

“The weaver and the blacksmith are crying day and night. They cannot find their food by plying their trade. Even threads and needles come from distant shores. Even match-sticks are not produced in the country. Whether in dressing themselves or in producing their domestic utensils or even in lighting their oil-lamps,—in nothing are the people independent of their foreign masters...Swarms of locusts from a distant island, coming to these shores have eaten up all its solid grains, leaving only the chaff for the starving children of the soil.”

Another poet in his “Song of India” writes :
“Sing, O my clarionet ! sing to these words:
Everyone is free in this wide world,
Everyone is awake in the glory of science,
India alone lieth asleep!”

“China and Burma and barbarous Japan.
Even they are independent, they are superior,
India alone knoweth no waking!”

Another song continues the same strain:—
“O India, weep, weep, thou,
As long as thy polluted atoms have not
 been washed away into the waters’ of the ocean,
So long weep thou, so long weep!”

Such were the outpourings of the new spirit of freedom that was coming over the country. The soil was thus being prepared for the politician.

3. *THE DAWN OF NEW NATIONALISM IN THE MAHARASHTRA.*

In another part of the country, political consciousness was always active, brooding over the departed glories of the past Indian rule. The Maharashtra has played a promi-

ment part in the history of medieval India—before the advent of the British, and was destined to play a prominent part in the history of modern India. Here, Ranade and Gokhale had led great movements and left their indelible mark upon Indian history. Here, another great man made himself conspicuous even in the days of Ranade and Gokhale. He soon became the father of Indian militant nationalism. Poona was the centre of the great Maratha and Peshwa Empire; and Poona became the centre first of moderate Indian nationalism and later on of radical Indian nationalism. The movement in Poona is largely led by Chitpavan Brahmins: and Tilak, like Ranade and Gokhale, was a Chitpavan Brahmin.

Tilak has contributed more by his life and character than by his speeches or writings to the making of the new nationalism. He was a politician of a very high order: and the great peculiarity of his politics was that, while looking more ahead than others, he never forgot the solid actualities about him. He was moved by a vision of the ultimate values: but in trying to give concrete reality to them he showed clearly the astuteness of an experienced man of affairs. But behind his vision as well as statesmanship was the force of a selfless patriotism, indomitable courage, and fierce determination. He had neither wealth nor great social position, neither professional success nor Government recognition, neither brilliant oratory nor any of the artificial tricks of the trade to recommend him. What then made him the incarnation of the national consciousness, the embodiment of the national ideal? It was his supreme concentration, without reservation, of his life to the one great aim, viz. the freedom of his country. "Arguments and speeches do not win liberty for a nation: but where there is a will in the nation to be free, and a man to embody that will in every action of his life and to devote his days to its realisation in the face of every difficulty and every suffering,

and where the will of the nation has once said, 'This man and his life mean what I have in my heart and my purpose,' that is a sure signpost of the future, which no one has any excuse for mistaking."

It was the vigour, the tone, the life that he tried to put into the masses that make him as well as his party so different from the Liberals. The nation had become intellectually self-conscious to some extent before Tilak appeared on the political horizon: the Moderates had made the case theoretically almost perfect. But what politics so far lacked was a certain note of practical reality; it was largely a speculative affair—a matter of proof and argument. Tilak brings politics from the cloudland of words and general theories to the solid earth of reality. Like Socrates, he brings political philosophy in India from heaven to earth, from the Council Hall or the Congress mandap to the street and the market. Politics so far was comparatively a feeble affair,—it lacked life. It is the great merit of Tilak that he puts a new self-confidence, a new self-assertiveness into his people. It was his great discovery that politics would remain a fleshless and bloodless affair unless it was able to enlist the interests and feelings of the masses. So far it was a parleying between the Government officials on the one hand and a few politicians on the other hand. It was reserved for Tilak to make both the Government and professional politicians look for a new power viz. the people. It was one of the standing arguments of the official party that the Congress did not represent the people. Tilak cleverly turned the tables on the Government by boldly identifying himself with the masses. Tilak's attempt to democratise the political movement and bring it home vividly into the consciousness of the average man, infused a new life and vigour into the movement and gave it a very different character.

This then was Tilak's first great political insight.

