

ing at the heart of these all, regulating and directing their activities, consistently with the large and eternal interests of the nation.”

### 19. REFORM ON NATIONAL LINES.

The new nationalism emphatically stood for the assertion of the Indian ideals in everything. The old nationalism stood for mechanical, blind imitation of the Western forms. Now imitation never leads to true greatness; and imitation always tends to be a mere external thing. It is easy perhaps to transplant the forms of Western life: but it is the spirit which matters; and the East is East and the West is West; and one should not be twisted and tortured into the other's likeness. This is the new attitude.

It is the peculiar thought-structure and the peculiar social structure which reveal a people's individuality. It is this individuality, this peculiar genius of the people, its characteristic national mind, which makes the literature, the religion, the social institutions of one people so different from those of other peoples. To stifle this spirit is to kill the very life of the people. To ignore it in our schemes of reconstruction is to foredoom them to failure. The whole Liberal school ignored this most vital fact in the whole social situation - viz. the soul of the nation and all that it stands for. This is why the whole school has not been able to touch the inner springs of the nation's life, and consequently has simply failed to move it. The new movement derives its strength from this fact that it addresses its whole programme to the actual, living soul of India, and not to its mere surface-intelligence. “The true meaning of ‘reform on national lines’ means the recognition of, and due obedience to, the supreme genius of the nation in devising means for its advancement. It does not mean the

preservation of the *status quo*. It does not mean the restitution of lost rights, the resuscitation of effete organs, or the re-institution of obsolete usages. It means simply the adjustment of the inner life of the people to their outer environments."

A nation is an organism and it grows like all organisms, according to the laws of its own. The clue to its peculiar genius is to be found in its past history and in its literary and artistic and religious monuments. The highest function of patriotism is to understand this secret of the nation by going deep down into the whole current of its life, to catch the peculiar rhythm of the nation's movements, and then to try to read the promise of its unrealised life and try to mould it in the light of all these facts. This is what the new movement tries to do. "To understand this new Movement properly, you must look into it through the prism of the highest ideals of your nation, and the highest teaching of your Scriptures, and the highest possibilities of your social, economic, industrial and your political life."

Indian History has not come to its own. It will have to be rewritten. It is not merely a long tale of Hindu slavery and Hindu idiocy. Its first great event is certainly not the Battle of Plassey of 1757 or the reconquest of India by Britain in 1857. It is not an episode in the romantic story of the British Empire. It undeniably shows a great people in its decay; but it also shows, when properly read, a great people's great achievement in the ages when a large part of European and American humanity had not yet emerged into the light of day. It further shows that a nation which has survived so many shocks and catastrophes, certainly bears a charmed life and is destined to play a great rôle in the future.

Indian History, therefore, "is to the patriot what the scriptures of his religion are to the devotee. Indian

history is the record of the dealings of God with the Indian people. It is no profane or secular book, but is instinct in every page of it with the plan and purpose of India's God, in regard to the Indian people. Patriotism that does not feed upon history is like religion that rejects the help of the Scriptures,—rootless, fanciful, unreal, just able to satisfy the sentimentality of the spiritual or patriotic voluptuary, but absolutely incapable of imparting any saving power or grace to their activities and exercises.”

B. C. Pal however does not preach a return to the golden past. Mere revivalism does not appeal to the taste of the new nationalist. His eye is fixed not only on the past, but also on the future. With the revivalist, he agrees that the future must be based on the past, that we should not lose sight of, in our mad haste for progress, the permanent elements of our ancient and medieval culture. But he does not stand for mere reaction, mere continuance of things as they are, or return to some imaginary past. What he repudiates is the position of the radical reformer or the abstract cosmopolitan, “who believes that man is man, and there exists nothing on earth of any vital value except the individual here and below and God above, and who regards all racial differences and national peculiarities as superstition and shortcomings, which in the higher stages of ethical and spiritual life, are absolutely overcome and obliterated, for to such a one, one country is as good as another, and patriotism is only an amiable weakness of man, due originally to geographical accidents.”

The Indians are a nation; they have not to become a nation. India is one country for ages. The Hindu literature, the foreign records, Indian history all testify to it in an absolutely unmistakable fashion. The Indian nation has not only an external physical or geographical unity; it has always stood for the same great cultural ideals, forming on a common basis the cultural life of all the Indian people.

The Hindu especially stands for one identical culture. Wherever the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are read, wherever the sacred verses of the Gita continue to inspire and instruct, wherever the deeds of Arjuna and Krishna, of Pratap and Shivaji are recited by the native bards, there then, is unmistakably the soul of Hinduism present. What a miserable lie it is to say that Indian unity is the product of the British rule! The Moderates have fallen a cruel victim to the pathetic fallacies and deliberate perversions of facts of the English historians. The Indian nation is, and never to be, born.

