An Outline History of the Indian People

H. R. GHOSAL

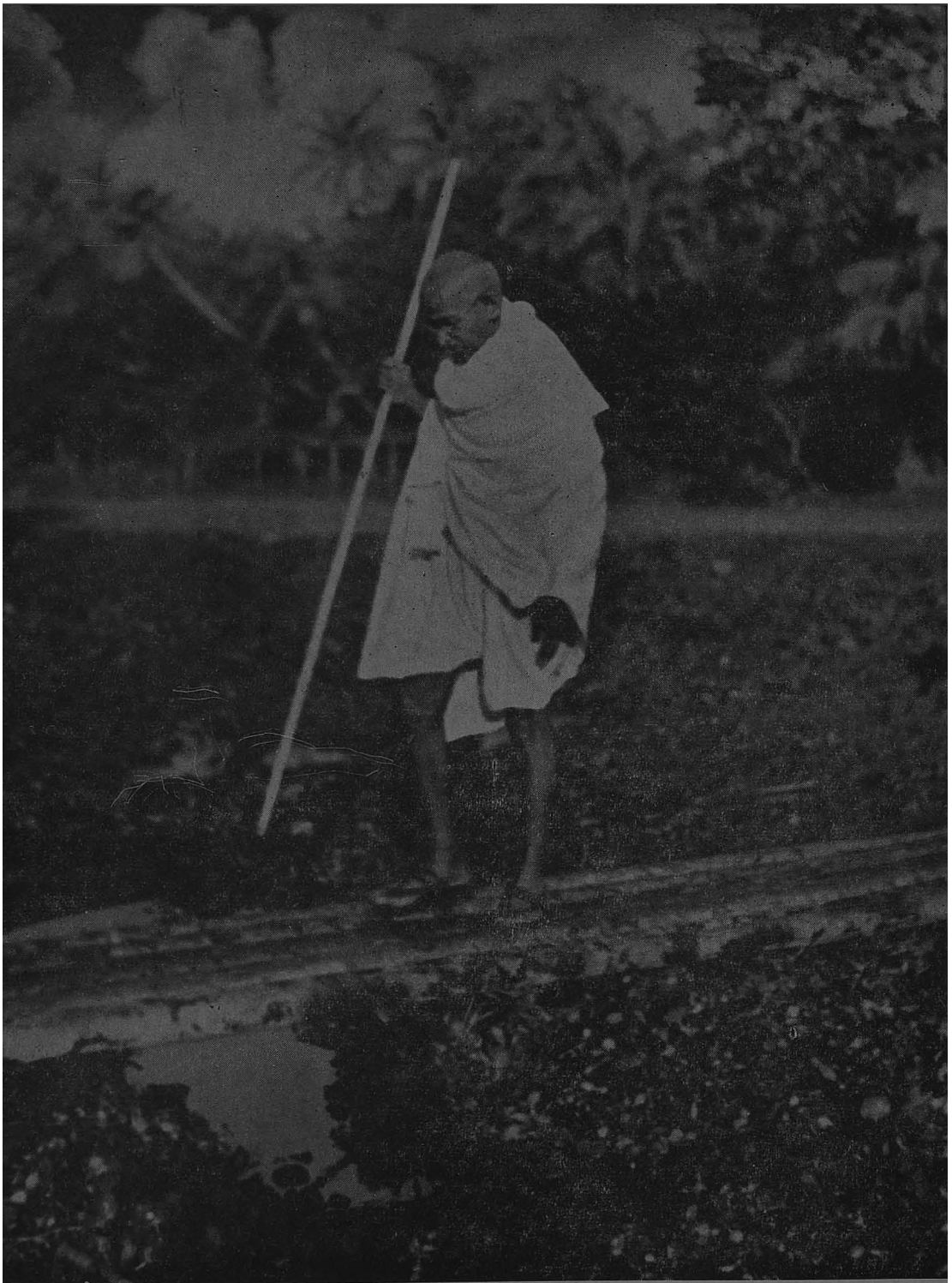
PUBLICATIONS DIVISION

This book was adjudged the best of the entries received when the Education Ministry of the Government of India invited manuscripts of a short history of the Indian people.

As the name of the book indicates, it is more than an account of the dynasties and kingdoms that rose and fell in India; it traces in a concise manner the social, economic, intellectual and artistic evolution of the Indian people.

