so that no Asian may come near, their vigilance hisses and spreads its hood like a serpent's.

It is precisely here, from the very beginning, that we see the disagreement between Europe and India. The very moment India's history began, at that instant the conflict of caste with caste, of Aryan with non-Aryan, arose. From that time to this the mind of India has been engaged in the arduous effort of reconciling this conflict. When Ramachandra, whom Aryan society regards as an incarnation divine, was engaged in advancing the Aryan settlement into the south, on the day he established friendship with the outcast king Guhaka, on the day he initiated into partnership—not exterminated—the non-Aryan people of Kishkindhya, and on the day he ended the enmity of the enemy's own side through friendship with Vibhishana rather than seeking to annihilate the defeated demon-kingdom of Lanka—on that day India's own purpose expressed itself, taking this great soul as its vehicle. From that time to the present day, the diversity of peoples gathered in this land has known no bound. Elements that in no way wished to blend were compelled to dwell together. In such a manner, only a heap is formed, but no body wishes in any way to bind itself together. And so, bearing this burden upon her shoulders, India has for hundreds upon hundreds of years had to do nothing but strive: by what means can those who are separate remain as cooperators within society; by what means can harmony be preserved among those who are opposed; by what arrangement can that difference—which human nature can by no means deny exists among them—be made to injure one another as little as possible; that is, by what means, while being compelled to acknowledge natural difference, can social unity yet be honored as much as possible.

Where many different peoples exist together, the problem of every single moment is this: how can the pain of this disparity, this weakness born of division, be removed? To be compelled to live together, and yet to be by no means able to become one—there can be no greater misfortune for mankind than this. In such a state, the first attempt is to demarcate difference by definite boundaries—to manage matters so that one does not strike another—to arrange so that no side transgresses, from any direction, the limits of the other's marked territory.

But these boundaries of prohibition, which in the first stage assist manifold diversity in dwelling together, come in time to obstruct the many from becoming one. They preserve against injury, but equally they obstruct union. To keep unrest at bay is not the same as to establish peace. In truth, by this means unrest is forever kept alive in some corner or other; though conflict be kept at some remove, it is nonetheless kept—and the instant it finds release, its apocalyptic form suddenly appears.

Nor is that all. Mere orderly coexistence within a system is only the negative condition of union, not the positive. In it man may find comfort, but he cannot find strength. Through discipline, work merely proceeds; through unity, life awakens. India too has, all this long while, been occupied solely in drawing her manifold discords and oppositions into a single system, confining each within its separate compartment. In no other country has such genuine diversity ever come together in one place; hence no other country has ever had any need to undertake such an arduous task.

When many scattered and disconnected truths pile up and threaten to block the path of knowledge, the first task of science is to classify them according to their properties. But whether in science or in society, classification is only the beginning of the work; the forming of an organic body is the ultimate achievement. It is not the building of a house merely to arrange bricks, lime, and mortar separately in their piles, lest, being mixed together, they destroy one another.

In our country too, classification exists, but the work of construction has either not begun, or has been unable to advance very far. Just as the mass of bones is entirely covered and concealed by the same living, blood-warm nerve, muscle, and flesh from head to foot—in just such a way, when the dry, hard system of ordinances and prohibitions is entirely enveloped and hidden, when the same living network of sympathetic feeling has spread the consciousness of life throughout the whole—only then shall we know that the great nation has taken bodily form.

The countries whose histories we have studied have each achieved their fulfillment by particular paths. Whatever particular evil stood as an obstacle to their full flowering, that very evil they were compelled to contend with. Once, one of

America's problems was this: that the colonizing power was in one place, while the force that governed it lay across the ocean—precisely as if head and body were severed; such a discord no nation could possibly bear to sustain. As a newborn infant cannot remain bound by any tie to the mother's womb—the cord must be cut—so, when the need for cutting this cord arose before America, she took up the knife and cut it. Once, France faced a problem of this kind: that though the governing class and the governed class belonged to the very same nation, their respective ways of life and interests had grown so utterly and completely opposed that the oppression of that disparity became unbearable to mankind. For this reason, in order to remove this self-division, France had to resort to bloodshed.

