

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

principalities against States and Principalities, Jats against Rajputs and Rajputs against Jats, Mahrattas against both, Rohillas against Bundelas and Bundelas against Pathans, and so on. Treaties were made and broken without the least scruple, sides were taken and changed and again changed, without the least consideration of honour or faith. Thrones were purchased and sold to the highest bidder. Military support was purchased and given like merchandise. Servants were induced to betray their masters, soldiers to desert flags, without any regard to the morality of the steps taken. Pretences were invented and occasion sought for involving States and Principalities in wars and trouble. Laws of all kinds, national and international, moral and religious, were all for the time thrown to the dogs. Neither minors nor widows received any consideration; the young and the old were treated alike. The one object in view was to loot, to plunder, and to make an empire. Everything was sub-ordinated to that end...Policies (fiscal, industrial, religious, educational) were all discussed and formulated from one point of view, viz. the establishing of British authority, the consolidation of British Rule, and pecuniary gain to the East India Company. If one were to pile up 'scraps of paper' which the British destroyed or disregarded in the making of their Indian Empire, one could fill a decent-sized box therewith. We do not know of anything in Indian history which could be compared with the deeds of this century. It was a century of consistent, prolonged, and deliberate spoliation, subtle and scientific sometimes, in the persuance of which all laws of morality, humanity and fairness were tossed aside, and the object in view was persistently and doggedly kept in view and achieved. The history of British 'conquest' of India from 1757 to 1857 A. D., is a continuous record of political charlatantry, political faithlessness, and political immorality. It was a true triumph of British 'diplomacy.' The British founders of the Indian Empire had the true Imperial in-

instincts of empire-builders. They cared little for the means which they employed. Moral theorists cannot make empires. Empires can only be conceived by Napoleons, Bismarcks, Disraelis, Richelieus, and Machiavellis. They can only be built by Clives, Hastings, Wellesleys and Dalhousies."

Such is the origin of this "Government established by law."

The vision of India as an integral part of the British Empire does not move the imagination of the Extremist as it does that of the Moderates. He does not see in it a fact to be very proud of. India is for the first time in her history reduced to the position of a dependency: for the first time she is ruled from the outside, for the first time her affairs are managed by people who come and go, under laws made outside of India. "All the chief offices of state, the direction and control of armies, the administration of revenues, of divisions, of districts, the coining of money, the administration of justice, the imposition of taxes, etc., are generally in the hands of foreigners who have absolutely no interest in the country, except as servants of the Crown, persons whose interest in the country ceases with the expiration of their term of service."

For the first time in the political history of India, it has become a political disqualification to be an Indian. Until recently only Indians were forbidden to carry arms except by special permission. "In the hills of his own native country, where his parents, grand-parents, and great-grand-parents before him were born, where they perhaps ruled or held positions of trust, where they died, where they fertilised the soil with their blood, and where less than a century ago, they enjoyed absolute freedom, he, their immediate descendant, was not allowed to carry an umbrella over his head to give him shelter from rain or sun, without the risk of being insulted by the lowest among the foreign

masters of his country.”

Inferiority has become the badge of his tribe. He carries it everywhere, even in the British Colonies. He is welcome there as a slave, an indentured coolie, but not as an equal. If he is a Pariah at home, how can he be anything but a Pariah abroad? “The self-governing dominions of the British Empire have built a solid wall of most revolting and inhuman laws and regulations against his entry into those dominions.”

The iron of political subjection thus enters the sensitive Indian soul. Everything in the world reminds him of his inferior status: he realises, wherever he goes outside India, that his country does not count in the world, that in the great mass of civilised humanity, he is a mere cipher.

The British must be a very strange, un-imaginative people, if they cannot understand the inwardness of this feeling of humiliation and shame which comes over an Indian everywhere. Will the British people accept quietly the rule of the Germans? Will they welcome German efficiency in preference to British self-government? Will they be content with trade returns, or the blessings of peace and order, or those of impartial justice, or the blessings of excellent communications? If not, why should they judge Indians by different standards? Why should they assume that the Indian is different, that he is accustomed to subjection, that he glories in subjection?

Granting for a moment that the British have brought civilisation to our lives, that they have given us their language and institutions, that they have made us secure against disorders from within and attacks from without, that they have made us materially prosperous and happy, can all this compensate for the loss of manhood which is involved in political bondage? “Chains are chains, no matter if they be gilded. Can the wealth of the whole

world be put in the scales against liberty and honour? What would it avail if one were to get the sovereignty of the world but lose his own soul?"

Indians do not want to be perpetually treated as helots, as "dumb, driven cattle." They have begun their battle for freedom. A policy of repression may temporarily prevail; but the cause of freedom in the long run flourishes all the more because of these temporary set-backs. The case of Lokamanya Tilak is the case of the nationalist in a nut-shell. The more he was persecuted, the greater and greater he emerged. Each time that he went to jail, his personality gained more and more additional weight in the country. His first imprisonment made him the leader of his small party, and to some extent of the Maharashtra: his second imprisonment made him a national hero and the leader of the Extremist Party: his third imprisonment transformed him for a time into the only all-India leader of the Progressive Party.

10. *LOSS OF FAITH IN THE BRITISH.*

The new Party was the outcome of the complete loss of faith of the people in the benevolent intentions of the Government. The British Government had so far cast a spell upon the Indian mind, and the Indian mind believed that in course of time, under British leadership and guidance, it would attain the full realisation of its destiny. But now these leaders were completely dis-illusioned: and they found that they were living in a fool's paradise. They suddenly began to realise that it was essentially a foreign Government. It is by its very nature bound to be hostile to the interests and aspirations of the people. The Government established peace: but what is the nature of this peace? As Dadabhai said: "We were prevented from going at each other's throats, so that a foreigner might go at the throat of