The volume has been written for the general reader and attempts to give him a glimpse of the significant protagonists on the Indian historical scene as well as an insight into the aspirations and endeavours of the people who make up this country.

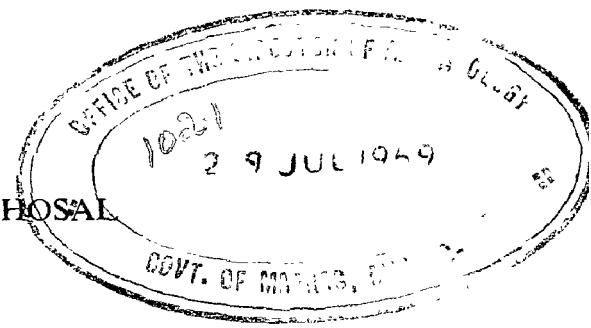
Rs. 3.00



Mahatma Gandhi during his peace mission in Noakhali, 1946

AN OUTLINE HISTORY
OF THE
INDIAN PEOPLE

H. R. GHOSAL



PUBLICATIONS DIVISION
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

First Published, April 1962 (*Chaitra* 1884)
Reprinted, October 1963 (*Kartika* 1885)
Reprinted, September 1966 (*Asvina* 1888)

PUBLISHED BY THE DIRECTOR, PUBLICATIONS DIVISION, OLD SECRETARIAT, DELHI-6,
AND PRINTED BY THE MANAGER, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESS, FARIDABAD

PREFACE

THIS small book was prepared in 1957 for a prize competition announced by the Ministry of Education, Government of India. It is meant for the general reader who wishes to have in as concise a form as possible a background of Indian history, rather than for the scholar, for whom there is no dearth of advanced studies on the subject.

The writing, in forty-five thousand words, of a history of the Indian people from the earliest times to the promulgation of the Republic in 1950 was a strenuous task for the author, involving, as it did, extreme caution and care at almost every step. And yet the work can by no means claim perfection. Within the slight compass, however, it attempts to tell the story of the Indian people, as far as practicable, in all its aspects, social, cultural and economic as well as administrative and political.

I take this opportunity to express my grateful thanks to the Ministry of Education for selecting the present work as the best of the manuscripts received, and to the Publications Division of the Government of India for undertaking its publication.

I acknowledge with thanks the courtesy of the Archaeological Department of the Government of India in permitting the reproduction of their copyright material (illustrations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 11) in the book, and of the Public Relations Department of the Government of Bihar in permitting the use of illustrations 8 and 16.

H. R. G.

UNIVERSITY OF BIHAR
MUZAFFARPUR
26 *January*, 1962

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

FROM THE STATE OF NATURE TO CIVILIZATION

FAR BACK in the dim twilight of unrecorded times—towards the end of the First or early in the Second Inter-glacial Age—the first footfalls of man were heard in India probably near the foot-hills of the north-west Punjab. Slowly through many millennia the descendants of early man evolved a culture which was spread here and there from the banks of the Soan in the north to the Kaveri in the south. These were Palaeolithic men; for their roughly chipped quartz tools of different varieties bear a close likeness to the Old Stone Age flint implements found in Europe and certain other parts of the world. These earliest known inhabitants of our country had no acquaintance with metals and knew neither cultivation nor the tending of cattle. They could produce no fire and make no earthenware. For the most part they wandered about collecting the day's or week's food laboriously from Nature's scanty store—the roots and fruits of the earth, and the flesh of the animals they hunted with their clumsy stone weapons. Quite often these weather-beaten savages lived a rigorous, open-air life. But sore necessity drove them at times to find shelter among rocks, caves and bushes.

No one can say with any degree of definiteness how long this state of things lasted. There is little doubt, however, that as the centuries passed, man's knowledge advanced until, perhaps after thousands of years, the so-called Mesolithic Age was reached. This transitional stage in the development of primitive man is represented by microlithic relics which have been found in the Narmada valley and the Deccan as well as in the Chotanagpur plateau and elsewhere in northern India. Then came the Neolithic or New Stone Age, the remains of which have been discovered in nearly all parts of India. Men of this age certainly made better-finished tools than their Palaeolithic predecessors and used a different species of stone. They also seem to have carried on a primitive form of agriculture alongside hunting, and

domesticated a few animals. Metals were still unknown, except perhaps gold. But the Neolithic men had learned how to make fire and turn the potter's wheel. Many clay vessels made by them have survived, and some of these are quite tastefully decorated. The Neolithic people had more fixed habitations than the Palaeolithic nomads. For a long time they dwelt in caves; and a number of their cave-paintings have survived in the Chotanagpur plateau, as also in the Deccan. Late in the New Stone Age, however, men seem to have built huts with the leaves and branches of trees. Gradually they acquired the art of spinning and weaving, but more often they wore skins, barks and leaves. The Neolithic people buried their dead, and some of their massive tombs may still be seen.

