

Lala Lajpat Rai gave us a more realistic analysis, both political and economic, of all the outstanding issues in the terms of this new nationalism, while Lokmanya Tilak remained the head of the Party: for his was the courage, the capacity for martyrdom, and the strong will-power which would not yield or bend to the opposing forces, however formidable they might look.

8. APPEAL TO THE GOLDEN PAST.

The prophets of this new nationalism started with a definite reading of the past Indian history. For them, Indian history did not begin with 1757 and 1857: neither the Battle of Plassey, nor the reconquest of India after the Mutiny and the assumption of the sovereignty of India by the King in Parliament, were the starting-points of the rise of the Indian people. The Moderates looked not to the past, but to the future: to them the past was a thing to be forgotten, and the sooner it was forgotten, the better. This attitude was not shared by all the Moderates: but the summary way in which they have generally disposed of the past almost implies it. But the new nationalists looked not only beyond the British period of Indian history, but also beyond the Mahomedan period of Indian History to a very great extent. The grandeur of the historic past was occasionally invoked by orators like Surendranath Bannerjee; but on the whole the tendency of the Indian Liberals was to dwell mostly on the present and the future rather than on the past. But this new Party went much deeper into history: and connected the Hindus of to-day at least in historic imagination with the Hindus of the Vedic times, of the age of the Mahabharata, of the age of Asoka and Chandra Gupta. It was largely under the influence of these nationalists that a new school of Indian history arose, which has been concentrating its attention upon the glories of the Golden

Age of Indian History. Nor was the medieval period barren of historic romance for the Hindus. Pratap Rana of Chitor, or Shivaji of later days, stood out in history as redoubtable champions for the cause of Hindu independence and culture. The Hindu of to-day is the descendant of the Hindu of those days. He has merely forgotten himself. The moment he shakes off this mood of self-depreciation, he will find himself quite different and quite worthy of his illustrious ancestors.

Thus before the birth of Christ, "India possessed a marvellous civilisation, a wonderful literature, a well-organised social system, a conception of Government based on the legal rights of subjects *inter se* as against the ruling monarch. The democratic institutions too were not unknown to India". The conception of an all-Indian empire is also familiar both in actual history and in Sanskrit literature. Vincent Smith says that the civil and military system of government during the reign of Chandra Gupta proves clearly "that Northern India in the time of Alexander the Great had attained to a high degree of civilisation, which must have been the product of evolution continued through many centuries. Upto the thirteenth century, India had been practically independent. The Muslim Rule lasted for six centuries with varying vicissitudes of fortune. The Deccan, Rajputana, and Central India were always independent until the rule of Akbar."

The Muslim Rule in India was not a foreign rule. The Muslims came from outside India: but they settled in India and made it their home. They were "Indians by birth, Indians by marriage, and Indians by death." They were born in India, they married in India, and they died in India. Their revenues were spent in India. Their bias against the Hindus was religious, not political. If the racial question came into prominence, it was between Mahommedans and Mahommedans.

In the golden days of Moghul Rule, the Hindus were not only theoretically eligible for, but often actually occupied, the highest offices under the crown, next after the princes of royal blood. They were governors of provinces, generals of armies, and rulers of districts and divisions. Looked at from the political and the economic point of view, the Government was as much indigenous as under Hindu rule. The Muslims never attempted to disarm the population: nor did they prohibit the manufacture or import of arms. They had no Lancashire industries to protect, and were under no necessity of imposing excise duties on Indian-made goods. They eventually evolved a language which is as much Indian as any other vernacular spoken in India to-day. The Muslim rulers were in no way concerned with the prosperity of the labouring classes of Persia or Afghanistan. Their Government was thus an Indian Government, and not a foreign Government.

History does not record a single instance of India being ruled from without by a people of purely non-Indian blood, and in the interests of another country and another people, before the British. India was always an empire by herself. She was never a part of another empire much less a dependency. She had her own army, her own navy, her own flag. She had her industries, and manufactured the goods she consumed. Anyone wanting the privilege of trading with India under special terms had to obtain the sanction of her Government, as the East India Company did. There was no India Office in Arabia or in Persia, or in Kabul, to which the people of India looked for initiative in the affairs of their native land.

There was a golden age in India. C. R. Das also drew a beautiful picture of India of yesterday and contrasted it with the India of to-day (1917): "We had corn in our granaries, our tanks supplied us with fish: and the eye was soothed and refreshed by the limpid blue of the sky and

the green foliage of the tree. All day long the peasant toiled in the fields: and at eve, returning to his lamp-lit home, he sang the song of his heart. But these things are no more. The granaries are empty of their golden wealth: the kine are dry and give no milk; and the fields, once so green are dry and parched with thirst. What remains is the dream of a former happiness and the languor and misery of insistent pain.”

9. THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF THE BRITISH RULE.

Contrasted with the view of the Liberals that the British Empire has a divine or Providential origin and a divine or Providential meaning, is the view of the Extremists that this Empire is essentially of the earth, earthy: that it has its origin in the humdrum commercial motives and the gross desire to enrich oneself at the expense of one's neighbour. The motives were anything but divine: the processes by which it was won and consolidated were anything but divine. The deceit and chicanery, the subtle Machiavellian diplomacy, the policy of setting Indians against Indians, the trick of treating a treaty or a document as a scrap of paper when it came in the way of expansion: all these are clearly marked at every stage of British progress in India. The Empire started as a haphazard plunder, and ended in being a perfectly well-organized exploitation. Indian blood was freely poured and Indian money was freely spent in this conquest of India. It is not a conquest of India by Britain in a purely military sense: it is a conquest of India by the British through Indians, by all the processes of skill, cunning, diplomacy, fraud and force. Upto 1857, the whole business—partly commercial, partly political—was carried on in the name of the East India Company: this was a convenient way of avoiding all responsibility. “Hindus were played off against Mahommedans, and *vice versa*, States and