

HOW WE CONQUERED INDIA

by **Sir J.R. SEELY**

With an introduction by
CHAUDHARY CHARAN SINGH

(Extracts from "Expansion of England" by Sir J.R. Seely,
First Edition 1883)

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Reprinted from "Expansion of England" written by Sir J.R. Seely (Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London, 1911 Edition).

As far as possible, original spellings used by Sir Seely have been retained. Foot notes have been provided as explanation for certain terms and names to enable the reader to better understand the context in which they are used.

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INTRODUCTION

It is said that the concept of nationality—the quality or spirit of cohesion which makes individuals a nation—grows out of one or more of several factors like a common language, religion, race etc. The lack of anyone of these as the unifying factor in our country led to its repeated subjugation by different foreign invaders for a continuous period of almost 2,500 years. Often these subjugations took place through migratory groups but all too often it was done by small groups who utilised to their advantage the internal divisions of our society. The causes of Indian defeat were broadly similar—from Alexander to Mahmood Ghazni, from Babar to Robert Clive. It took a vast reawakening in the country, inspired by Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders, to create a feeling of nationhood, of national consciousness and bring to an end centuries of alien rule in India.

In a series of lectures, delivered in 1883, the renowned British historian, Sir J. R. Seely, Litt. D., K.C.M.G. dealt exclusively with two topics, viz., how the British conquered India and how they had continued to rule it till the time of his lectures. The eighties were the height of the British imperial power. The historian, Seely, was describing the expansion of England into the mightiest empire known to history—so vast and mighty that the sun never set on it. It was but natural for the British to believe that they had achieved this through racial superiority or through greater intelligence and courage. Seely, however, dispassionately analyses

the real reasons behind the British subjugation of India, viz., the disintegration of the centralised Mogul authority, the emergence of feuding local chieftains and a population thoroughly alienated from its rulers through racial, linguistic and religious antagonisms. He clearly proves how a handful of Englishmen with the help of a large number of Indians played one Indian ruler against another to finally subjugate them all : as a matter of fact, during the long span of one hundred years, viz., 1757-1857—the English soldiers never constituted more than 16% of the Company's army. As Seely points out: "India can hardly be said to have been conquered at all by foreigners; she has rather conquered herself."

The Kisan Trust in reproducing these two chapters from Sir J.R. Seely's book titled "Expansion of England" (first edition 1883, Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London, 1911 Edition) hopes that the reader will better appreciate the causes that have made our country such an easy prey to foreign predators. In more ways than one the current situation in our country resembles those phases of our history when we most readily succumbed to outsiders. A central authority unwilling or unable to rule, disruptive and divisive forces gathering momentum from one end of the country to another, and alien forces readily fishing in troubled waters. Perhaps, after reading these pages our countrymen will be able to appreciate why even after 35 years of independence we have failed to create the India of our dreams—strong, united and prosperous. It is only through a better understanding of our own weaknesses that we can hope to erase them. It is with this in mind that the Kisan Trust brings to the readers this pamphlet.

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CHAPTER I

How We Conquered India

The question how we (the British) conquered India does not at all resemble the questions which I raised in the last course.¹ Our colonists in the new world² occupied, to be sure, a vast territory, but it was comparatively an empty territory. The difficulties they encountered arose not so much from the natives, as from the rivalry of other European nations.

By what degrees and from what causes we gained the advantage over these rivals, I partly discussed. It was a question to which the answer was not at once obvious, but at the same time not extremely difficult to find. On the other hand it is at first sight extremely perplexing to understand how we could conquer India. Here the population was dense, and its civilisation, though descending along a different stream of tradition, was as real and ancient as our own.

We have learnt from many instances in European history to think it almost impossible really to conquer an intelligent people wholly alien in language and religion from its invaders. The whole power of Spain could not in eight years conquer the Dutch provinces with their petty population. The Swiss could not be conquered in old time, nor the Greeks the other day.

1. See Introduction

2. The non European world opened up through European-explorers, merchants and missionaries from 15th century onwards.

Nay, at the very time when we made the first steps in the conquest of India, we showed ourselves wholly unable to reduce to obedience three millions of our own race in America, who had thrown off their allégience to the English Crown.³ What a singular contrast is here! Never did the English show so much languid incompetence as in the American War, so that it might have seemed evident that their age of greatness was over, and that the decline of England had begun. But precisely at this time they were appearing as irresistible conquerors in India, and showing a superiority which led them to fancy themselves a nation of heroes. How is the contradiction to be explained?

History is studied with so little seriousness, with so little desire or expectation of arriving at any solid result that the contradiction passes almost unremarked, or at-most gives occasion to a triumphant reflexion that after all there was life in us yet. And indeed it may seem that, however difficult of explanation the fact may be, there can be no doubt of it. Over and over again in India, at Plassey,⁴ at Assay, and on a hundred other battle-fields, our troops have been victorious against great odds, so that here at least it seems that we may indulge our national self-complacence without restraint and feel that at any rate in comprison with the Hindu⁵ races we really are terrible fellows!

But does this hypothesis really remove the difficulty? Suppose that one Englishman is really equal as a soldier to ten or twenty

3. American war of Independence, began with the skirmish at Lexington Massachusetts on April 19, 1775, and was virtually ended by the capitulation of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown, Varginia, on October 19, 1781. By this war, the British colonies along the Atlantic Seaboard definitely separated themselves from the mother country. Historically this is also known as the American Revolution.
4. The Battle of Plassey was fought in 1757, in which a small army led by Lord Robert Clive, defeated the vastly bigger force of Nawab of Bengal Siraju Daula, thereby starting the subjugation of India by the British.
5. The reader may note that the author at times uses the word 'Hindu' as a generic term for Indians in general.

Hindus, can we even then conceive the whole of India conquered by the English? There were not more than twelve millions of Englishmen at the time when the conquest began, and it was made in a period when England had other wars on her hands. Clive's career falls partly in the Seven Years' War of Europe, and the great annexations of Lord Wellesley were made in the midst of our war with Napoleon.

We are not a military state. We did not, in those times, profess to be able to put on foot at any moment a great expeditionary army. Accordingly in our European wars we usually confined ourselves to acting with our fleet, while for hostilities on land it was our practice to subsidise any ally we might have among the military states, at one time Austria, at another Prussia. How then in spite of all this weakness by land could we manage to conquer during this time the greater part of India, an enormous region of nearly a million square miles and inhabited by two hundred millions of people?

What a drain such a work must have made upon our military force, what a drain upon our treasury. And yet somehow the drain seems never to have been perceived. Our European wars involved us in a debt that we have never been able to pay. But our Indian wars have not swelled the national debt. The exertions we have to make there seem to have left no trace behind them.

WRONG CONCEPTION

It seems then that there must be something wrong in the conception which is current, that a number of soldiers went over from England to India and there by sheer superiority in valour and intelligence conquered the whole country. In the last great Mahratta war of 1818 we had, it appears, more than a hundred thousand men in the field. But what? That was the time of mortal exhaustion that succeeded the great Napoleonic War.

Is it possible that only three years after the battle of Waterloo⁶ we were at war again on a vast scale and had a much greater army in India than Lord Wellington had in Spain? Again at the present moment the army kept in foot in India amounts to two hundred thousand men, What! two hundred thousand English soldiers! And yet we are not a military State!