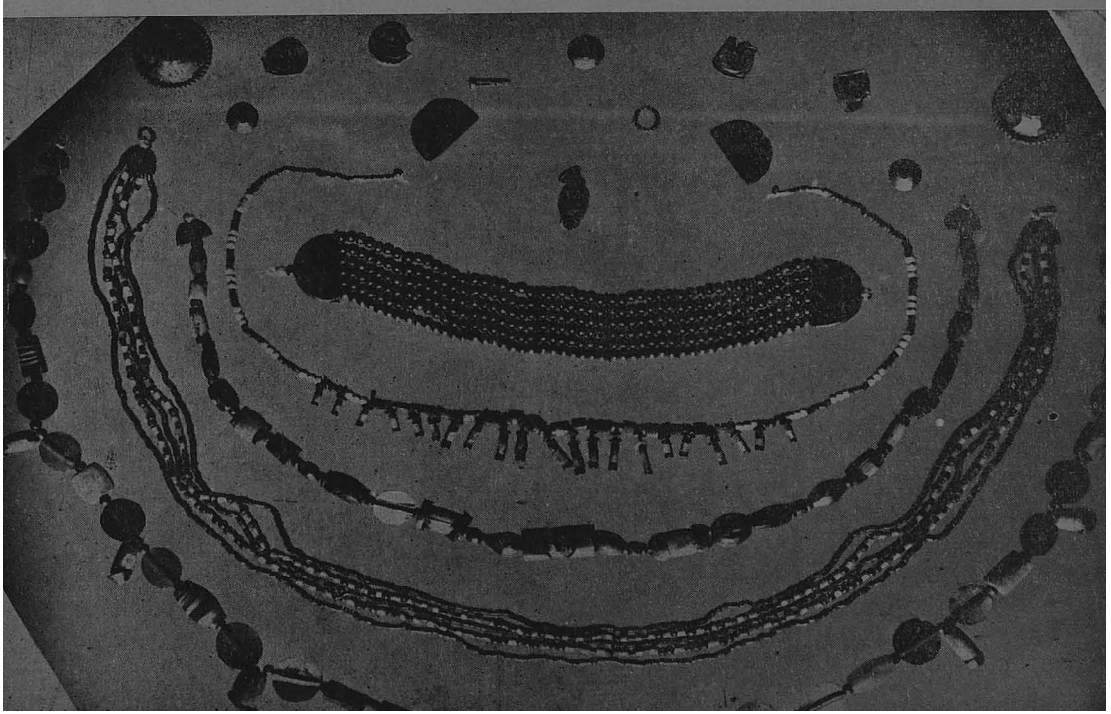
Before the Neolithic period actually ended, the Metal age had probably begun. So the early metal implements, found in this and other parts of the world, are not very different in their shape from the Neolithic tools. The Metal Age really consisted of several ages, and it is commonly believed that the Copper Age preceded the Iron Age. In some parts of Europe, the Neolithic Age was immediately replaced by a Bronze Age. In India, however, bronze tools have been found practically mixed up with copper implements, suggesting that they belonged more or less to the same period as the latter.

