

PART II

CHAPTER IV

WHAT IS INDIA?

"With all its magnitude of extent and the mightiness of its empire it is unequal in its climate, its rapid succession of harvests and the equable temperament of its people. Notwithstanding its vast size, it is cultivated throughout. You cannot accomplish a stage nor indeed travel a *kos* without meeting with populous towns and flourishing villages, nor without being gladdened by the sight of sweet-waters, delightful verdure and enchanting downs. In the autumn and throughout the depth of winter the plains are green and the trees in foliage. During the rainy season which extends from the close of the sun's stay in Gemini to his entry into the sign of Virgo, the elasticity of the atmosphere is enough to transport the most dispirited and lend the vigour of youth to old age. Shall I praise the refulgence of its skies or the marvellous fertility of its soil? Shall I describe the constancy of its inhabitants or record their benevolence of mind? Shall I portray the beauty that charms the heart or sing of purity unstained? Shall I tell of heroic valour or weave romances of their vivacity of intellect and their lore? The inhabitants of this land are religious, affectionate, hospitable, genial and frank. They are fond of scientific pursuits, inclined to austerity of life, seekers after justice, contented, industrious, capable in affairs, loyal, truthful and constant. The true worth of this people shines most in the day of adversity and its soldiers know not retreat from the field. When the day is doubtful, they dismount from their steeds and resolutely put their lives to hazard, accounting the dishonor of flight more terrible than death, while some even disable their horses before entering the fight."

There is much truth in the very familiar allegation that India lacks history. China which repre-

¹ Abul Fazl-i-Allami, *The Ain I Akbari*, Vol. 3, pp. 7-8, written in the sixteenth century. Translated by Colonel H. S. Jarrett.

sents the only other surviving ancient civilization, has her historical records which go beyond at least a couple of millenniums before the coming of Christ. Greece had her Herodotus, Rome her Tacitus; but India's past, rich as it is with the boldest attempts of man to unfold the eternal mystery of creation, is not bequeathed to us in a strict historical system. Such an allegation may even amount to a clear accusation pointing to the proud people of India, an evident weakness in their past, if not inferiority when it is compared with other ancient civilizations.

While a true definition of history is yet to be formed, the point of weakness in India's past need not be disconcerting to any of her children. The past of a people, which makes human imagination stretch to an indefinite limit and then turn back dizzy, might go to transform its alleged weakness into a real sign of health and vigour. History is a matter of self-consciousness,—a state peculiarly different from self-assertion inasmuch as the former signifies contraction while the latter expansion. It involves an attitude of looking backward and filling the mind with the whole perspective. It is an exercise of memory with a corresponding stifling of imagination; a halt in the onward race of life. When does an individual desire his biography written? Not while he is full of youth for he cannot stop to think of his past life in the overflowing youth which is ever dreaming of better days to come, always stepping from the good to the better. Similarly, a people does not acquire

a historical mentality when in its youth, it sees no cause of fear and is pleasantly absorbed in transcendental dreams. Self-consciousness suggests the idea of non-self, a duality growing along with some kind of more or less distinct rivalry. Ancient India was hardly conscious of any rival and, therefore, hardly self-conscious. There was no question of mine or thine, for her sole problem was self-enlargement; absorption of all duality into one. Her action was based on the conception of greater and smaller and not on mine and thine; and even though there was a seeming duality in the former, it meant no rivalry, for the relation never involved any repulsive idea and always sought to draw them together. When the self-assertive Aryans entered India and met the civilized Dravidians there was no rivalry though there was bound to be some temporary misunderstanding accruing from the advent of the proud strangers. How wonderfully did the Aryans assimilate the Dravidians by incorporating the culture of the latter into their own. Self-consciousness arises when there is no feeling of one's self in others and history as it is understood today, is an abstraction of national self seeking to exaggerate the superficial differences of man. This national self-consciousness was not a virtue in ancient India, consequently there was no history.