You see of course what the fact is that I point at. This Indian army, we all know, does not consist of English soldiers, but mainly of native troops. Out of 2,00,000 only 65,000, or less than a third, are English. And even this proportion has only been established since the mutiny,⁷ after which catastrophe the English troops were increased and the native troops diminished in number. Thus I find that at the time of the mutiny there were 45,000 European troops to 235,000 native troops in India, that is, less than a fifth. In 1808 again I find only 25,000 Englishmen to 130,000 natives, that is, somewhat less than a fifth. The same proportion obtained in 1773 at the time of the Regulating Act, when British India first took shape. At that date the Company's⁸ army consisted of 9000 Europeans and 45,000 natives.

6. The French military genius Napoleon Bonapart, was born at Ajaccio in Corsica on August 15, 1769 and died on May 5, 1821 was emperor of France from 1804—1814 and again for the hundred days in 1815. He was finally defeated by a combined force of Britain and her allies, led by Lord Wellington at Waterloo in 1815.
7. India's first war of independence of 1857, was referred by British historians as the "Indian Mutiny of 1857".
8. A company formed for the exploitation of trade with India and the Far East in the 17th & 18th centuries. Such companies were established by England, the United Provinces (Dutch), France, Denmark, Spain, Austria and Sweden. By far the greatest of these was the English East India Company. In September 1599, a group of London merchants formed an association for direct trade with what was then called the East Indies, in order to compete with the Dutch and break their monopoly of the lucrative spice trade. This company expanded its control over vast territories in India till it became virtually the colonial ruler of India. It was abolished after 1857 when the British Government took over direct rule of India.

Before that I find the proportion of Europeans even lower, about a seventh; and if we go back to the very beginning we find that from the first the Indian army was rather a native than a European force.

Thus Colonel Chesney opens his historical view of it in these words:

‘The first establishment of the Company’s Indian Army may be considered to date from the year 1748, when a small body of sepoy was raised at Madras after the example set by the French, for the defence of that settlement..... At the same time a small European force was raised, formed of such sailors as could be spared from the ships on the coast and of men smuggled on board the Company’s vessels in England by the crimps.

In the early battles of the Company by which its power was decisively established, at the siege of Arcot, at Plassey, at Buxar, there seem almost always to have been more sepoy than Europeans on the side of the Company. And let us observe further that we do not hear of the sepoy as fighting ill, or of the English as bearing the whole brunt of the conflict. No one who has remarked the childish eagerness with which historians indulge their national vanity, will be surprised to find that our English writers in describing these battles seem unable to discern the sepoy. Read Macaulay’s Essay on Clive; everywhere it is ‘the imperial people,’ the mighty children of the sea’, ‘none could resist Clive and his Englishmen.’

But if once it is admitted that the sepoy always outnumbered the English, and that they kept pace with the English in efficiency as soldiers, the whole theory which attributes our successes to an immeasurable natural superiority in valour falls to the ground. In those battles in which our troops were to the enemy as one to ten, it will appear that if we may say that one Englishman showed himself equal to ten natives, we may also say that one sepoy did the same. It follows that, though no doubt there was a difference, it was not so much a difference of race as a difference of discipline, of military science, and also no doubt in many cases a difference of leadership

Observe that Mill's summary explanation of the conquest of India says nothing of any natural superiority on the part of the English. 'The two important discoveries for conquering India were: First, the weakness of the native armies against European discipline; Secondly, the facility of imparting that discipline to natives in the European service'. He adds: 'Both discoveries were made by the French.'

CONQUERED HERSELF

And even if we should admit that the English fought better than the sepoys, and took more than their share in those achievements which both performed in common, it remains entirely incorrect to speak of the English nation as having conquered the nations of India. The nations of India have been conquered by an army of which on the average about a fifth part was English. But we not only exaggerate our own share in the achievement; we at the same time entirely misconceive and misdescribe the achievement itself. For from what race were the other four-fifths of the army drawn? From the natives of India themselves! *India can hardly be said to have been conquered at all by foreigners; she has rather conquered herself.*

If we were justified, which we are not, in personifying India as we personify France or England, we could not describe her as overwhelmed by a foreign enemy; we should rather have to say that she elected to put an end to anarchy by submitting to single Government, even though that Government was in the hands of foreigners.

But that description would be as false and misleading as the other, or as any expression which presupposes India to have been a conscious political whole. *The truth is that there was no India in the political, and scarcely in any other sense. The word was a geographical expression, and therefore India was easily conquered, just as Italy and Germany fell an easy prey to Napoleon, because there was no Italy and no Germany, and not even any strong Italian or German national feeling. Because there was no Germany,*

Napoleon was able to set one German state against another, so that in fighting with Austria or Prussia he had Bavaria and Wurttemberg for allies.

As Napoleon saw that this means of conquest lay ready to his hand in Central Europe, so the Frenchman Dupleix⁹ early perceived that this road to empire in India lay open to any European state that might have factories there. He saw a condition of chronic war between one Indian state and another, and he perceived that by interfering in their quarrels the foreigner might arrive to hold the balance between them. He acted upon this view, and accordingly the whole history of European Empire in India begins with the interference of the French in the war of succession in Hyderabad that broke out on the death of the great Nizam ul Mulk (1748).

The fundamental fact then is that India had no jealousy of the foreigner, because India had no sense whatever of national unity, because there was no India and therefore, properly speaking, no foreigner. So far, as I have pointed out, parallel examples may be found in Europe. But we must imagine a much greater degree of political deadness in India than in Germany eighty years ago, if we would understand the fact now under consideration, the fact namely that the English conquered India by means of a Sepoy army.

In Germany there was scarcely any German feeling, but there was a certain amount, though not a very great amount, of Prussian feeling, Austrian feeling, Bavarian feeling, Suabian feeling.¹⁰ Napoleon is able to set Bavaria against Austria or both

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9. Dupliex, Joseph Francois (1696-1763), was French colonial administrator as Governor General of the French establishment in India. He was Robert Clive's great rival and was born at Landrecies, France in December, 1696 and died in Paris on November 10, 1763. He was the first European to exploit the divisions between the Indian rulers in order to gain political and territorial influence in India.
10. Prussia, Bavaria, Wurttemberg and Suab were the powerful military states during Napoleon's era and are now-a-days parts of Austria, Germany and Switzerland.

against Prussia, but he does not attempt to set Bavaria or Austria or Prussia against itself. To speak more distinctly, he procures by treaties that the Elector of Bavaria shall furnish a contingent to the army which he leads against Austria; but he does not, simply by offering pay, raise an army of Germans and then use them in the conquest of Germany. This would be the exact parallel to what has been witnessed in India.

A parallel to the fact that India has been conquered by an army of which four-fifths were natives and only one-fifth English, would be found in Europe, if England had invaded France and then by offering good pay had raised an army of Frenchmen large enough to conquer the country. The very idea seems monstrous. What you exclaim, an army of Frenchmen quietly undertake to make war upon France! And yet, if you reflect, you will see that such a thing is abstractedly quite possible, and that it might have been witnessed if the past history of France had been different. We can imagine that a national feeling had never sprung up in France; this we can easily imagine, because we know that the twelfth century is full of wars between a king who reigned at Paris and another who reigned at Rouen.

CONFUSED IDEA

But let us imagine further that the different Governments established in different parts of France were mostly foreign Governments, that in fact the country had been conquered before and was still living under the yoke of foreign rulers. We can well understand that if in a country thus broken to the foreign yoke a disturbed state of affairs supervened, making mercenary war a lucrative profession, such a country might come to be full of professional soldiers equally ready to take service with any Government and against any Government, native or foreign.