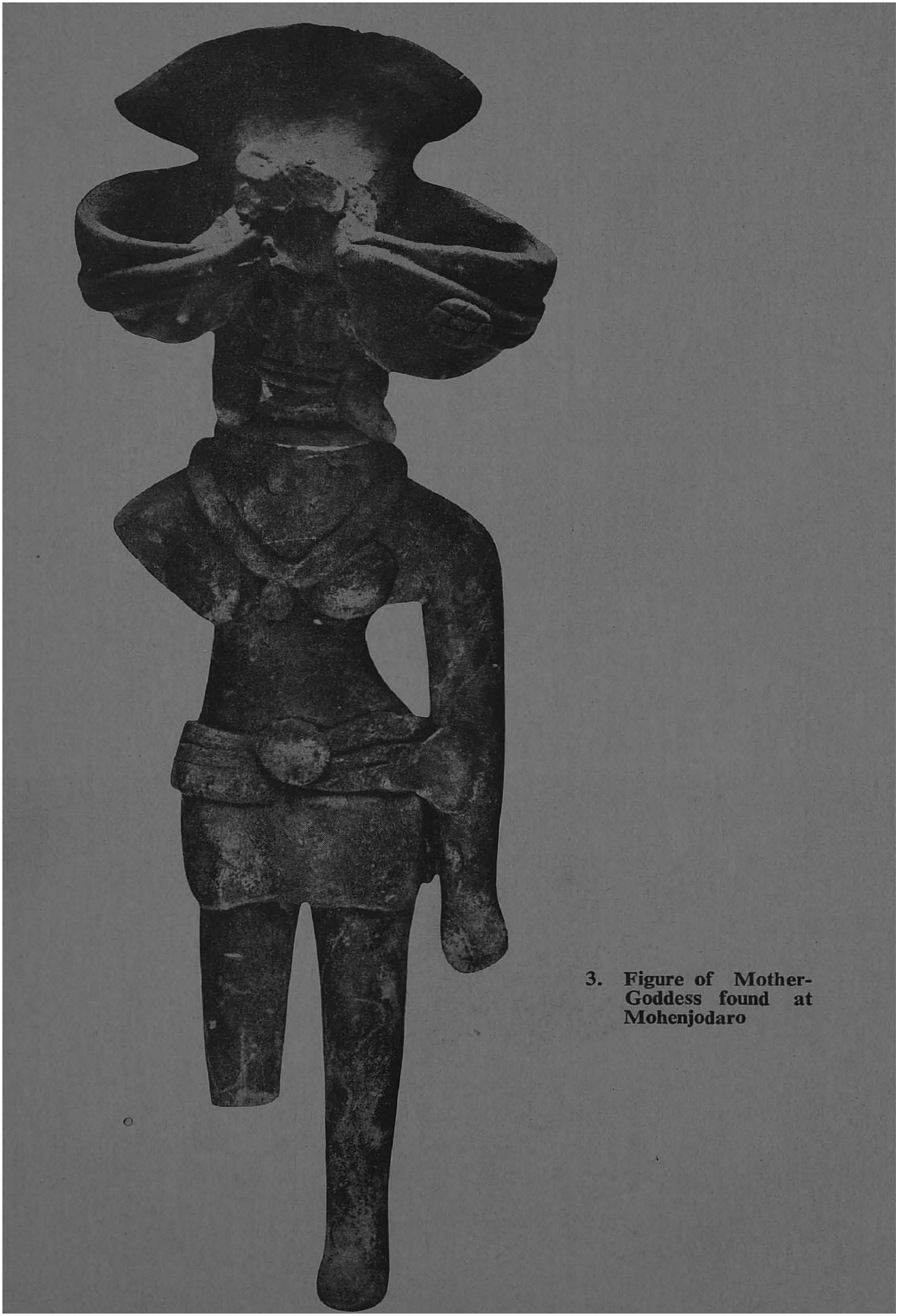
The discovery of copper and bronze must be counted among those epoch-making events of history which, like the invention of steam-power or electricity, immensely speeded up human progress. Indeed with the advent of the Copper Age we may date the beginning of civilization proper. It is no wonder therefore that the Copper and Bronze Age in India is represented by a highly developed civilization.

The mysteries of this civilization were completely buried in obscurity until a few decades ago when archaeologists stumbled upon a most remarkable discovery in the Sindhu valley. At Mohenjodaro (Sind) and Harappa (West Punjab), and on a lesser scale at certain other places in their neighbourhood, materials of an astonishing variety ranging from the ruins of two splendid cities to tiny little toys for children were unearthed. Copper and bronze tools, stone

1. Excavations at Mohenjodaro

2. Beads and other jewellery discovered at Mohenjodaro





3. Figure of Mother-Goddess found at Mohenjodaro

implements and statues, human and animal skeletons, ivory needles and combs, spindles and ornaments, different kinds of painted pottery and innumerable terracotta seals, some of them containing engraved animal figures, have been found at these places. It is significant that no iron has been found as a result of the excavation. The ornaments, which apparently were worn by both men and women, are of ivory, gold, silver, copper and stone. All this speaks of a society showing a marked advance in knowledge and taste. Antiquarians are inclined to place this civilization somewhere near 3000 B.C.