But those were ancient days when civilization was not a problem forced upon man but a thing acquired by him. Compartmental division of humanity came to be recognized under the pressure of tribal sentiment hypostatized in Western Asia and

raised to a status of refinement by those who imbibed the ideas of civilization from there. It was in the contact of these people that the people of India began to think of history. Historians from outside came to study India the way they were used to, and with their historical imagination built up something which they called history of India. Their speculations on setting a definite chronology of certain events made them put the origin of her civilization at various dates in which they were hardly unanimous and none of which the people themselves have thought acceptable. Many of them put the date somewhere between 3000 and 2000 B.C. Sir John Marshall, the present Director General of Archaeology, would put the date before 3000 B.C. and compare India with the contemporary Babylonia and Egypt to the great advantage of the former. The great Hindu scholar B.G. Tilak however, gave a thorough explanation of his point in his book, *"Orion or Researches into the Antiquity of the Vedas,"* on strictly astronomical grounds. The earliest period of the Aryan civilization he puts somewhere between 6000 and 4000 B.C. and the period between 4000 and 2500 B.C., which he calls the Orion period, was according to him "the most important in the history of Aryan Civilization." This is rather going beyond the other ancient civilizations whose unsurpassing antiquity is zealously defended by Western historians for obvious reasons. But when the native opinion on a country's history, based as it is on significant dates, is set at naught,

it is simply bewildering to the natives who would only wonder if their inheritance is more intelligible to others than to themselves.

Foreign scholars write India's history and give the meaning of her past,—a sort of patent designed to meet the curiosity of the world. Nevertheless, India remains mysterious and reveals only a jumble of contradictions to foreigners as they come to study her things and ideas. They hardly try to think that it is not an Englishman studying German or French culture, or a Bulgarian studying Russian history, or a Japanese trying to understand the Tibetans; it is the West coming to understand the East. In spite of the common racial inheritance of the Aryan Hindu and the Western people, the length of the period which marks their separation and the difference of geographical and climatic conditions have wrought a most profound change, so as to make two distinct types of humanity. Nature's partiality is pronounced in the different regions of the earth, but is quite justified, to her honest desire to preserve a most wonderful variety in creation. The two branches of the Aryans with their common original inheritance, separated to build up two distinct civilizations in two distant lands. One of the most important factors of a civilization is its language,—an outcome of a people's soul desiring to express itself. A civilization without a distinct language of its own is a shadow whose hidden mimicry tends to destroy the signs of life. The language of a civilization contains concepts every one of which has a history peculiar to itself and the civilization

is simply these concepts concretized. How can one, therefore, adequately interpret a civilization by means of concepts born of a different civilization? It may be possible, to a certain extent, only when the concepts of the foreign language are divested of their native contents and explained in full details to carry the ideas of the land. The foreign historians cannot adequately do so without being naturalised into the state of the land, and as they always choose to remain foreign their interpretation never does justice to the civilization they do not inherit. In writing the history of India, Western scholars hardly considered this important point and have thus given a misleading picture of her people. They would neither listen to the native interpretation of things Indian nor would they assimilate the attitude necessary to understand their meaning.

In this respect, the Oriental scholars, however, stand in a good contrast. They have never been, until recently, so rash in their judgment of things Western inasmuch as they recognized the necessity of a different angle of vision to grasp the meaning of things which seem so peculiar to them. They are not like that honourable member of the British Parliament of whom Mathew Arnold said that after his return from the United States, he spoke very favourably of the agricultural and industrial developments of the country but advised that the country needed a king and one of the British princes be sent there to rule over the people. If there are some scholars in the Orient now who are inclined to criticise the West,

it is because they are tired of the ignorant criticism against them, and lest the West be too cocksure of its greatness they adopt Western method in their reply. But the scholars of China do not treat India in the Western method just as Indian scholars do not like to see the so-called weaknesses of China in the manner of the West. India is not so much a mystery to China as she is to the West, although the West has been speaking a good deal about India while China has kept studied silence.