Now the condition of India was such as this. The English did not introduce a foreign domination into it, for the foreign domination was there already. In fact we bring to the subject a fixed misconception. The homogeneous European community,

a definite territory possessed by a definite race, in one word, the Nation—State, though we assume it as if it were a matter of course, is in fact much more exceptional than we suppose, and yet it is upon the assumption of such a homogeneous community that all our ideas of patriotism and public virtue depend.

The idea of nationality seems in India to be thoroughly confused. The distinction of national and foreign seems to be lost. Not only has a tide of Mussulman invasion covered the country ever since the eleventh century, but even if we go back to the earliest times we still find a mixture of races, a domination race by race. That Aryan, Sanskrit-speaking race which, as the creators of Brahminism, have given to India whatever unity it can be said to have, appear themselves as invaders, and as invaders who have not succeeded in swallowing up and absorbing the older nationalities.

The older, not Indo-Germanic race, has in Europe almost disappeared, and at any rate has left no trace in our European languages, but in India the older stratum is everywhere visible. The spoken languages there are not mere corruptions of Sanskrit, but mixtures of Sanskrit with elder languages wholly different, and in the south not Sanskrit at all. Brahminism too, which at first sight seems universal, turn out on examination to be a mere vague eclecticism, which has given a show of unity to superstitions wholly unlike and unrelated to each other.

It follows that in India the fundamental postulate cannot be granted, upon which the whole political ethics of the West depend. The homogeneous community does exist there, out of which the State properly so-called arises. Indeed to satisfy ourselves of this it is not necessary to travel so far back into the past.

It is enough to notice that since the time of Mahmood of Ghazni¹¹ a steady stream of Mussulman invasion has poured

11. The author describes the manner in which the British subjugated India by exploiting the divisions and jealousies between the Indian rulers. Almost the same way was used by the Mughals and before them by the Muslim invaders and this process goes back far into history, even to the days of Alexander's invasion when he was able to defeat king Porus with the help of other Indian rulers.

into India. The majority of the Governments of India were Mussulman long before the arrival of the Mogul in the sixteenth century. From this time therefore in most of the Indian States the tie of nationality was broken. Government ceased to rest upon right; the State lost its right to appeal to patriotism.

In such a state of affairs what is called the conquest of India by the English can be explained without supposing the natives of India to be below other races, just as it does not force us to regard the English as superior to other races.

We regard it as the duty of a man to fight for his country against the foreigner. But what is a man's country? When we analyse the notion, we find it presupposes the man to have been bred up in a community which may be regarded as a great family, so that it is natural for him to think of the land itself as a mother. But if the community has not been at all of the nature of a family, but has been composed of two or three races hating each other, if not the country, but at most the village has been regarded as a home, then it is not the fault of the natives of it that they have no patriotism but village patriotism. It is one thing to receive a foreign yoke for the first time, and quite a different thing to exchange one foreign yoke for another.

NOT A CONQUEST

But, as I have pointed out, the surprising feature in the English conquest of India is not so much that it should have been made, as that it should have cost England no effort and no trouble. The English people have not paid taxes, the English Government has not opened loans, no conscription was ever introduced, nay no drain of men was ever perceived, and no difficulty was ever felt in carrying on other wars at the same time, because we were engaged in conquering a population equal to that of Europe.

This seems at first sight incredible, but I have already given the explanation of it. As to the finance of all these wars, it falls under the general principle which applies to all wars of conquest.

Conquest pays its own expenses. As Napoleon had never any financial difficulties, because he lived at the expense of those whom he vanquished in war, so the expense of India. The only difficulty then is to understand how the army could be created. And this difficulty too disappears, when we observe that four-fifths of this army was always composed of native troops.

If we fix our attention upon this all-important fact we shall be led, if I mistake not, to perceive that the expression 'conquest', as applied to the acquisition of sovereignty by the East India Company in India, is not merely loose but thoroughly misleading, and tempts us to class the event among events which it in no way resembles. I have indeed remarked more than once before that this expression, whenever it is used, requires far more definition than it commonly receives, and that it may bear several different meanings. But surely the word is only applicable at all when it refers to some action done to one state by another.

There is war between two states; the army of the one state invades the other and overturns the Government of it, or at least forces the Government to such humiliating terms that it is practically deprived of its independence; this is conquest in the proper sense. Now when we say that England has conquered India, we ought to mean that something of this sort has happened between England and India.

When Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire, there was war between the Macedonian State and the Persian, in which the latter was subjugated. When Caesar conquered Gaul, he acted in the name of the Roman Republic, holding an office conferred on him by the senate and commanding the army of the Roman state. But nothing of this sort happened in India.

The King of England did not declare war upon the Great Mogul or upon any Nawab or Rajah in India. The English State would perhaps have had no concern from first to last in the conquest of India but for this circumstance, that it engaged five times in war with France after the French settlements in India had become considerable, and that these wars, being partly waged in India, were in a certain degree mixed up with the wars bet-

ween the East India Company and the Native Powers of India.

If we wish clearly to understand the nature of the phenomenon, we ought to put this circumstance, which was accidental, one side. We shall then see that nothing like what is strictly called a conquest took place but that certain traders inhabiting certain seaport towns in India, were induced, almost forced, in the anarchy caused by the fall of the Mogul Empire, to give themselves a military character and employ troops, that by means of these troops they acquired territory and at last almost all the territory of India, and that these traders happened to be Englishmen, and to employ a certain, though not a large, proportion of English troops in their army.

Now this is not a foreign conquest, but rather an internal revolution. In any country when government breaks down and anarchy sets in, the general law is that a struggle follows between such organised powers as remain in the country, and that the most powerful of these sets up a Government. In France for instance after the fall of the House of Bourbon in 1792 a new Government was set up chiefly through the influence of the Municipality of Paris; this Government having fallen into discredit a few years later was superseded by a military Government wielded by Bonaparte.

FAVOURABLE SITUATION

Now India about 1750 was in a condition of anarchy caused by a decay in the Mogul Empire, which had begun at the death of Aurungzebe in 1707. The imperial authority having everywhere lost its force over so vast a territory, the general law began to operate. Everywhere the minor organised powers began to make themselves supreme. These powers, after the fashion of India, were most commonly mercenary bands of soldiers, commanded either by some provincial governor of the failing Empire, or by some adventurer who seized an opportunity of rising to the command of them, or lastly by some local power which had

existed before the establishment of the Mogul supermacy and had never completely yielded to it.

To give an example of each kind of power, the State of Hyderabad was founded by the satrap of the Great Mogul called the Nizam. The State of Mysore was founded by the Mussulman adventurer Hyder Ali, who rose from the ranks by mere military ability. The great Mahratta confederacy of chieftains headed by the Peshwa, a Brahminical not a Mussulman Power, represented the older India of the time before the Mogul. But all these powers alike subsisted by means of mercenary armies, they lived in a state of chronic war and mutual plunder such as, I suppose, has hardly been witnessed in Europe except perhaps in the dissolution of the Carolingian Empire.¹²

Such a state of affairs was peculiarly favourable to the rise of new powers. In other circumstances conquest presupposes that I may call a capital fund of power. No one can undertake it that does not already possess a recognised authority and an army. In those circumstances it was otherwise. Hyder Ali had nothing but his head and his right arm, and he became Sultan of Mysore. For mercenary armies were everywhere; they were at the service of every one who could pay them or win an influence over them; and any one who commanded a mercenary army was on a level with the greatest potentates of India, since in the dissolution of authority the only force left was military force.