Viewed externally, India's problem bears resemblance to that of America and of France. In India, too, ruler and ruled stand disjoined from one another. Between them there exists no bond whatever of shared condition or shared feeling. In such a state, it may be that no deficiency occurs in the machinery of governance—but man's need is far greater than mere administration alone. The joy by which man lives, and by which man attains growth, is not merely the establishment of law and order and the safeguarding of life and property. The fact is, man is a spiritual being—he has a body, he has a mind, he has a heart; to satisfy him, one must satisfy the whole of him. Whatever thing lacks living wholeness will cause him suffering. What is given to him is not the only reckoning that matters to him; how it is given is an even greater reckoning. A benefit becomes a burden to him if, along with that benefit, there is no sense of his own inherent strength. He can bear even extremely harsh rule in silence—indeed, he can even embrace it of his own accord—if, along with it, there is the joy of freedom. This is why I was saying that mere good administration alone cannot keep man whole and fulfilled.

And yet, where ruler and ruled remain far apart from one another, where any relation of intimacy higher than mere necessity is prevented from being established between the two, there, even if the administration of the state be exceedingly good, it can be nothing more than a pure office of law, nothing beyond mere rules and regulations. But despite this, why man continues merely to wither, why his inner and outer being becomes devoid of joy, the ruler will by no means understand—he only grows angry; indeed, even the one who suffers cannot himself properly understand it. Therefore, that a lifeless, arid system of governance

is bound to result when ruler and ruled remain mutually severed—that this has been India's fate—none can deny.

Beyond this, we must also acknowledge a certain resemblance between present-day India and eighteenth-century France. The manner of life of our rulers is far more costly than our own. Their food and dress, their luxury and leisure, the provisioning of goods across both shores of the ocean for them, the arrangement of comfortable furlough to England upon completion of their term of service here—all this we must supply. Everyone is aware that, as time goes on, the scale of their extravagance has only continued to rise. The burden of supplying the expense of all this luxury falls upon an India where the common man cannot obtain even his two daily meals in full measure. In such a state, those who form the luxurious dominant party are compelled to become hardened of heart. If anyone tells them, "Look there—these wretched people cannot get enough to eat," they hasten to prove that such fare is entirely natural and sufficient for such people. The clerk toiling himself to death like a ghost for fifteen or twenty rupees a month, the well-paid burra sahib seated beneath his electric fan, does not even trouble to consider once how, on such wages, the families of these men manage to subsist. They wish to keep their minds calm and settled, lest their digestion suffer and their liver grow disordered. When it is certain that they themselves cannot manage on little, and that their dependence is entirely upon India, then, by comparison, how the people around them eat and clothe themselves and pass their days is something they can never judge with disinterest. And this is no matter of one or two individuals—not merely a single king, not a single emperor—it is the luxury of an entire nation, for whose maintenance this India must provide. For the sake of those who wish, dwelling at so great a distance, to live in royal state, an alien nation with whom they share no bond of kinship must have its food and clothing constricted at every turn—and this cruel disparity, ever increasing day by day, is denied only by those for whom comfort has become an absolute necessity.

Thus, on the one side, vast salaries, fat pensions, and a lordly style of living; on the other, the bare subsistence of life eked out on half-rations amid dire want—this incongruity of condition clings, as it were, flesh to flesh. It is not merely the deficiency of food and clothing; the slight put upon our honor is so very excessive, the disparity in the valuation of the one and the other so extreme, that even in the

courts of law it is impossible to escape partiality; in such a state, as time goes on, the burden of the foreigner upon the breast of India grows only heavier, and the inequity between the two sides becomes ever more immeasurably vast—this, today, is no longer beyond anyone's comprehension. On the one hand, the pain grows ever more unbearable; on the other, the callousness and contempt grow ever deeper. If such a state of things be allowed to persist, there can be no doubt that some day or other it will bring forth a storm.

Despite such measure of similarity, we must nevertheless say that the single problem which confronted America and France before their revolutions—that is, the problem upon whose resolution alone their liberation entirely depended—does not exist before us in the same form. That is to say, even if we could, by force of petition or by force of arms, persuade the Englishman to take his leave of India, even then no solution whatsoever would come to our problem; the result would be either that the Englishman would return, or that someone else would come whose appetite and girth might perhaps be no smaller than the Englishman's.

It goes without saying that in a country where no great nation has yet been forged, there can be no such thing as freedom at all. For where, indeed, does the "self" of self-rule reside? Freedom—whose freedom? If, in India, the Bengali becomes free, the Nair of the south will not thereby count himself free; and if the Jat of the west attains liberty, the Assamese of the eastern extremity will not glory in having gained the selfsame fruit. In Bengal alone, no sign is to be seen that the Hindu is prepared to unite his fate with that of the Muslim. Who, then, shall be free? When hand is entirely severed from arm, and foot from leg, and head from all, in the reckoning, to whom, then, does the gain belong?