At all events, the same reason as caused India's lack of historical consciousness would account for her lack of unity in the Western sense of the term. If Sir John Strachey would think, "that the first and most essential fact that could be learned about India was that there was no such country," it was because he could not understand any other kind of unity than what in the West is recognized by its organization system. To him a country unorganized would be unreal,—no entity without the mechanical homogeneity of ruthless organization. The same comment was made against the Chinese that they were no better than "a sheet of loose sand." His idea of organization is as peculiarly Western as the idea of nationalism. A population of 320,000,000 "practising nine great religions and speaking 130 different dialects belonging to six distinct families of speech," may cause a lot of trouble to a statistician to understand how they could make a country like India, but India would hardly be so unintelligible to those who have learned to distinguish unity from unifor-

mity. The modern ideas of naturalization, assimilation and absorption are purely political and quite foreign to the tradition of India. She never liked the idea of attaining a unity which many political countries are having in the various parts of the world. That "White man's burden policy,"—that "manifest destiny" which is working among the native Australians, Samoans, American Indians, Hawaiians and many other peoples, has never been a part of Indo-Aryan civilization. The Aryans entered India in search of a suitable place to live in and when they found it in the fertile valleys of the Indus and the Ganges, they became settled. They fought merely in defense of their life and property against the aborigines who did not like these foreign intruders to settle in their land and used to make frequent incursions in protest. But the land was large enough for all and slowly they began to get used to one another. The Aryan civilization did not interfere with the life of the aborigines. But while the Aryans were advancing in their civilization many of the aborigines came in contact with it and carried their impressions to their respective groups. They introduced to their own groups, some of the ideas of the Aryan civilization which suited their tastes and tendencies. It was just a natural process through which the primitive tribes were acquiring the Aryan ways and ideas of life. It was their own interpretation, their own acquirement. So they still retain their distinct existence in most of their peculiar ways of life while slowly introducing things and ideas of the

Aryans. This process of the Indian culture and civilization permeating the life of the aboriginal tribes is slow indeed but not destructive. Here is the difference between the East and the West. Many a thousand years the civilized Indo-Aryans have been living in the same country with these primitive people who are scattered in various tribes all over India, and yet never did they use the Western method of assimilation, never did they force their ways and ideas upon minds that do not understand them. "If there are some disadvantages for lack of racial standard-uniformity, yet there is every reason to feel proud for the present generation that their ancestors out of humanity of impulse and generosity of heart let live the helpless aboriginal tribes and not butcher them as a sport. The very existence of the Veddas, Pariyas, Santals, Chandalas, is a living glorious monument to Indo-Aryan cultural refinement."² Look how it works the other way,—not even a few centuries that the West is in Australia and America and the native Australians are now a dying race, the American Indians are fast decreasing in their few reservations. And the Hawaiians! Those "Polynésians of physical beauty and subtropical langour, bathed, fished, plucked the trees of fruits, worked the soil desultorily for a few humble vegetables, sang, danced, fought occasionally and were happy." The West from America came in and "they were Christianised and clothed by the missionary, taught

² Chandra Chakrabarty, *A Study in Hindu Social Policy*, p. 221.

to drink alcoholic liquor by the trader, and infected with syphilis and tuberculosis by civilization. They are now civilized and dying out. There were 130,000 of them in 1832, and 23,000 in 1920."²

But India is different. Could not the Aryan Hindus during those long periods of their full political sovereignty force their civilization upon these scattered tribes? That would have been mighty easy for any one of the great Hindu emperors such as Chandragupta, Asoka and Vikramaditya. Yet they still live their tribal life, speak their own dialect and profess their own crude religion. India could not choose that method to assimilate her various racial types into one rigid whole. Her civilization sought to comprehend all of them, supplying under the same ideal, varying requisites to help the different levels of humanity rise progressively from the cruder to the more and more refined state of life. This explains what Lord Ronaldshay says: "In the peoples of India is to be found an ethnologic pageant epitomising the gradual growth of civilization through centuries of time. At one end of the scale are men of the finest culture who have reached dizzy heights in the realms of speculative thought; at the other, men whose religion has not yet outgrown the stage of the crudest superstition."³ Nevertheless, it does not mean there is no unity that would give the land its title to be called India. The whole country is called by its people Bharata or Bharatbarsha, the name originating from the an-

² Nathaniel Peffer, *The White Man's Dilemma*, p. 220.