Now among the different local powers in India, which in such peculiar circumstances might strike for empire with some chance of success, were certain merchants who had factories in the seaport towns. They were foreigners indeed, but, as I have pointed out, this could make no difference in India, where most Governments were foreign, where the Great Mogul himself was a foreigner. Much rhetoric has been spent on the miraculousness of the fortune of the East India Company.

12. Carolingian family that became a sovereign dynasty in Western Europe (8th to 10th centuries). The most famous among them was Emperor Charlemagne.

It is true that there had been no previous example of such a fortune, and that for this reason it would not have occurred to any one to predict such a fortune. But it was not miraculous in the sense of being hard to account for or having no visible cause. For the East India Company had really some capital to start with. It had a command of money, it had two or three fortresses the command of the sea, and it had the advantage of being a corporation, that is, it was not liable to be killed in battle or to die of a fever.

We are not much astonished when an individual rises from some private station into empire over a great territory, because this has happened often. And yet intrinsically it is much more astonishing. That the younger son of a poor nobleman in Corsica should control the greater part of Europe with despotic power, is intrinsically far more wonderful than that the East India Company should conquer India, for Bonaparte began without interest, without friends, without a penny in his pocket, and yet he not only gained his empire but lost it again in less than twenty years. In like manner the rise of Hyder Ali, or of Scindia, or of Holkar, was more wonderful and demanded more of the special favour of fortune than the rise of the East India Company.

COMPANY'S TALISMAN

You see that I wish you to place this event in a different class of events from that in which it is commonly placed. It is not the conquest of one state by another. It is not an event in which two states are concerned, at least directly; it is not an event belonging to the foreign department. It is an internal revolution in Indian society, and is to be compared to one of those sudden usurpations or coups d'état, by which a period of disturbance within a community is closed.

Let us imagine for a moment that the merchants who rose to power had not been foreign at all, the nature of the event is

not thereby altered. We may suppose that a number of Parsee merchants in Bombay, tired of the anarchy which disturbed their trade, had subscribed together to establish fortresses and raise troops, and then that they had the good fortune to employ able generals. In that case they too might have had their Plassey and their Buxar; they too might have extorted from the Great Mogul the Dewannee, or financial administration of a province, and so laid the foundations of an Empire, which might in time have extended over all India.

In that case we should have had substantially the same event, but it would have appeared clearly in its true light. We should have recognised it as having the nature of an internal revolution, as being the effect of the natural struggle which every community makes to put down the anarchy which is tearing it to pieces.

In such an event as that there would have been nothing very miraculous, and yet the rise of the East India Company was much less miraculous. For the Company was closely connected with Europe, and could call in the military science and discipline of Europe, which was evidently superior to that of India. That same Frenchman Dupleix, who laid down so clearly the theory of the conquest of India, perceived that the native armies could not for a moment stand before European troops, but he perceived also that the native of India was quite capable of receiving European discipline and learning to fight with European efficiency.

This then was the talisman which the Company possessed, and which enabled it not merely to hold its own among the Powers of India but to surpass them,—not some incommunicable physical or moral superiority as we love to imagine—but a superior discipline and military system, which could be communicated to the natives of India.

Beyond this they had another great advantage. They did not to be sure, represent the English State, but yet their connection with England was of infinite service to them. They had indeed to procure in the main for themselves the money and the men by

which India was conquered. But as a chartered Company which had the monopoly of English trade in India and China, they were an object of interest to the English Government and to Parliament. It several times happened that the war by which they acquired Indian territory wore the appearance before the English public of a war between England and France, and was therefore heartily supported by the nation.

This is a fact of fundamental importance, which has not often been sufficiently considered. The English conquest of India began not in some quarrel between the Company and a native power. It began in an alarming attempt made by the French to get control over the Deccan, and so among other things to destroy the English settlements at Madras and Bombay by interfering in the question of the Hyderabad succession. Our first military step in the East was to defend ourselves against the French attack. And from that time for nearly seventy years, that is, to the end of the war with Napoleon, our wars in India never ceased to wear more or less the appearance of defensive wars against France.

The effect of this was that, though they were not waged in the name or at the expense of the State, yet they seemed to a certain extent national wars, wars in which England was deeply concerned. To a considerable extent therefore the Company's troops were aided by Royal troops, and from 1785, when Lord Cornwallis went out as Governor-General, an English statesman of mark was sent out to preside over the political and military affairs.

MOGUL DECAY

The attacks that were made upon the Company in Parliament, the vote of censure moved against Lord Clive, the impeachment brought against Hastings, the successive ministerial schemes for regulating the Company's affairs, one of which in 1783 convulsed the whole political world of England, all these

interferences contributed to make our Indian wars seem national wars, and to identify the Company with the English nation. In this way the Company was practically backed by the credit and renown of a first-class European state, though at the same time that state contributed little to the wars by which the Company acquired territory.

The words 'wonderful', 'strange,' are often applied to great historical events, and there is no event to which they have been applied more freely than to our conquest of India. But an event may be wonderful or strange without being necessarily at all difficult to account for. The conquest of India is very wonderful in the sense that nothing similar to it had ever happened before, and that therefore nothing similar could be expected by those who for the first century and a half administered the affairs of the Company in India. No doubt Job Charnock, or Josiah Child, or Governor Pitt of Madras (grandfather of the great Lord Chatham) or perhaps Major Lawrence, never dreamed that we should one day suppress the authority alike of the Peshwa or the Mahrattas and of the Great Mogul himself. But the event was not wonderful in the sense that it is difficult to discover adequate causes by which it could have been produced.

If we begin by remarking that authority in India had fallen on the ground through the decay of the Mogul Empire, that it lay there waiting to be picked up by somebody, and that all over India in that period adventurers of one kind or another were founding Empires, it is really not surprising that a mercantile corporation which had money to pay a mercenary force, should be able to compete with other adventurers, not yet that it should outstrip all its competitors by bringing into the field English military science and generalship, especially when it was backed over and over again by the whole power and credit of England and directed by English statesmen.

The sum of what I have urged is that conquest of India is not in the ordinary sense a conquest at all, because it was not the act of a state and was not accomplished by the army and the money of a state. I have pointed this out in order to remove the perplexity

which must be caused by the statement that England conquered India, that is, a population as large as that of Europe and many thousand miles off, and yet that England is not a military state, though this enormous conquest was achieved by England without any exhausting effort and without any expense. The explanation of this contradiction is that England did not in the strict sense conquer India, but that certain Englishmen, who happened to reside in India at the time when the Mogul Empire fell, had a fortune like that of Hyder Ali or Runjeet Singh and rose to supreme power there.

But yet of course in its practical result the event has proved to be a conquest of India by England. For now that the process is complete and the East India Company has been swept away we see that Queen Victoria is Empress of India, and that a Secretary, who is a member of the English Cabinet and sits in the English Parliament, is responsible for the administration of India. England as a state did not make the acquisition, yet it has fallen to England.