One even hears the argument that so long as we remain under the harsh rule of another, we shall never be able to forge ourselves into a nation; we shall meet obstruction at every step, and shall have no leisure for those great collective undertakings through which, working together, men come to blend into one. If this be true, then this problem admits of no solution at all. For the disunited can never win victory over the united in any contest whatsoever; among the disunited there

is division of capacity, division of purpose, division of perseverance. A scattered thing, lying inert like matter, may yet endure; but the moment any wind of circumstance attempts to set it in motion, it scatters, it breaks apart, one part of it strikes against another; all its inward weaknesses awaken in manifold forms and rise up bent upon its destruction. If we ourselves cannot become one, we shall be unable to displace any single unified power, however artificial, that now occupies that place of unity.

It is not merely that we shall be unable; even should we, by some purely accidental cause, succeed, the single external bond by which we are now held together would itself then come apart. Should conflict then arise among ourselves, it would not even be possible for us to engage in some measure of strife and struggle for a time and then arrive at some settlement of it in our own fashion—no one would even grant us that much time. For though we ourselves may not be prepared to seize the advantage of our opportunity, the nations of the world, ever ready at every season for such occasions, will not sit at a distance watching our domestic warfare as mere spectators of a drama. India is no place from which the eye of the plunderer will ever be withdrawn.

Therefore, in a country where many disparate peoples have not yet come together to form a single great nation, whether or not English dominion should continue there is not the matter for discussion; the forging of that great nation is itself the one purpose before which all other purposes must bow the head—indeed, if English rule itself assists in the achievement of this purpose, then English rule too must be accepted and acknowledged as a resource of our own India. There exist many obstacles to accepting this wholeheartedly, with affection. What must English rule do so as not to wound our self-respect, what must it do so that an honorable relation of kinship may be established between it and us—the resolution of this exceedingly difficult question, too, we must undertake. Even should we say in anger, "No, we do not want it," we shall nonetheless be compelled to want it; for so long as we cannot become one and forge ourselves into a great nation, the very purpose for which English rule exists can never be fulfilled.

Not long ago, Providence drew the whole of our consciousness toward what is our country's greatest problem. On that day we thought we would show the Englishman how deeply wounded we were by the Partition; we resolved to sever our connection with foreign salt and would sooner drink water than remove our foreign-made clothing. But no sooner had we declared war upon the outsider than such tumult arose within our own house as had never before been witnessed. The discord between Hindu and Muslim suddenly grew fatally, hideously acute.

However exceedingly painful this affair may have been for us, it was a lesson we needed. It was necessary for us to know, with complete certainty, that in our country Hindu and Muslim are separate, and that whatever work we may undertake while forgetting this reality, this reality will never forget us. It will not do to console ourselves by saying there was no fault whatsoever in the relations between Hindu and Muslim, and that it was the Englishman alone who set the Muslim against us.

If the Englishman has truly succeeded in setting the Muslim against us, then the Englishman has done us a supreme service—he has, right at the very outset, turned our gaze toward one immense reality of our country which, like fools, we were disregarding entirely while calculating our great national undertakings. If, taking no lesson from this, we continue to heap the entire measure of our anger upon the Englishman alone, then, in order to remove our own folly, we shall have to suffer the blow yet again; whatever the true state of affairs may in fact be, we must come to understand it—there is no path by which it can in any way be evaded.

Along with this, one thing must be especially borne in mind: that union between Hindu and Muslim, or among the various divisions of Hindus, or between high and low castes—the idea that if such union does not occur our work suffers hindrance, and that therefore by achieving union somehow we shall gain strength—this is not the greatest consideration of all, and hence it is not the truest consideration either.

I have said before that mere opportunity for accomplishing necessity, mere good administration, is far from sufficient; without more, man's life cannot survive. Christ has said that man does not live by bread alone. The reason is that man's life is not merely bodily life. It is because that vast life is being starved of its true

nourishment that English rule, despite all manner of good governance, is depriving us of joy.

But if this deprivation of nourishment were caused only from without, only by English rule, then by correcting matters somehow from outside alone, our task would be accomplished. In the very arrangements of our own inner household, this business of starvation has been going on since long ago. We—Hindu and Muslim; we—the various regional Hindu peoples of India—dwell, indeed, in one place, but man is meant to supply to man a nourishment higher than bread, one that fills life with strength and joy; and of that very nourishment we have deprived one another. All our heart's affections, all our efforts for good, have become bound up so excessively within family and lineage and within one small society or another that we have kept nothing in reserve with which to acknowledge that vast bond of common kinship which exists among common humanity. For that reason we lie broken into fragments like an archipelago; we have been unable to spread out, vast and unified, like a continent.