What is required is not to start our A. B. C. of education in everything under the British masters, who have never understood and who can never understand anything about the soul of India; what is required is a conscious, rational re-adjustment of the nation's life to the nation's new situation and its demands. But in all schemes of reconstruction, the national mind, the national heritage, the national past should be given the first consideration. The Hindu must not cease to be Hindu, the Indian must not cease to be Indian in order that the Hindu or the Indian becomes a modern. It is because he is a Hindu or Indian that he must advance and advance as a Hindu or an Indian, his whole effort at advance being conditioned as much by the past which lives in him, as by the future which lures him on. The supremacy of the spirit, of the soul is the essential ideal of his race; it is the proudest part of his heritage, and in all reforms he must be guided by the supreme fact of his race-consciousness. The Hindu must not lose his soul; he cannot part with his fundamental position for a mess of pottage.

What we have now to learn, what we in the past often tended to forget much to our cost, is the fact that this supreme spiritual consciousness upon which our people take their stand is organically related to the world and must try

to find its highest expression not apart from our material, intellectual, or social life, but in and through our material, intellectual or social life. This is the message of Indian history and Indian culture to the Indian of to-day. The salvation of India does not lie in resting upon a past till that past has become almost dead nor in cultivating the soul-consciousness in the solitudes of the Himalayas: but in bringing that past with its virile traditions to bear upon the stagnant life of to-day and to revivify it and bringing that soul-consciousness from the retreat of solitude to the actual life of to-day and raise its whole level to undreamt of heights.

This is the one refrain of the modern Indian national revival, running like a golden thread through Swami Vivekananda and Arabinda Ghose and Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi. This is the supreme lesson of Indian history; and in our assimilating it, lies our hope of future salvation. India cannot if she will, and will not if she can, merge in the so-called modern culture and lose her identity altogether. This nationalist school combats the Liberal fallacy, which if not properly detected and courageously discarded, would lead to India's ruin—her disappearance as a nation from the face of the earth.

The divorce of the spiritual life from every-day life has brought about the present catastrophe in India, since we witness the decadence of our bodily life. The spirit must live in the body and through the body it must express itself. The Indians must, therefore, build up robust bodies like their ancient forbears, develop once more the ideal of Brahmacharya (celibacy), of mental and bodily self-control, follow the plain dictate of Indian situation, cultivate the ideal of plain living and high thinking, bring out the limitless physical reserves of strength and endurance latent in the country. The Western luxuries are ruining us economically and morally. They are sapping the vitality even of

the Western nations: but they will simply complete our ruin. Wretched living, however, is not plain living. The people must get more and better food, and clean houses and streets, as a part of the ideal of sounder life which the nation desires to live now.

The nationalist calls upon the patriot to take up the burden of the country upon himself. New patriotism is anything but a luxury to be indulged in your leisure hours for fame and prosperity. The days of lotus-eating patriots who sometimes deceived others, are gone. The India of our imagination is a glorious picture: but the India of actuality is a grim thing, sore and tired, and poor and destitute, and ill and suffering. The new patriot has to indentify himself with this India of the twentieth century, so different from the India of the days of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The new patriot is as much conscious of the ignorance, the errors, the weaknesses, and the superstitions of his people as the Indian Liberal; but he goes further than the Indian Liberal in "seeing the eternal possibilities of light and love, and truth and strength that are hidden in the soul of his nation." The new love of the country demands hard work, laborious days, and a life of grim poverty and suffering, and possible martyrdom of every awakened child of the country. It is made of stern stuff. "It is easier to plunge one's self, like Brutus of old, horse and all, into the dark abyss, before the eyes of the admiring multitude, than to live laborious days, working up the national life, by hourly sacrifices of life and happiness, to see one's house and home, crumbling to dust inch by inch, one's dear ones slowly moving towards the grave, through the privations of self-imposed penury and one's ideal of art and beauty, and love and life standing for ever unrealised." The old ideal of patriotism could make fine reconciliations, the reconciliation of the fidelity to the Empire with devotion to one's country; the fidelity to one's culture with the pursuit of patriotism; the interests of the self and the

family with the interests of the nation; the material interests and desire for comfort and happiness with the material interests and economic well-being of the country. These ideals are not necessarily incompatible but in India of to-day, it is a simple mockery to talk of such vital reconciliations of opposites.