This is merely an exemplification of the general principle, which, as I pointed out above, has governed all the settlements of Europeans outside Europe since the time of Columbus.¹³ However far they roamed, however strange and wonderful was their success, they were never able at the outset to shake-off their European citizenship. Cortez¹⁴ and Pizarro¹⁵ trampled under their feet the Governments they found in America. With scarcely an effort they made themselves supreme wherever they came. But though they could set at nought in Mexico the authority of

13. With the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus in 1492, the arrival of European settlers began, leading to the conquest of large parts of the world by European powers.
14. Hernan Cortes (1485-1547) Spanish conqueror of Mexico born at Medollin, Estremadura, in 1485.
15. Francisco Pizarro (1474-1541) discoverer and conqueror of Peru. Born at Trujillo, Spain.

Montezuma,¹⁶ they could not resist or dream of resisting the authority of Charles V,¹⁷ who was on the other side of the Atlantic.

The consequence was that whatever conquests they made by their own unassisted audacity and efforts were confiscated at once and as a matter of course by Spain. So with the English in India. After 1765 the East India Company held nominally a high office in the Empire of the Great Mogul. But it was asserted at once by the English Parliament that whatever territorial acquisition might be made by the Company, were under the control of Parliament. The Great Mogul's name was scarcely mentioned in the discussion, and the question seems never to have been raised whether he would consent to the administration of his provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa being thus conducted under the control of a foreign Government.

The Company made part of two states at once. It was a Company under a Charter from the King of England; it was a Dewan under the Great Mogul. But it swept away the Great Mogul, as Cortez swept away Montezuma; on the other hand it submitted all its boundless acquisitions meekly to the control of England, and at last, when a century was completed from the battle of Plassey, it suffered itself to be abolished and surrendered India to the English Government.¹⁸

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16. The great Emperor of Mexico whose glorious Aztec civilization was defeated and destroyed by Cortez in 1521.
 17. King Charles V of England had been at war with Spain and Portugal which were the first to establish themselves outside Europe and conquer vast territories but were finally defeated and overtaken by England after a rivalry spanning almost 200 years.
 18. In 1857, after the Indian Mutiny the company was abolished and British Government took over direct rule of all colonies including India.

CHAPTER II

How We Govern India

I have considered the nature of the relation in which India stands to England and have tried to explain how this relation could spring up without a miracle. We may now advance a step and form some opinion on the question whether that relation can endure without a miracle, as it was created without one, or whether we ought to regard the Government of India, by the English as a kind of political *tour de force*, a matter of astonishment while it lasts, but certain not to last very long.

For the great difficulty which the student has to contend with in studying Indian affairs, is the dazzling effect of events so strange, so remote, and on a scale so large, by which he is led to think that ordinary causation is not to be expected in India, and

in that region all is miraculous. The rhetorical tone ordinarily adopted in history favours this illusion; historians are fond of parading all the strange and marvelous, features of the Indian Empire, as if it were less their business to account for what happens than to make it seem more unaccountable than before.

Thus we come to think of our ascendancy in India as an exception to all ordinary rules, a standing miracle in politics, only to be explained by the heroic qualities of the English race and their natural genius for Government. So long as we take this view, it is of course impossible for us to form any opinion concerning the duration of it. What was a miracle at the beginning is likely to continue so to the end. If ordinary laws are suspended,

who shall say how long the suspension is likely to last ?

Now I have tried to look calmly at our Empire in its beginning. I have examined the conquest of India, and have found that it is indeed miraculous in the sense of being unlike our experience—the revolutions of Asiatic society would naturally be unlike those of Europe—but that it is not miraculous in the sense of being unaccountable, or even difficult to account for. I now inquire whether our government of India is miraculous in this sense.

It must certainly appear so, if we assume that India is simply a conquered country and the English its conquerors. Who does not know the extreme difficulty of repressing the disaffection of a conquered population ? Over and over again it has been found impossible, even where the superiority both in the number and efficiency of troops has been decidedly on the side of the conquerors. When the Spaniards failed in the Low Countries,¹ they were the best soldiers and Spain by far the greatest state in Christendom. For the instinct of nationality or of separate religion more than supplies the place of valour or of discipline, being diffused through the whole population and not confined to the fighting part of it.

Let us compare the parallel case of Italy. Italy corresponds in the map of Europe to India in that of Asia. It is a similar peninsula at the south of the Continent with a mighty mountain range above it and below this a great river flowing from west to east. It is still more similar in the circumstance that for many centuries it was a prey to foreign invaders. Not a long time ago Italy was subject to the ascendancy and partly to the actual rule of Austria. Its inhabitants were less warlike, its armies much less efficient than those of Austria, and Austria was close at hand. And yet, though fighting at so much disadvantage, Italy has made herself free.

1 . Low Countries—Countries on the north of Europe like Holland, vast area of which are actually below the sea level, hence referred to as low countries.

In the field she was generally defeated, but the feeling of nationality was so strong within and attracted so much sympathy without, that she has had her way, and the foreigner has left her to herself. Now in every point India is more advantageously situated with respect to England than Italy with respect to Austria. She has a population about eight times as great as that of England; she is at the other side of the globe; and then England does not profess to be a military state. Yet to all appearance she submits to the yoke; we do not hear of rebellions.

In conducting the government of India we meet with difficulties, but they are chiefly financial and economical. The particular difficulty which in Italy was too much for Austria we do not encounter; we do not feel the difficulty of repressing the disaffection of a conquered nationality. Is not this miraculous? Does it not seem as if all ordinary laws were suspended in this case, or as if we might assume that there are no bounds either to the submissiveness of the Hindu or to the genius for government of the English.

NATIONALITY NOTION

What I urged above may partly prepare you for the answer which I make to this question. In the question it is assumed, first, that India constitutes a nationality, secondly, that this nationality has been conquered by England; now both these assumptions are wholly unfounded.

First, the notion that India is a nationality rests upon that vulgar error which political science principally aims at eradicating. We in Europe, accustomed to see the map of Europe divided into countries each of which is assigned to a peculiar nationality, of which a special language is the badge, fall into a profound misconception. We assume that wherever, inside or outside of Europe, there is a country which has a name, there must be a nationality answering to it. At the same time we take no pains to conceive clearly or define precisely what we call a nationality.

We content ourselves with remarking that we in England should be most unwilling to be governed by the French, and that the French would be sorry to be governed by the Germans, and from these examples we draw the conclusion that the people of India must in like manner feel it a deep humiliation to be governed by the English.

Such notions spring from mere idleness and inattention. It does not need proving, it is sufficient merely to state, that it is not every population which constitutes a nationality. The English and the French are not mere populations; they are populations united in a very special way and by very special forces. Let us think of some of these uniting forces, and then ask whether they operate upon the populations of India.

The first is community of race, or rather the belief in a community of race. This, when it appears on a large scale, is identical with community of language. The English are those who speak English, the French those who speak French. Now do the inhabitants of India speak one language? The answer is; No more, but rather less, than the inhabitants of Europe speak one language! So much has been said by philologists about Sanskrit and its affinities with other languages, that it is necessary to remark that it is an obvious community of language, of which the test is intelligibility, and not some hidden affinity, that acts as a uniting force. Thus the Italians regarded the Austrians as foreigners because they could not understand German, without troubling themselves to consider that German as well as Italian is an Indo-European language.