³ *India, A Bird's eye View*, p. 7.

cient people called the Bharatas. India is not the name by which the country is known to its people; it is a foreign invention from the term "Hindu",² and to those who do not know any of the foreign languages, 'India' has no meaning. How was this name, Bharatbarsha applied to the land extending from the Himalayas to cape Comorin, (Sanskrit, Kumārīka) from Gandhara (Afghanistan) to Manipura, if there was no sense of unity among the people? Bharatbarsha presupposes a sense of unity in spite of her outward diversities of life and those who indulge in a facile generalization against the fundamental unity of the country, betray their inability to penetrate through the outer surface of life. If India means what they see on her surface, she would have long been wiped out of existence, and would now remain as a mere matter of archeological curiosity.

Wherein lies then the source of India's unity? Evidently it is in the spirit of the land. This spirit is so peculiarly Indian, so indefinable and yet so pervasive that one would feel its influence in every phase of Indian life. India knows not when it arose nor is she anxious to know, but she knows that it is there. Her art, philosophy, literature and science are so beautifully permeated by it that their coordination has always been a simple process. The different factors of Indian civilization were never in conflict with one another,—her science was never fundamentally opposed to her religion,

² The term Hindu was first applied to those Aryans who settled in the valley of the Sindhu (Indus).

nor was her religion an obstacle to scientific and philosophical inquiries. Indeed, in the realm of thought nowhere else in the world are people given such complete freedom. "It (Hinduism) lends itself to the most divergent schools of thought, sometimes verging on pure theism, and sometimes drifting into absolute atheism, but more often resolving themselves into universal pantheism. In all ages many of the finest minds have been absorbed in the pursuit of some nobler solution of the problem of existence and some more rational satisfaction for the spiritual needs of humanity than a gross idol-worship admittedly only fit for the ignorant masses. The human intellect has indeed seldom soared higher or displayed deeper metaphysical subtlety than in the great systems of philosophy in which many conservative Hindus still seek a peaceful refuge from the restlessness and materialism of the modern world." How marvellously has it stooped down to the lowest form of animal passion and connected it with the highest attainments of life! It dissolves all artificial frontiers of creation and instead of disgracing God by recognizing any special creation, links its infinite levels into one harmonious whole. It reveals the same microcosmic mystery in every form of being. Indian conception of evolution is a gradual microcosmic unfoldment recognizing the incarnation of God even in fish and animal forms. The outward diversities of life do not prevent the Indian from acknowledging his

* Sir Valentine Chirol, *India*, p. 13.

relation with all. He is, therefore, not disturbed by his neighbours being different. He knows that there is difference in caste, creed and colour but if there is anybody who does not tolerate this difference, he is a stranger to the land, an impossible child of India.

How it has come to pass may be gathered from some important characteristics about India. The great poet Dwijendralal Roy sang of her as "a land of dream where memory wraps the plain." The great German idealist, Hegel called her a land of "imaginative aspiration," "a fairy region," "an enchanted world." Indeed, looked at with a mind free from mean prejudices and material hunger, India strikes the very depth of human imagination and evokes expressions with no taint of exaggeration. Where is another country that is naturally so well protected! The mighty Himalaya in the north protects her from the extreme rigour of Siberian cold and the vast ocean in the South, keeps her cool against the heat of the tropical sun. Her sacred rivers bear a history of her abundance of harvests both in the material and mental plain. Her Ganges and Jumna are the perennial and inexhaustible source of an inspiration that keeps her teeming millions ever devoted to the lofty ideal of the ancient sages. Nor is this the only reason that these two rivers are held so sacred by all people who save their little money even at the risk of starvation, to come just at least once in their life to sanctify their body with the sacred water. It is remarkable that even in the big cities on the banks of the Ganges,

including Calcutta, the second largest city in the British empire, where there is no want of the display of modernism, people including the highly rich and the cultured, despite the municipal arrangement of an adequate supply of refined water, choose to take their daily bath in the Ganges be it at any distance from their residence. This has unfortunately caused many unkind remarks from foreign visitors, but let me answer to their hasty judgment by quoting F. C. Harrison, D. Sc., F. R. S. C., Principal and Professor of Bacteriology, Macdonald College, Mc Gill University, Que., Canada who writes in his illuminating essay on *'Microorganisms in Water.'*