The old politics developed to perfection the arts of logic and rhetoric and brought them fully and unreservedly in the pursuit of their cause. These argumentations and declamations may make some stir; but they cannot make a lasting impression. The battles of a country are never won purely by logic and rhetoric. The vital factor which they ignored was the place of force and organization in politics. It is a well-known truth that diplomacy can work wonders only if it is backed by force. The British Government saw the logic but not the force behind the logic; that is the meaning of their statement that the educated classes do not represent the masses. "The success of constitutional or peaceful methods is determined, not by the strength of their logic, or the abstract justice of their claims, but only and always by the force that stands behind them, force not applied but capable of application, if need be, for the due realisation of their respective ends. In constitutional agitation, the force is a constitutional force; in more peaceful agitation, it is a moral force. The Congress had neither the one nor the other behind it. The Government had no constitution; the people at large had neither a political consciousness nor a political will; neither the inspiration of an intelligent ideal, nor the determination of a clear and definite purpose. The new movement created both. It presented an intelligible ideal, that of Swaraj or autonomy, and prescribed a definite and practical method which every man and every woman might at once adopt in his or her own sphere of life, for the furtherance of this ideal, namely, of self-help and passive resistance. From its ideal

the new propaganda derived its faith in its ultimate success; in its methods it had the assurance of peaceful advance towards that ultimate end."

The new movement stands for emphatically the old, historic Indian nation and demands that this nation will have its life shaped in consonance with its eternal genius. It has a racial, religious, cultural inspiration behind it. It proceeds from the soul of the people and goes to the soul of the people. It springs from the soil of India and has a strong national flavour about it; it is very racy of the soil from which it has sprung. It inspires men, women and children, classes and masses, the orthodox and the educated alike. It has given birth to a new literature, a new art, a new industry. Little girls sing in chorus :

" Cry Bande Mataram,-forty million brothers, forty million sisters; are we inferior to any ?

Cry Bande Mataram."

This is the meaning of Tilak's campaign in the Maharashtra in the eighties and nineties of the last century. It was the re-forging of India on national lines, by national methods. Tilak started by making a new cult of the country and the nation. This new cult, this new 'ism' must have its own appropriate symbolism, its own rites and sacraments. Hence we must have our national hero-worship with all the paraphernalia of processions and other suitable machinery to capture the imagination of the Indian mind and to direct it from the worship of the western heroes and traditions to the worship of national gods and national heroes. Tilak was thus able "to effect the union of the new political spirit with the tradition and sentiment of the historic past and of both with the ineradicable religious temperament of the people, of which these festivals were the symbol. The Congress Movement was for a long time purely occidental in its mind, character and methods,



confined to the English educated few, founded on the political rights and interests of the people read in the light of English history and European ideals, but with no root either in the past of the country or in the inner spirit of the nation. Mr. Tilak was the first political leader to break through the routine of the somewhat academical methods, to bridge the gulf between the present and the past, and to restore continuity to the life of the nation."

In 1917, C. R. Das uttered the same message of a reform on national lines as a President of the Bengal Provincial Conference. Europe was in the melting-pot then, and a disillusionment about European culture was then in full swing. India, therefore, continued to try to find solace in her golden past. Das denounced the evils of competition and industrialism as the golden calf, symbolical of the ideas of Europe. "The state of the country to-day stood in sombre contrast with the Bengal of old. This calamity had been brought about because in the dust which had been raised by the clash of ideals of East and West, the people had lost sight of their own divinities, and had cast their offerings upon the altars of strange gods. The scales were now falling from their eyes...Already prophets of the race had arisen who had kindled once again the fires on the ancient altars. The Swadeshi movement had come like a tempest; it had rushed along impetuously like some mighty flood, submerging them, sweeping them off their feet, but revitalizing their lives. Under its reviving influence, they had steeped themselves once again in that stream of culture and civilisation which had been flowing perennially through the heart of Bengal. They had been enabled once more to catch glimpses of the true continuity of their national history. The main problem, for their consideration, therefore, was this—how to develop fully and adequately the newly awakened life of Bengal. In this critical period of nation-building, they must root

out and cast aside the European ideal of indulgence and must cleave fast to their native and ancient ideal of sacrifice. Problems of education and culture, of agriculture and commerce, must be dealt with in the light of their treatment in the past. The connection of these things with their ancient social system must be considered. And not this alone. They must consider also the precise relation in which all their thoughts, endeavours and activities stood, and still stand, with reference to the question of religion, for they would misread and misknow all things unless they kept this point steadily in view. They must accept only what was consonant with the genius of their being, and must regret and utterly cast aside what was foreign to their soul."

## 20. SWADESHI.

The Swadeshi movement has the support of all creeds and parties in India. The Extremists are even more enthusiastic than the Moderates for the Swadeshi cause, partly for the same reasons, partly for somewhat different reasons. Lajpat Rai calls it *the* remedy upon the right and continued use of which depends the alleviation of the sufferings of India. "I regard it," he said, "as *the salvation of my country*. The Swadeshi movement ought to make us self-respecting, self-reliant, self-supporting, self-sacrificing and last, not least, manly. The Swadeshi movement ought to teach us how to organise our capital, our resources, our labour, our energies and our talents to the greatest good of all Indians, irrespective of creed, colour, or caste. It ought to unite us, our religious and denominational differences notwithstanding. It ought to furnish us with an altar before which we can all stand in the fullest sincerity of our hearts and in the deepest strength of faith, to pray for the good of our common motherland, with a determination to stand to-