There is affinity among several of the languages of India, as among those of Europe. The Hindi languages may be compared with the Roman languages of Europe, as being descended of the ancient language, but the mutual affinity of the Bengali, the Marathi, the Gujarati does not help to make those who speak them one nation. The Hindustani has sprung out of the Mussulman conquest, by a mixture of the Persian of the invaders with the Hindi languages of the natives. But in the south we find a linguistic discrepancy in India greater than any which

exists in Europe, for the great languages of the South, Tamil, Telugu, Canarese (Kannada), are not Indo-European at all, and they are spoken by populations far larger than those Finns and Magyars of Europe whose language is not Indo-European.

This fact is enough by itself to show that the name India ought not to be classed with such names as England or France, which correspond to nationalities, but rather with such as Europe, marking a group of nationalities which have chanced to obtain a common name owing to some physical separation.

Like Europe it is a mere geographic expression, but even so, it has been much less uniformly used than the name Europe. Europe at any rate has been used in much the same sense since the time of Herodotus²; but our present use of the word India is not perhaps very old. To us indeed it seems natural that the whole country which is marked off from Asia by the great barrier of the Himalaya and the Suleiman range should have a single name. But it has not always seemed so.

GEOGRAPHICAL NAME

The Greeks had but a very vague idea of this country. To them for a long time the word 'India' was for practical purposes what it was etymologically, the province of the Indus. When they say that Alexander invaded India, they refer to the Punjab. At a later time they obtained some information about the valley of the Ganges, but little or none about the Deccan. Meanwhile in India itself it did not seem so natural as it seems to us to give one name to the whole region. For, there is a very marked difference between the northern and southern parts of it.

The great Aryan community which spoke Sanskrit and invented Brahminism spread itself chiefly from the Punjab along

2 . Great author of a history of the Persian Wars. The precise dates of his birth and death are uncertain. Generally considered the first historian of the European world.

the great valley of the Ganges, but not at first far southward. Accordingly, the name Hindustan properly belongs to this Northern region. In the South or peninsula we find other races and non-Aryan languages, though Brahminism has extended itself there too. Even the Mogul Empire in its best time did not much penetrate into this region.

It appears then that India is not a political name, but only a geographical expression like Europe or Africa. It does not mark the territory of a nation and a language, but the territory of many nations and many languages. Here is the fundamental difference between India and such countries as Italy, in which the principle of nationality has asserted itself.

Both India and Italy were divided among a number of states and so were weak in resistance to the foreigner. But Italy, though divided by organisation, was one by nationality. The same language pervaded it, and out of this language had sprung a great literature, which was the common possession of the whole peninsula. India, as I have pointed out, is no more united by language than Europe is.

But nationality is compounded of several elements, of which a sense of kindred is only one. The sense of a common interest and the habit of forming a single political whole constitute another element. This too has been very weak, though perhaps it has not been altogether wanting in India. The country might seem almost too large for it, but the barrier which separates India from the rest of the world is so much more effective than any barrier between one part of India and another, that, in spite of all ethnical and local divisions, some vague conception of India as at least a possible whole has existed from a very ancient time.

In the shadowy traditionary history of the times before Mahmud of Ghazni it is vaguely related of this king and that king that he was lord of all India; the dominions of some historical princes in the first Mohammedan period, and finally the Mogul Empire, were approximately universal. But we must not exaggerate the greatness of the Mogul Empire, or imagine that it answers in India to the Roman Empire in Europe. Observe

how short its duration was. We cannot put the very commencement of it earlier than 1524, the date of the capture of Lahore by Baber, that is, in Henry VIII's reign. When Vasco da Gama landed in India it had not begun to exist, and its marked and rapid decline begins in 1707, that is in Queen Anne's reign.

Between these dates there is less than two centuries. But next observe that the Mogul Empire cannot be properly said to have existed from the moment when the Indian dominion of the Moguls became extensive. Now at the accession of Akbar, which was in 1559 or the year after that of Queen Elizabeth, this Empire consisted simply of the Punjab and the country round Delhi and Agra. It was till 1576 that Akbar conquered Bengal, and he conquered Sind and Gujarat between 1591 and 1594. His empire was now extensive, but if we consider 1594 instead of 1524 as the date of the commencement of the Mogul Empire, we reduce its duration to little more than a century.

NEVER UNITED

Next observe that even at this time it by no means includes all India. To imagine this is to confuse India with Hindustan. Akbar's dominion in 1595 was limited by the Narbada, and he had not yet set foot in the Deccan. He was Emperor of Hindustan, but by no means of India. In his later years he invaded the Deccan, and from this time the Mogul pretensions began to extend to the Southern half of India. But it cannot be said that anything like a conquest of the Deccan was made before the great expedition of Aurungzeb in 1683.

From this time we may, if we choose, speak of the Mogul Empire as including the Deccan, and therefore as uniting all India under one Government, though the subjection of the Deccan was chiefly nominal, for the Mahratta Power was already rising fast. Thus the duration of the Empire is reduced to a mere moment, for the Mogul Emperors purchased this extension of their dominion by the ruin of the Empire. Within

twenty-four years decay had become visible, and, as I take it, directly in consequence of this ambitious expedition. The Empire had always wanted a sufficient nucleus, and its powers were exhausted by this unwise attempt to extend it.

On the whole then it may be said that India has never really been united so as to form one state except under the English. And they cannot be said to have accomplished the work until the Governor-Generalship of Lord Dalhousie *thirty years ago*, when the Punjab, Oude and Nagpore were incorporated with the English Dominions.

Another leading element of nationality is a common religion. This element is certainly not altogether wanting in India. The Brahminical system does extend over the whole of India. Not of course that it is the only religion of India. There are not less than fifty million Muslims, that is, a far greater number than is to be found in the Turkish Empire. There is also a smaller number of Sikhs, who profess a religion which is a sort of fusion of Mohammedanism and Brahminism; there are a few Christians, and in Ceylon and Nepal there are Buddhists.

But Brahminism remains the creed of the enormous majority, and it has so much real vitality that it has more than once resisted formidable attacks. One of the most powerful of all proselytising creeds, Buddhism, sprang up in India itself; it spread far and wide; we have evidence that it flourished with vigour in India two centuries before Christ, and that it was still flourishing in the seventh century after Christ. Yet it has been conquered by Brahminism, and flourishes now almost in every part of Asia more than in the country which produced it.

After this victory Brahminism had to resist the assault of another powerful aggressive religion, before which Zoroastrianism had already fallen and even Christianity had in the East had to retreat some steps, Mohammedanism. Here again it held its own; Mussulman Governments overspread India, but they could not convert the people.

Now religion seems to me to be the strongest and most important of all the elements which go to constitute nationality;

and this element exists in India. When it is said that India is to be compared rather to Europe than to France or England, we may remember that Europe, considered as Christendom, has had and still has a certain unity, which would show itself plainly and quickly enough if Europe were threatened, as more than once it was threatened in the Middle Ages, by a barbarian and heathen enemy. It may seem then that in Brahminism India has a germ, out of which sooner or later an Indian nationality might spring. And perhaps it is so; but yet we are to observe that in that case the nationality ought to have developed itself long since.

For the Mussulman invasions, which have succeeded each other through so many centuries, have supplied precisely the pressure which was most likely to favour the development of the germ. Why did Brahminism content itself with holding its own against Islam, and not rouse and unite India against the invader? It never did so. Brahminical Powers have risen in India. A chieftain named Sivaji arose in the middle of the seventeenth century, and possessing himself of one or two hill-forts in the highlands behind Bombay, founded the Mahratta Power.