"A peculiar fact, which has never been satisfactorily explained, is the quick death (in three to five hours) of the cholera vibrio in the waters of the Ganges and Jumna. When one remembers that these rivers are grossly contaminated by sewage, by numerous corpses of natives (often dead of cholera), and by the bathing of thousands of natives, it seems remarkable that the belief of the Hindoos, the water of these rivers is pure and cannot be defiled, and they can safely drink it and bathe in it, should be confirmed by means of modern bacteriological research. It is also a curious fact that the bactericidal power of Jumna water is lost when it is boiled; and that the cholera vibrio propagates at once, if placed in water taken from wells in the vicinity of the rivers."

This mysterious power naturally evokes in the people a strong religious feeling towards the rivers. Where are the people living long in India, and yet

not inspired by the sight which these rivers display? Nature indeed is grand everywhere, but India reacts to this grandeur in a deep spirit of wonder and admiration. Wherever this grandeur is concentrated so as to strike the human heart with the sublime idea of spirituality, the people have made it distinctly sacred by introducing some god or goddess as the presiding deity of the locality. The rich and the sceptics are attracted here by its sanitary quality, the poets and philosophers by the majesty of Nature, and the pious by the sacred temple. They come from all over the country, meet together and then return to their distant homes not without sharing that common spirit of India. There are hundreds of holy places like this, nay thousands of them scattered throughout the country and the people would cheerfully undergo any kind of privation to go on pilgrimage to its various parts. That is how the people of a certain locality, though handicapped by pecuniary difficulties to go abroad and see India, happen to meet their distant countrymen at the holy shrine close to their home. If any foreigner wants to see India without the cost of a long journey let him visit any of the important holy places like Gaya, Benares, Prayag (Allahabad), Hardwar, Kurukshetra, Dwaraka, Rameswar, Shri-Kshetra (Puri) Chandranath, Kamakhya, and so forth.

Take again the climate,—India enjoys six consecutive seasons a year, e.g., summer, rain, autumn, pre-winter (*Hemanta*), winter, and spring. She has the extreme heat of Madras and Bengal where

the temperature hardly falls below 52° F. in the coldest season and the perpetual snow of the Himalayas; the wettest climate of Cherapungi in Assam, where the annual rainfall is something like 450 inches and the driest climate of Jhatput in Beluchistan, where the average annual downpour is 3 inches. But between the extremes she has a wonderful variety of climate, maintaining all the seasons at the same time in some parts or other. This causes annual migration of the rich people to the various parts of the land keeping them in touch with the different situations existing there. The variation of climate lends itself to the different degrees of skin pigmentation from the purest white and rosy complexion in the North to the darkest type in the South. Of course, much of this difference in complexion has its cause in blood-fusion of the Aryans with the non-Aryans, but fortunately, the people of India unlike the Western people, are not afflicted with any colour-phobia.

Education in Ancient India was a great unifying factor. The countless *pathashalas* under the care of disinterested *Gurus* (teachers) were used to provide primary and secondary education for the poor and rich alike, inasmuch as the students were not to pay any fees but to study and work under the supervision of the teacher who admitted them as members of his own family. Here only merit counted and even the son of a king had to do the same menial work as was assigned to the rest.

Like the mediæval University of Bologna in Italy, India had a few large universities as those of

Taxila, Nalanda, Vikramsila, Udantipuri and Madura. People from all parts of India even outside India used to come here and receive higher education. They were the real centres of learning which kept the ideal of the land always alive in the heart of the people. But they had to vanish after the coming of the foreigners who took possession of the land and controlled its educational policy. Under a different educational system the people were not quite enthusiastic about their education as the study of the vernacular was receiving less and less attention while the study of English began to be emphasised. The people in fact, were much alarmed when the Macaulay policy of Indian education was revealed as intended to manufacture clerks in the interest of the British Government in India. That Macaulay's policy has attained considerable success is evident as we find that the graduates from Indian schools and colleges come out with a real obsession of securing clerkship. Fortunately, however, this clerkship could not absorb the thousands of graduates who come out every year and run around to become clerks,—a practical refutation of the system itself; otherwise all the so-called educated youths would have been lost to the cause of the country. At any rate, Indian people hardly need to be so pessimistic because after nearly two centuries of British administration they have only 13 per cent literate male population and 3 per cent female. Literacy and education do not always mean the same and I have seen many literate people in the West who are far less educated than the average illiterate