The remains of the dead city of Mohenjodaro, with its rows of well-arranged, brick-built, storeyed mansions boasting of doors, staircases, baths and wells, its broad and straight highways, and its ingenious drainage system, cannot but excite our admiration for the people who planned the city. Among the interesting discoveries is a big bath which has galleries and rooms on all sides and a quadrangle in the centre. The bath was fed by a well. Equally striking is the great granary at Harappa. The ruins of similar cities may still lie buried beneath the soil in this region. Possibly the whole lower basin of the Sindhu right up to Baluchistan was once dotted with settlements.

The inhabitants of Harappa and Mohenjodaro were agriculturists as well as manufacturers, hunters as well as breeders of animals. Wheat seems to have formed their staple diet, together with dates, fish and meat. Within easy reach of the cities, it may be supposed, there was plenty of pasture to supply feed for the sheep, camels, buffaloes and oxen which they tended. Dogs were also probably reared chiefly for the purpose of hunting. Home industries such as pottery, jewel-making, spinning, weaving and wool-shearing were carried on, besides bricklaying, masonry, carpentry, boat-making and ship-building. Navigation appears to have played an important part in the life of these people since they lived in the land of rivers. Possibly they carried on a small maritime trade with the countries of Western Asia.

Historians are not agreed whether the people whose civilization we have just described were a Dravidian race or closely akin to the Vedic Aryans. Some have gone to the

extent of saying that their civilization was post-Rig-Vedic. The script of their numerous seals, which is yet undeciphered, does not help us beyond knowing that the art of writing was familiar in India even at so remote a period. It may be pointed out, however, that the Sindhu Valley Civilization resembles more the Sumerian culture of old than the Aryan culture of the early Vedic times. The religion of the Harappa people, based chiefly on the deification of the Mother Goddess and of a horned male god—the prototype of Siva—with a certain insistence on phallic worship, bears almost unmistakable non-Aryan characteristics. On this point Sir John Marshall is emphatic. "The Vedic religion," he asserts, "is normally aniconic. At Mohenjodaro and Harappa iconism is everywhere apparent."

CHAPTER II

ARYAN CULTURAL EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENTS

IN DIRECT contrast to the urban civilization of the lower Sindhu valley was the predominantly rural civilization of the early Vedic period. Our knowledge of it is derived almost wholly from the Rig-Veda, the earliest of the four Vedas of the Hindus. Those who evolved this civilization were Aryans. Opinions have differed widely regarding the original home of the Vedic Aryans and the antiquity of their culture. The theory that they came from somewhere in Central Asia or Asia Minor does not find support from many Indian scholars, who hold that Madhyadesa, that is, the present Uttar Pradesh, roughly speaking, is the territory to which they originally belonged. On the other hand, it is stated in a passage of the Rig-Veda that a few of the famous Aryan tribes were brought from some far-off land by Indra, one of the two principal gods of the early Vedic period. The occurrence in certain fourteenth century B.C. inscriptions, discovered at Boghaz-Koi, of the names of some Rig-Vedic deities may indicate that their worship had long been prevalent in the Asia Minor region. On the whole, it seems reasonable to conclude that early Aryan civilization was well established in India by 1500 B.C.

Possibly, during the centuries between the full-fledged development of Sindhu valley culture and the birth of early Vedic civilization, the Dravidian tribes spread over different parts of northern and southern India. By the time the Rig-Vedic hymns were composed, they had settlements throughout the country. From the Rig-Veda we learn that non-Aryan chiefs had well-built *puras,* surrounded by walls, and numerous castles "crowning the spurs of the Vindhyas". They had, moreover, great wealth, and their women commanded many luxuries.

The Aryan tribes seem at first to have settled in the upper valley of the Sindhu, from where they migrated eastwards.

Fierce conflicts and clan rivalries kept the Aryan tribes divided for a long time in the beginning. The Rig-Veda speaks among others of the Turvasas and Yadus, arrayed against the Srinjayas and their allies, the Bharatas. In the initial stages of the conflict, the Bharatas and their associates are said to have suffered bad defeats and driven to become cowherds. But eventually they came out victorious in the Battle of the Ten Kings and succeeded in establishing their undisputed leadership of the Aryan community.