NO NATIONALITY

This was a truly Hiñdu organisation, and, as its power increased, it fell more and more under the control of the Brahmin caste. The decline of the Moghul Empire favoured its advance, so that in the middle of the eighteenth century the ramifications of the Mahratta confederacy covered almost the whole of India. It might appear that in this confederacy there lay the nucleus of an Indian nationality, that Brahminism was now about to do for the Hindus what has been done for so many other races by their religion. But nothing of the kind happened.

Brahminism did not pass into patriotism. Perhaps its facile comprehensiveness, making it in reality not a religion but only a loose compromise between several religions, has enfeebled it as a uniting principle. At any rate it appears that in the Mahratta

movement there never was anything elevated or patriotic, but that it continued from first to last to be an organisation of plunder.

There is then no Indian nationality, though there are some germs out of which we can conceive an Indian nationality developing itself. It is this fact, and not some enormous superiority on the part of the English race, that makes our Empire in India possible. If there could arise in India a nationality-movement similar to that which we witnessed in Italy, the English Power could not even make the resistance that was made in Italy by Austria, but must succumb at once. For what means can England have, which is not even a military state, of resisting the rebellion of two hundred and fifty millions of subjects ?

Do you say, as we conquered them before, we could conquer them again ? But I explained that we did not conquer them. I showed you that of the army which won our victories four-fifths consisted of native troops. That we were able to hire these native troops for service in India, was due to the fact that the feeling of nationality had no existence there. *Now if the feeling of a common nationality began to exist there only feebly; if, without inspiring any active desire to drive out the foreigner, it only created a notion that it was shameful to assist him in maintaining his dominion, from that day almost our Empire would cease to exist.*

For, of the army by which it is garrisoned, two-thirds consist of native soldiers. Imagine what an easy task the Italian patriots would have had before them, if the Austrian Government which they desired to expel, had depended not upon Austrian but upon Italian soldiers ! Let us suppose— not even that the native army mutinied — but simply that native army could not any longer be levied. In a moment the impossibility of holding India would become manifest to us. For, it is a condition of our Indian Empire that it should be held without any great effort. As it was acquired without much effort on the part of the English State, it must be retained in the same way. We are not prepared to bury millions upon millions or army upon army in defending our acquisition. The moment India began really to show herself

what we so idly imagine her to be, a conquered nation, that moment we should recognise perforce the impossibility of retaining her.

And thus the mystic halo of marvel and miracle which has gathered round this Empire disappears before a fixed scrutiny. It disappears when we perceive that, though we are foreign rulers in India, we are not conquerors resting on superior force, when we recognize that it is a mere European prejudice to assume that since we do not rule by the will of the people of India, we must needs rule against their will. The love of independence presupposes political consciousness. Where this is wanting, a foreign Government will be regarded passively, and such a Government may continue for a long time and prosper without exerting any extraordinary skill. Such a passive feeling towards Government becomes inveterate in a country that has been frequently conquered.

Governments most oppressive have often continued for centuries, and that though they had no means of resisting rebellion if it should arise, simply because it did not enter into the habits of the people to rebel, because they were accustomed to obedience. Read the history of the Russian Czars in the sixteenth century. Why did a great population submit to the furious caprices of Ivan the Terrible? The answer is plain. They had been trampled under foot for two centuries by the *Tartars*, and during that period they had acquired the habit of passive submission.

MOGUL EXAMPLE

Now ought we not to expect the population of India to be in a similar condition of feeling? Of liberty, of popular institutions, there exists scarcely a trace in the whole extent of Indian history or tradition. The Italjans had the Roman Republic behind them,

and it was by reading Livy³ to the people that Rienzi⁴ roused them to rebellion. No Indian demagogue could find anything similar to read to the people. And for seven hundred years before the English arrived, they had been governed not only by despots but by foreign despots.

It would be marvellous indeed if in such a country the feeling could have sprung up that Government exists for and depends on the people, if a habit of criticising Government, of meditating its overthrow, or of organising opposition against it, could have sprung up. Nations have, as it were, very stiff joints. They do not easily learn a new kind of movement; they do what their fathers did, even when they fancy themselves most original.

It has been pointed out that even the French Revolution strangely resembled some earlier chapters in the history of France. Certainly the Italian nationality-movement resembles earlier Italian movements that go back beyond the age of Dante⁵. Now by this rule we should expect to find the Indian population silently submitting to whatever Government had the possession of power, even though it were foreign, as our Government is, and even though it were savagely oppressive, which we think our Government is not.

3. Livy, (Titus Livius) (59BC-AD 17). Most famous of Roman Historians, born at Patavium (Padua), Italy. Livy extended his interests to the composition of philosophical dialogues, including dialogues that were historical in character. His great achievement lay in the application of his historical feelings and literary art to the writing of a full-dress history of Rome.

4. Probably refers to Rienzo Cola Di (1313-1354) a famous warrior/statesmen born in Rome in 1313 and died on October 8, 1354.

5. Dante (Durante Alighieri)—1265-1321—was the greatest poet of Italy and the author of the great Christian poem "The Divina Commedia or Divine Comedy". Dante's other famous works are "Vita Nuova" (New Life), "Donna Gentile", "The Monarchia", and "De Vulgari Eloquentia".

Our Government of India would be a miracle on two conditions. First, if the Hindus had been accustomed to be ruled only by their own countrymen, and were familiar with the idea of resisting authority. This is not the case of the Hindus, and accordingly they submit, as throughout history vast populations have been in the habit of submitting to Governments which they could easily overthrow, as the Chinese at the present day submit to a Tartar domination, as the Hindus themselves submitted to the Mogul domination before the English came.

Indeed, this example of the Moguls is well adapted to show that our ascendancy over the Hindus is no proof of any supernatural statesmanship in us. For, one cannot read the Mogul history without being struck with the very same fact which surprises us in the history of the English rule, viz., that the Moguls too conquered almost without apparent means. Baber, the founder of the Empire, did not come with a mighty nation at his back, or leaning on the organisation of some powerful state. He had inherited a small Tartar kingdom in Central Asia, but he had lost this by an invasion of Osbeks⁶. He wandered for a while as a homeless adventurer, and then got possession of another small kingdom in Afghanistan. Nothing could be slighter than this first germ of empire. This Tartar adventurer ruling Afghans in Kabul founded an Empire which in about seventy years extended over half India, and in a hundred years more extended nominally at least over the whole.

I do not say that the Mogul Empire was ever comparable for greatness or solidity to that which we have established, but like our own, even more than our own, it seems built up without hands. The Company had at least English money, English military science, and the immortality of a corporation. Baber and his successors had none of these resources. It is difficult to dis-

6. Fierce warrior tribe of Central Asia whose activities disrupted existing kingdoms in Central Asia, thus forcing Babar to move towards Kabul in Afghanistan from where he went on to create the Mogul dynasty in India.

cover any causes which favoured the growth of their Empire. All we can say is that Central Asia swarmed with a wandering population much inclined to the vocation of mercenary soldiers, which passed very readily for pay and plunder into the service of the ruler of Kabul.

Secondly, our rule would be wonderful if the two hundred million Hindus had the habit of thinking all together, like a single nation. If not, there is nothing wonderful in it. A mere mass of individuals, unconnected with each other by any common feelings or interests, is easily subjected, because they may be induced to act against each other. Now I have pointed out how weak and insufficient are the bonds which unite the Hindus. If you wish to see how this want of internal union has operated in favour of our rule, you have only to read the history of the great Mutiny.