Indian. This large percentage of illiteracy may be made a convenient point against the British rule in India, but it seems to have another aspect on the side of the Indians. The illiterate Indians are educated enough to guard ever so religiously the ideal for which India stands and no amount of college sophistry in favour of new-fangled ideas can dissipate their attachment for things Indian. It is the illiterate parents who resolutely stick to their village home and preserve the village tradition, while their literate children with that smattering of what the foreigners call 'Babu English' seem to feel too big to allow their families live in the village as soon as they can secure the proud position of a merchant's clerk. The illiterate people may be said to be grovelling in superstition, but superstition is a matter of definition and no person in the world is absolutely free from it. In fact the superstition of these millions of unsophisticated villagers are far less awkward than the deliberate prejudices of many a learned fool. Their superstition may be scoffed at by insolent literates but it is comparatively innocent and will hardly persist under a proper system of education.

But just what do I mean; that the illiterate Indian masses are not quite so uneducated? Education is more or less a conservative force inasmuch as it takes the dough from the old store-house, kneads it again and again and then bakes it toothsome for the intellectual sustenance of the existing generation. This education is not confined to the school room or in the power of reading and

writing. The mind of the Indian is always alert and peculiarly introspective. His joint family system, his village organization, the long traditions of his caste and home, continually feed his introspective mind with things and thoughts which constitute by themselves an elaborate course of studies acquired almost in the natural order of things. The scholars of the Shastras (Kathakas) travel around the country and interpret the glorious heritage of the people. The travelling theatres and many other similar organizations are popular everywhere and are the most efficient means of impressing upon the mind of the people, the ancient ideal of the country. Illiteracy, however, is unfortunate and much to be deplored; but under the existing circumstances, it is not without compensation and India's inevitable illiteracy goes even with the world-wide reputation of Shivaji and Ramkrishna Paramahansa.

These and many other powerful under-currents of unity are still saving India from the cold fate of Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt, Greece and Rome. On the surface her diversity appears so prominent, and she is not against it, for Nature which is the art of God, is in India so congenial to the feeling of art which is the nature of man, that all who have come to live here are slowly drawn to the inward grandeur of things leaving the surface as different now as it was long long ago. The fundamental unity of India is not a problem to the people whose ideal of life has always been to seek unity in diversity and not to force a uniformity to rob the creation of its beauty. It is the ideal of self-adjustment rather

than mechanical arrangement that has made India so tolerant, nay proud of her infinite variety. India is not a political fact but an undying spirituality.

Foreigners, politically inclined by nature, are sure to find it difficult to understand India whose life-object has ever been to realize the essential unity of the entire creation. The adherents of Hobbes, Bacon, Darwin and Nietzsche whose only philosophy was an inordinate exaggeration of struggle in Nature, are expected to look askant at the people who live to seek unity with and befriend even the non-human world. Where the spirit is the same external difference simply adds to the beauty of life just as the beauty of music is enhanced with the increase of different notes set in harmony. That is why the people of India do not feel shy to look different from one another, in fact they want to be so, for they abhor uniformity. Henry David Thoreau did not exaggerate the mentality of the West when he said, "The head of the monkeys at Paris puts on a traveller's cap and all the monkeys in Europe and America do the same." This is not possible in India. When the Indian people go to Europe or America, outwardly they try to look like the people of the land, for they know that if they retain their Indian appearance in dress and manners they may be hooted by the mob. But when the foreigners come to India, the natives want to see them represent the ways of their country and are greatly surprised if they take up the ways of the natives. A Madrassese or a Marathee or a Rajput or a Punjabee may be easily recognized by his dress, manners and conversation