His second political insight was equally remarkable. He knew his people well; and he knew that to awake the dormant spirit of the Indian people, an appeal must be made not to their head, but their heart, not to their political intelligence but to their spiritual consciousness. He thus placed himself in touch with the inner working of the soul of the people as it had revealed itself in history: and thus linked up the present political struggle with their age-long social and spiritual struggle and gave an organic unity to his movement, by connecting the future with the present and the past. Hence his social and religious conservatism. He loved to talk to people in their own language: he loved to appeal to symbols which were dear to their heart and imagination. "This divination of the mind and spirit of the people and their needs, and this power to seize on the right way to call it forth, prove strikingly the political genius of Mr. Tilak: they made him the one man predestined to lead them in this trying and difficult period: when all has to be discovered and all has to be reconstructed. To bring in the mass of the people, to found the greatness of the future on the greatness of the past, to infuse Indian politics with Indian religious fervour, are the indispensable conditions for a great and powerful awakening in India. Others-writers, thinkers, spiritual leaders, had seen this truth; Mr. Tilak was the first to bring it into the actual field of practical politics."

India is a vast country: and the Indian people are made of many sub-nationalities. The Maharashtrians, the Bengalees, the Punjabees, for example, constitute powerful groups with a well-marked individuality. Tilak belonged to Maharashtra and he started his agitation first among the people of his own province, and earned by his patient and arduous labours and sufferings, the character of an accredited representative of the Maharashtra. Tilak was never a cosmopolitan type of man. He was steeped in his provin-

cial and vernacular culture. He was a type of Mahratta character : he truly belonged to the old Mahratta and Peshwa stock, with all those characteristics of the people which made them conspicuous on the stage of Indian history. "The Mahratta race, as their soil and their history have made them, are a rugged, strong, and sturdy people, democratic in their every fibre, keenly intelligent and practical to the very marrow,...capable of great fervour, feeling, and enthusiasm like all Indian peoples, but not emotional idealists, having in their thought and speech always a turn for strength; sense, accuracy, lucidity, and vigour; in learning and scholarship patient, industrious, careful, thorough and penetrating; in life simple, hardy and frugal; in their temperament courageous, pugnacious, full of spirit, yet with a tact in dealing with hard facts and circumventing obstacles, shrewd yet aggressive diplomatists, born politicians, born fighters. All this Mr. Tilak is with a singular completeness, and all on a large scale, adding to it all a lucidity of genius, a secret intensity, an inner strength of will, a single-mindedness in aim of quite extraordinary force."

Tilak, therefore, started very naturally his propaganda in his characteristic way in his own province. He was born in 1856-the year of the great mutiny. His father was a school inspector in Poona and Tilak received a good grounding in Sanscrit and Marathi from him. His father however died in 1872-and Tilak was largely left to himself: but he continued his studies and passed B. A. in 1875, with a first class in mathematics. In that year, there was an abortive attempt to overturn the British Government by a few fanatics under Wasudev Balwant Phadke,-the foolishness of which must have made a great impression on Tilak's mind. Tilak started his work under the inspiring influence of friends like Chiplonkar and Agarkar. Ranade was a great influence in those days, but while he was trying to rationalise the whole social movement of his time, Chiplonkar was for

nationalising it. Tilak was more attracted to Chiplonkar than Ranade. In 1882, Tilak and Agarkar championed the cause of the representative of the historic dynasty of Shivaji, were found guilty of having "thoughtlessly published defamatory articles" and were sentenced each to four months' imprisonment.

Tilak began as an educationalist and had a great share in the making of the New English School and the Fergusson College. He started two well-known and very widely-read papers, the *Kesari* (Marathi weekly) and the *Mahratta* (English weekly), through which he carried on his social and political propaganda. Now he began to develop his idea of quickening the national self-consciousness of the people by methods of propaganda suitable to them and putting a little of the spirit of self-help and manliness into them. Religion has been at all times a powerful force with the people; and Tilak knew it too well. Religious ceremonials of popular Hinduism constitute powerful media for influencing the popular mind. Tilak therefore launched first the Ganpati celebrations (1893) and then the Shivaji festival with a view to stimulate the religious and patriotic consciousness of the Hindu masses. Here, the Hindu young men, mostly from the schools and colleges learnt the secret of organized, disciplined action. "Lectures, processions, singing parties are the invariable accompaniments of the festival and they not only afford an outlet to the religious zeal of the people but help in fostering the national sentiment also, and creating an interest in the outstanding questions of the day." Thus the political revival of the masses began under the religious garb; and in 1895, Tilak inaugurated the Shivaji festival. This was national hero-worship. Shivaji was one of the greatest makers of modern Hindu India; and round his name rallied all the newly aroused national pride and enthusiasm of the Maharashtrian people. Fiery speeches were made and Tilak himself said that a higher morality