Every small individual continues to realize his unity with the great body of mankind through manifold assemblies, in manifold forms. This realization is not glorious merely as a means to some particular achievement—it is his very life, it is his very humanity, that is to say, it is his religion (dharma). To precisely the degree that he is deprived of this dharma, to that same degree he grows arid. It is our misfortune that for long we in India have given license to this aridity. The great highways of our knowledge, our action, our customary dealings, of all our forms of exchange, have come to be blocked off, confined before some small circle or other; our heart and our endeavor have wandered about chiefly within our own household, our own village; they have found no leisure to reveal themselves toward the whole of humanity. For this reason we have gained domestic comfort, we have gained the support of small societies, but we have long been deprived of the strength and completeness of the great collective human body, and we live like paupers.

If we cannot forge from within ourselves the means to fill this vast deficiency, how then shall we obtain it from outside? Why do we imagine that once the Englishman departs, this void of ours will be filled? That we have not honored one another, have not helped one another, have not even tried to know one another; that we

have long sat treating "courtyard as foreign land, though but a step from home"—that indifference, that contempt, that discord regarding one another which we must utterly dispel—is this to be done merely for the convenience of discarding foreign cloth, merely for the purpose of demonstrating our strength before English authority? If we do not do this, our dharma is being wounded, our humanity is being constricted; if we do not do this, our intelligence will remain narrow, our knowledge will not flower—our feeble minds will remain entangled in hundreds of blind superstitions—we shall be unable, cutting away every bond of servitude within and without, to raise our heads fearlessly and unhesitatingly amidst the society of the world. It is only to attain that fearless, unfettered, vast humanity that we must bind one another, each to each, in the bond of dharma. Without this, man can in no way become great, can in no way become true. All who exist in India, all who have come to India—taking every one of them together, shall we become whole—in India shall be resolved one of the vast problems of universal humanity. That problem is this: that in the world, man is diverse in race, in language, in nature, in conduct, in faith—the divine spirit in man consists precisely in this diversity—that very diversity we shall behold made one within this temple that is India. Not by banishing or annihilating disparity, but through the boundless realization everywhere of Brahma, through an all-forbearing supreme love toward mankind, through acknowledging service to God in the service of all, high and low, kin and stranger alike.

Nothing else is needed—conquer the country through the effort of good will alone. Conquer the suspicion of those who suspect you; overcome the hostility of those hostile to you. Strike upon the closed door, strike again and again—turn back from no disappointment, from no wound to your own pride; the heart of man can never forever refuse the heart of man.

India's call has touched our inmost being. That this call has resounded amidst the angry roar of the newspapers, or that it has found its true expression amidst the frenzy of violent agitation—this we shall not concede; but we can understand that this call is truly awakening our inner soul when we see that we are carrying vessels of food, without distinction of caste or creed, to the door of the famine-stricken; when we see that, without judging worthy from unworthy, we have girded ourselves to help travelers arriving from abroad; when we see that, even in the face

of the ruthless suspicion and hostility of officials, no fear of danger is deterring our young men in the hour when resistance to oppression is called for. In service we feel no hesitation, in duty our fear has vanished, in helping others we have forgotten the reckoning of high and low—from this good sign that has appeared, we have understood this: that the call which has come to us this time will draw us out from behind every veil of narrowness; this time, in India, man's attraction toward man has taken hold.

This time we must go wherever there is any want, in order to fulfill it; we must dedicate our lives, in the remote corners of the countryside, to the distribution of food, health, and education; no one shall any longer be able to hold us confined within self-interest and ease. After long aridity and drought, when the rains come, they come bearing storm—but that initial storm at the onset of the new monsoon is not the greatest sign of this new advent, nor is it lasting. The flicker of lightning, the roar of thunder, and the frenzy of the wind will of themselves grow calm; then cloud will join with cloud, and the eastern and western sky will become wrapped in tranquility; on every side the rain will fall in steady streams, filling the vessel of the thirsty with water, and in the field of the hungry the hope of grain will sprout and gladden both eyes. That this day of diverse fulfillment, replete with good, has appeared today in India after long, long waiting—knowing this with certainty, let us be ready with joy. For what purpose? To leave the house and descend into the field, to till the soil, to sow the seed; and then, when in the golden harvest Lakshmi shall make her advent, to bring that Lakshmi home and establish there the festival of everlasting celebration.

1315 [Bengali Era]