The eastward expansion of the early Aryans, motivated chiefly by the desire for fresh and fertile lands, naturally brought them face to face with the non-Aryans who were in possession of the east. The struggle was long and deadly. Many non-Aryans were killed and a still larger number apparently captured. Several Aryan heroes figure prominently in the Rig-Veda as victors in the campaigns. From the internal evidence of the Rig-Veda it appears that the early Vedic tribes were eventually in possession of a vast territory extending from the Kabul valley to the upper basin of the Ganga.

But this acquisition was not purchased without a price. In the grim, hand-to-hand fight with the non-Aryans, the Aryans must have had to suffer appreciable losses. It could not have been that the Aryan tribes found enemy settlements ready to hand and occupied them outright. As they moved, they had to penetrate extensive wildernesses, cut and clear the jungles, and establish isolated homes in the clearings. They had to thrust themselves as intruders and brave the dangers of wild beasts and ferocious men. On the other hand, in their slow and difficult marches the princes and fighters must have been accompanied by many other classes of people—peasants and artisans, hunters and trappers, priests and bards. The story of Aryan expansion indeed is not merely a narrative of heroic exploits; it is in the main a story of the extension of their culture.

The earlier inhabitants were in the long run affected by the new culture of the immigrants in spite of great differences between them. The Rig-Veda describes the non-Aryans as a dark, dwarfish, snub-nosed and ill-favoured people, and reviles them also as Dasas (slaves) or Dasyus. But in course

of time racial antagonism between the two subsided and intermarriages took place between free Aryans and enslaved non-Aryans, though aristocrats still looked upon racial intermixture with disfavour. This may be one of the reasons for the four-fold division of society into Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaisyas (traders and agriculturists) and Sudras (serfs) which occurred towards the end of the early Vedic age. The mingling of the conquerors with the conquered population was at any rate a slow and gradual process. Further, the impact of the two cultures was mutual. Philologists argue in favour of the presence of un-Aryan affectations in the sounds of Sanskrit words. But apart from that, non-Aryan manners and customs almost imperceptibly found their way into Aryan society. In the field of religion, as indeed in several other spheres, the conquerors' civilization owes a great deal to the conquered. The adaptation by the Vedic people of the worship of Siva is said to have been due to non-Aryan influence. There is no doubt that Siva worship in its phallic form, which came to be in vogue among the Aryan community at a later stage, was directly borrowed from the non-Aryans.

Society in the early Aryan settlements was simple, and its basic unit was the family. A group of families formed a *grama* (village) which generally consisted of cottages built of wood or reed. Families were patriarchal, and the master of the house usually received unquestioned obedience from the other members. Great importance was attached to the increase of the male population for which the blessings of the gods were invoked. This does not mean that women were neglected. In fact they were permitted to attend the meetings of the *sabha*, one of the semi-political organizations of the time. Polygamy was not unknown but rare, while polyandry was non-existent. Child marriage was the exception rather than the rule, and there was no bar to widow remarriage. In the Rig-Veda, there are references to feminine display of proficiency in music and dancing. The diet of the early Vedic people was simple. Normally they took vegetarian food, but on special occasions meat was preferred. And so was the drinking of *soma* and *sura*, two kinds of beverage frequently referred to in the Rig-Veda. Cows were

not yet looked upon as sacred, but cow-slaughter was being discouraged. Hunting and chariot-racing were among the favourite amusements of the people at the time. And the great importance of the horse in the warlike conditions of society may be evident from a few stirring hymns describing the divine charger Dadhikra.

The religion of the Rig-Vedic Aryans shows a marked contrast, in some respects, to that of the pre-Vedic Sindhu valley people. Image worship does not appear to have been prevalent among the early Aryans, and most of their deities were natural phenomena personified. Great stress was laid on sacrifices as a means of propitiating the gods and goddesses. To secure a good harvest, or to ensure the birth of a son, as also to protect themselves during natural calamities which were by no means infrequent, animals were offered in sacrifices. Gods enjoyed a higher status than goddesses. On the other hand, the conception of the Mother Goddess and her male counterpart is common to both religions. The Rig-Veda mentions a fairly large number of deities, the chief among them being Varuna, the benevolent sky-god; Indra, the god of thunder and war; Mitra, the sun-god; Agni, the fire-god; Aditi, the goddess of eternity; Prithvi, the earth-goddess; and Ushas, the lovely goddess of the dawn. The three principal later deities of the Aryans—Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra—also find mention in the Rig-Veda. Moreover, the basic conception of Hindu religion that when "neither death nor deathlessness existed," there was only One, the Absolute, who became many, was known to the early composers of the hymns.