than that of the Indian Penal Code, in the usual ethical teachings of the East and the West, governs the life of nations; and Shivaji was fully justified in killing Afzal Khan, because it was a great unselfish act for national self-preservation. "God has not conferred on the Mlechha a grant of Hindustan inscribed on imperishable brass." Another speaker said: "Who dares to call that man a murderer who, when only nine years old, had received Divine inspiration not to bow down before a Mahomedan Emperor? Who dares to condemn Shivaji for disregarding a minor duty in the performance of a major one? Had Shivaji committed five or fifty crimes more terrible, I would have been equally ready to prostrate myself not once but one hundred times before the image of our lord Shivaji..... Every Hindu, every Mahratta must rejoice at this spectacle, for we too are all striving to regain our lost independence, and it is only by combination that we can throw off the yoke."

This whole campaign caused a lot of excitement: and simultaneously India experienced a visitation of famine and plague. Tilak began to organise help for the masses and asked them to be bold. "Will you, when the Queen desires that none should die, when the Governor declares that all should live, and the Secretary of State is prepared to go in for debt, if necessary,—will you kill yourself by timidity and starvation? If you have money to pay Government dues, pay them by all means. But if you have not, will you sell your things away only to avoid the supposed wrath of subordinate Government officers? Can you not be bold even when in the grip of death?" Appeals like this were interpreted by the official mind as a "no-rent" campaign. Famine was followed by plague: and the Government campaign to check its spread offended people's customs and prejudices. The *Kesari*—Tilak's paper—continued its campaign to put life into the people. The following verses were

put into the mouth of Shivaji: "I delivered my country by establishing 'Swaraj' and saving religion. I planted in the soil of Maharashtra virtues that may be likened to the Kalpavriksha (one of the five trees of Indra's Paradise that yields whatsoever may be desired), sublime policy based on strong foundations, valour in the battlefield like that of Karna, patriotism, genuine unselfishness, and unity, the best of all. Alas, alas, all I see now is the ruin of my country. Those forts of mine to build which I poured out money, to acquire which torrents of fiery blood streamed forth, from which I sallied forth to victory roaring like a lion—all those are crumbling away. What a desolation is this! Foreigners are dragging out Lakshmi (the goddess of Good Fortune) by the hands of persecution. Along with her, plenty has fled, and with plenty health.

"Say, where are those splendid ones who promptly shed their blood on the spot where my perspiration fell? People eat bread once in a day, and not even enough of that. They toil through hard times by tightening up their bellies. Oh people, how have you tolerated in the sacred places the carrying off to prison of those holy preceptors, those religious teachers of mine, those saintly Brahmans whom I protected—who, while they devoted themselves to religious practices in times of peace, exchanged the Darbha (sacrificial grass) in their hands for weapons, which they used manfully when occasion required. The cow, the foster-mother of babes, when their mother leaves them, the mainstay of the hard-worked peasants, the imparters of strength to my people, whom I worshipped as my mother and protected more than my life, is taken daily to the slaughter house and ruthlessly butchered by the unbelievers How can I bear this heart-rending spectacle? Have all our leaders become like helpless figures on the chess-board? What misfortune has overtaken the land?"

The result of all these events was an atmosphere of excitement and violence: and Tilak was convicted of sedition for having published the above verses and his speech at the Shivaji festival in connection with the killing of Afzal Khan.

4. *THE PARTITION OF BENGAL AND THE NEW SPIRIT.*

The scene again shifts from the Maharashtra to Bengal. Circumstances were there conspiring to give the agitation, started by Tilak in the nineties of the last century, a nation-wide character. The year 1905 constitutes one of the great landmarks in the history of Indian nationalism. Lord Curzon had brought with him the ideal of administrative efficiency and was trying to enforce it in the country. Lord Curzon may have meant well; but his measures and still more his words, were not calculated to check the growing tension of the popular mind in India. He was fond of exchanging swords with the nationalists, and made no secret of his contempt for the democratic aspiration of the intelligentsia. He had set before himself twelve administrative problems, the solution of which was bound to produce wide-spread alarm in the country. People felt that his ideal of centralization would virtually put the political clock back, and deliberately reverse the generous policy enunciated in the Queen's Proclamation and carried out to some extent by Viceroys like Lord Ripon. His attempt in 1899 to reduce the elected members of the Calcutta Corporation to half their original number and to vest its administration in a General Committee was thought to lay an axe at the root of Local Self-Government. This was followed by "the officialization of the Universities, the curtailment of high education, the abolition of open competitive tests for the Provincial Civil Services, the enactment of the Civil