It may have occurred to you when I said that a mutiny or even less than a mutiny on the part of our native troops would be instantly fatal to our Empire, that just such a mutiny actually happened in 1857, and yet that our Empire still flourishes. But you are to observe that I spoke of a mutiny caused by a nationalistic movement spreading among the people and at last gaining the army. The mutiny of 1857 was not of this kind. It began in the army and was regarded passively by the people; it was provoked by definite military grievances, and not by any disaffection caused by the feeling of nationality against our Government as foreign. But now let us ask; in what way was this mutiny, when once it had broken out, put down, I am afraid the only opinion that has ever obtained in England has been that it was crushed by the prodigious heroism of the English and their infinite superiority to the Hindus.

Let me read you the account which Col. Chesney gives of the matter in his 'Indian Polity'. After remarking that an intensely strong *esprit de corps* had sprung up in the Bengal Army—for observe that the Bombay and Madras armies were very slightly concerned in the mutiny—an *esprit de corps* which was purely military and actually opposed to the feeling of nationality, since

it welded together the Hindu and the Mussulman elements, (so that Col. Chesney remarks : In ill-discipline, bitterness of feeling against their masters, and confidence in their power to overthrow them, there was nothing to choose between Hindu or Mussulman') he goes on to point out by what counter-movement this movement was met.

'Fortunately the so-called Bengal Presidency was not garrisoned wholly by the regular army.' Four battalions of Gurkhas, inhabitants of the Nepalese Himalaya, who had been kept aloof from the rest of the army, and had not imbibed the class-feeling which animated that body, with one exception stood loyal; the conspicuous gallantry and devotedness to the British cause displayed by one of these regiments especially won the admiration of their English comrades. Two extra-regiments of the line, which had been recruited from the Punjab and its neighbourhood, also stood firm. But the great help came from the Punjab Irregular Force, as it was termed, a force however which was organised on quite as methodical and regular a footing, was quite as well-drilled and vastly better disciplined, than the regular army. This force consisted of six regiments of infantry and five of cavalry, to which may be added four regiments of Sikh local infantry, usually stationed in the Punjab.

These troops were directly under the orders of the Government of that province, and not subject to that centralised system of administration which had a share in undermining the discipline of the regular army. It was with these troops and the handful of Europeans quartered in the upper part of India that the rebellion was first met. Meanwhile the sympathies of the people of the Punjab were enlisted on behalf of their rulers. A lately conquered people, whose accustomed occupation had been superseded by the disbandment of their army, they entertained no good will to the Hindustani garrisons which occupied their country, and welcomed with alacrity the appeal to arms to them to join in the overthrow of their hereditary enemies. Any number of men that could be required was forthcoming and the levies thus raised were pushed down to the seat of war as fast as they

could be equipped and drilled. And on the reorganisation of the Bengal army these Punjab levies have formed a large component part of it'.

You see, the mutiny was in a great measure put down by turning the races of India against each other. So long as this can be done, and so long as the population have not formed the habit of criticising their Government, whatever it be, and of rebelling against it, the Government of India from England is possible, and there is nothing miraculous about it. But, as I said, if this state of things should alter, if by any process the population should be welded into a single nationality, if our relation to it should come to resemble even distantly the relation of Austria to Italy, then I do not say we ought to begin to fear for our dominion, I say we ought to cease at once to hope for it.

I do not imagine that the danger we have to apprehend is that of a popular insurrection. In some of the alarmist literature, for instance, in Mr. Elliot's book entitled, 'Concerning John's Indian Affairs', I find harrowing pictures of the misery of the poor ryot, and then the conclusion drawn as a matter of course that this misery must lead to an explosion of despair, by which we shall be expelled. Whether the descriptions are true this is not the place to inquire; but granting the truth of them for argument's sake I do not find in history that revolutions are caused in this way.

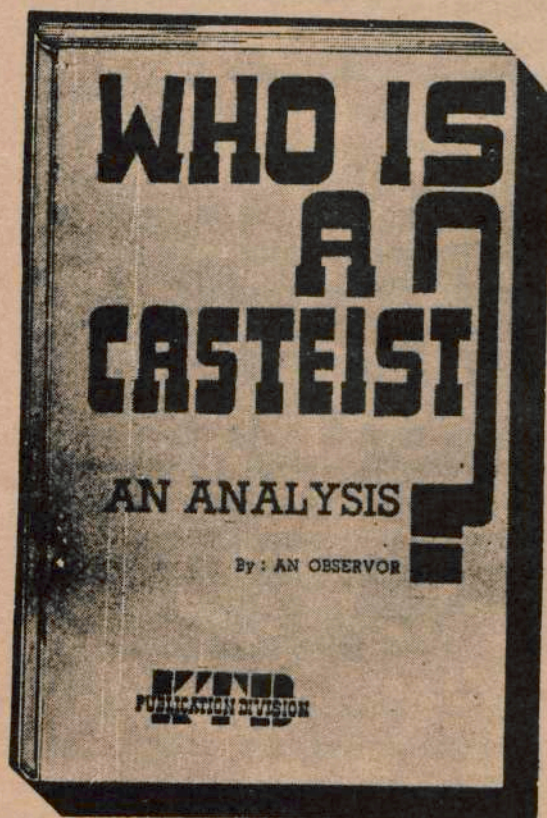
I find great populations cowering in abject misery for centuries together, but they do not rise in rebellion; no, if they cannot live they die, and if they can only just live, then they just live, their sensibilities dulled and their very wishes crushed out by want. A population that rebels is a population that is looking up, that has begun to hope and to feel its strength. But if such a rising took place, it would be put down by the native soldiery so long as they have not learned to feel themselves brothers to the Hindu and foreigners to the English-man that commands them. But on the other hand if this feeling ever does spring up, if India does begin to breathe as a single national whole—and our own rule is perhaps doing more than ever was done by former

Governments to make this possible—then no such explosion of despair, even if there were cause for it, would be needed. For, in that case the feeling would soon gain the native army, and on the native army ultimately we depend.

We could subdue the mutiny of 1857, formidable as it was, because it spread through only a part of the army, because the people did not actively sympathise with it, and because it was possible to find native Indian races who would fight on our side. But the moment a mutiny is but threatened, which shall be no mere mutiny, but the expression of a universal feeling of nationality, at that moment all hope is at an end, as all desire ought to be at an end, of preserving our Empire. For we are not really conquerors of India, and we cannot rule her as conquerors; if we undertook to do so, it is not necessary to inquire whether we could succeed, for we should assuredly be ruined financially by the mere attempt.

THE END

'Who Is A Casteist ? An Analysis'



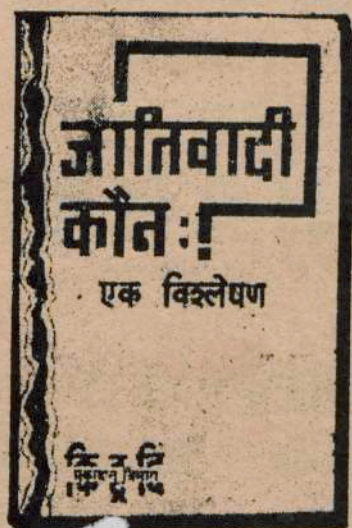
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