in a crowd of Bengalees, but their common past bearing the ideal of India at once reveals an inner unity in their philosophy of life. They recognize the external difference as due to the difference in natural conditions and even though the Bengalees, Beharees and Punjabees use a very large number of common words, they have made distinct languages of their own, distinct in accent, emphasis and even in temperament. Even then, each of her distinct languages excepting those used by the scattered aborigines, is the language of a fairly large population, e.g., Bengalee is the language of more than fifty millions of people while Hindusthani may be profitably used by anybody to make himself intelligible almost all over India and it is used as vernacular by about ninety-nine millions, or as Lord Ronaldshay says that it is "widely spoken in five different provinces in British India, as well as in two large groups of native States." But beneath these languages of the mind there is the common language of the heart which expresses itself in the same way, all over India. The people of Assam look at Nature with the same mystical attitude as the people of Guzrat and even the Indian scientist uses his genius to scientifically justify the attitude. This mystical spirit has developed certain traits which seem to be common all over India. Some of these traits may be roughly stated as the following:

1. To admire and not compare.
2. To emulate and not compete.
3. To adjust and not enslave.
4. To assimilate and not destroy.

5. To give and not lend.
6. To lay emphasis on duties and not on rights.
7. To love not to marry but marry to love.
8. The sense of the identity of husband and wife and not equality.
9. Spirit and not matter.
10. Love and not lust.
11. Harmony and not struggle.
12. Synthesis and not simply analysis.
13. Education and not sophistry or mere information.
14. Internal and not external.
15. Morality and not sociality or formality.
16. Decrease of desires and not increase.
17. Self-control and not self-indulgence.
18. Realization and not submission.
19. Cleanliness and not luxury.
20. Simplicity and not ostentation.
21. Happiness and not enjoyment.
22. Courage and not cruelty.
23. Liberty and not license.
24. Practising and not preaching.
25. Deserving and not begging.
26. Unity and not uniformity.

There are, of course, many traits common to all civilized people, such as honesty, truthfulness etc; and the above list is not the sole property of India. But the peculiarity of India lies in her emphasis on these traits,—a phenomenon which distinguishes her from other countries. Even the most illiterate people know why they should live such a life and

those who consciously try to live this way are not quite uneducated.

In living such a life, India has sometimes in some cases gone to the extreme,—to disprove the popular conception that there is an indelible line of demarcation between the real and the ideal. She maintains a tradition in which there are abundant examples of her bold attempt to translate the lofty ideal in actual life; examples that testify her uncompromising youthfulness to recognize no hypocrisy or inconsistency between practice and profession. Such rigid consistency often appears to be ridiculous, and an unthinking mind makes it a convenient excuse to sling mud at her face and be satisfied. India is quite familiar with all kinds of criticism against her.

The world has heard of India's great civilization, but when the people from distant lands come to visit India and see her countless people going around bare-footed, half-clothed (from their view-point) eating with the fingers, squatting on the floor and many other things which to them seem so fantastic, they begin to wonder how such people could be called civilized. The manners and customs of the natives appear to be so quaint and perplexing that they leave the country with the idea that there is hardly any civilization beneath that brown skin. The fact is that the foreigners have not learnt to think of anything other than trouser-necktie-knife-fork-and-hot-dog civilization. They have not grown to realize that beneath the brown skin there may dwell a soul so white and pure, so noble and elevated that

it seeks good even in evil and struggles not to hate even hatred. They do not know that these are the people who in their dealings with others, learn to realize the same self in all. They do not know that these people consider even that golden rule rather too egoistic; for to say, "Do unto others as you would they should do unto you", is to lay emphasis upon 'you'—the personal self is being made the centre of all activities. Forget thyself in all thy activities is India's ideal. To her "Love thy enemy" is indeed an exalted expression, but its contradiction is apparent, inasmuch as the idea of love is inconsistent with the idea of an enemy,—the consciousness of love is the negation of enmity. And the idea of enmity does not arise in the people whose ideal is to seek self in all. As it is said in the Ishopanishad, "He who sees everything in self and self in everything, does not, for that reason, despise anybody."¹ Most of those noble principles that are associated with the name of that great saint of Nazareth, are not preached or believed but being lived by her people; they are Christians without professing Christianity. The vigorous statement of Mr. Graham Wallas that "Christianity has failed" despite Bishop Gore's reply that "it has never been tried," may be incontrovertible in Christendom but the true meaning of its fundamental principles may be recognized in the actual life of non-Christian India. Christ might have extolled poverty, but to the people who profess to be his followers it is un-

¹ *Yasta sarvani bhutani atmanya samupashyati; sarva-
bhutateshu chatmanam tato na bijagrsate.*

doubtedly an economic heresy; and Dr. Rabindranath Tagore was right when he said that if Christ would now try to enter America, he would be found intelligible for many reasons. But in India it has always been held as one of the indispensable requirements for religious-mindedness and even the professional mendicants, though they may have come from the very low caste, are held in high esteem by the people including the Brahmins. India maintains even now, starving as she is, about 4,000,000 ascetic mendicants. Ridiculous! but between the sublime and the ridiculous there is but a step.

As the world has long been educated to see things as they appear to the West, those who have the cheek to differ and persist in their own ways, are not safe from the organized criticism of the ignorant outsiders. India is a convenient target. But let not India be demoralized by any such criticism and lose confidence in herself. Things do not appear in the same way to all and let her not be misled by Western persuasion that she is wrong. On the contrary, let her tell the West that it is too relentlessly dogmatic. The unstable nature of Western life may pass for progress elsewhere but not in India. The soul of India cannot be adjusted to Western speed, noise, smoke, sensationalism, excitement, cruelty and confusion; it has its own atmosphere and cannot endure in the toxin of Western life.

India's distinct philosophy of life does not preclude, however, any scientific spirit. Science does

not go against her ideal. for it seeks to unravel the mystery of nature and so far as it does so, it aids all seekers after truth. Science is, therefore, international, and although a particular scientist of a country, may have the honour of discovering certain truth, the uniform behaviour of Nature makes that truth a property of all. But the difference lies in applying it to practical life. Application of the scientific truth is determined by the art of life and as it maintains its peculiarities in different natural and geographical situations it seeks to make use of it in its own peculiar way. Applied science, therefore, cannot be internationally acceptable without detriment to the moral and spiritual aspiration of the different peoples. India welcomes all the discoveries of science but the aim and method of using them should be her own. She cannot conscientiously use them in the manner of others when she is convinced that her life-object is different. She is slow to appreciate the achievements of science because she finds that they are being used to pamper the animal in man like a spoilt child served with many powers simply to make himself more dangerous than before. Her genius is to take the other way and show a different use of them so as to help man rise much above the level of the brute.

The world has not been able to understand it; it has learned to associate civilization only with fastidious fads, outlandish extravagance and voluptuous shows. They may be all right in some forms of civilization, but not in all, and India chooses to remain different. Real civilization, for her, begins

from within,—to attain a coordinated self out of varied desires and impulses and she is convinced that her outward simplicity is not inconsistent with the loftiest conception of civilization. She always welcomes such Indians of the West as Pythagoras, Socrates, Seneca and Epictetus to sit by the ancient sages of India,—those who have never failed to inspire her people. She tolerates everything except intolerance; that was why she built up a strong wall of exclusiveness when Islam entered to destroy what she took so many ages to build; that is why Christianity with all its Oriental savour has no special attraction for her. She knows that what is passing for Christianity is a disguised form of Westernity buttressed by Hebrew tribalism of studied intolerance and Pauline imperialism of missionary propaganda. But to her, temples, mosques and churches do not appear to be inconsistent as long as they serve to satisfy the spiritual yearning of man; for she knows that the destination is the same, the paths only are different. She recognizes the difference in outward appearance and her love for her own things means no hatred of the other. She holds to her own religiously, for therein lies her salvation, therein lies her message for the world. Poet Vaswani spoke it well,

"Each nation must obey the law of evolution immanent in its own genius and ideals.

Imitation is self-suppression. Freedom is self-realization.

India must be Herself. Her own self."