Political developments in the Rig-Vedic period were determined largely by the problem of territorial expansion and the conditions of life of the tribes. Tribal chiefs bearing the title *raja* were at first little more than war-lords, and their principal duty was protection of their tribes. Kingship was normally hereditary but by no means altogether absolute. The voice of popular assemblies—the *sabha* and the *samiti*—counted for much in administration. And people's approval had to be got at the time of the king's consecration. The king was assisted by a number of officials, of whom the *purohita* (priest) and the *senani* (commander-in-chief) were

especially important. Spies were employed to gather secret information about the enemy. Tribal, semi-aristocratic republics did not make their appearance until a later date.

The transition from the urban civilization of Harappa to a civilization that was overwhelmingly pastoral and rural does not necessarily imply a going down in the scale of progress. As a matter of fact, the bronze tools and weapons of the Rig-Vedic age are decidedly superior to those of Harappa culture. A slightly increased variety of home manufactures was probably carried on during the period. Moreover, cattle and sheep had become more important, leading to the introduction of improved livestock. Internal trade, communication and the means of transport had somewhat improved too. The reference to *nishkas* (gold necklets) as a medium of exchange is indicative of an advanced economy. The early Aryans appear to have acquired the habit of sailing abroad from the non-Aryan sea-goers, and to have possessed ships of their own.

Nothing much can be said about the crafts of the Rig-Vedic people apart from what we gather from their tools and weapons, pottery and woodwork. It is generally supposed that the art of writing was not prevalent among them. Yet some of the hymns of the Rig-Veda, which were handed down orally till they were written down probably about 1000 B.C., are among the finest specimens of the world's lyric compositions.

The early Vedic age may be said to have ended around 1100 B.C. The next five hundred years, which may be described as the later Vedic period, show all-round development among the Aryans, and were characterized by the use of iron alongside other metals.

During the whole period, more or less, Aryan penetration of the east and south from the middle country continued. Comparatively distant territories such as Vaisali and Videha were brought within the Aryan pale quite early in the period. Later, Magadha and Anga, peopled generally by non-Aryan or mixed races, the Andhra country in the Godavari valley, and the Wardha region were partially colonized. Tradition has it that the Aryan sage Agastya was the first to go to the south, and he went never to return. Thereafter the credit

of extending Aryan culture over the trans-Vindhyan wildernesses goes to Rama, the hero of the *Ramayana*. Supposing him to be a historical figure, though his authenticity has been doubted by many, it is difficult to fix him chronologically. But in all probability he lived before 1000 B.C.

The extension of Aryan cultural sway was accompanied by the rise of mighty kingdoms and the growth of the royal power in general during the period. Kosala, Kasi, Videha, Kuru and Panchala, among others, reached a position of unquestioned pre-eminence. The Kurus, exercising their domination over a considerable area around Delhi, and the Panchalas, spread mostly over the upper Yamuna basin, attained particular importance. Their mutual rivalry was one of the causes of the Great War, fought at Kurukshetra, which forms the subject-matter of the *Mahabharata*. The event, which was of the greatest significance, seems to have occurred about 1000 B.C. Numerous potentates from all over the country are said to have taken part in it. Among them was Krishna Vasudeva of the Yadu tribe who, though he did not wield his arms on the occasion, was the moving spirit behind the drama. Shortly after the war he repaired to his seaside kingdom of Dwaraka in Gujarat and spent his last days amid the bickerings of his tribesmen. Subsequent legend clustering round this central epic figure not only made him, in the eyes of the Hindus, the greatest man of all times, but raised him to the position of God of gods. The Mahabharata War, which made the Pandava brothers victorious over their rival cousins, and gave the kingdom of the Kurus to the eldest, Yudhishthira, evidently resulted in the wiping out of a large number of smaller kingdoms and enabled kings like Parikshit (grand-nephew of Yudhishthira) and his son Janamejaya to attain some sort of an imperial position. The kings of this age often displayed their might by the performance of great sacrifices like the Rajasuya, Vajapeya and Asvamedha. The strengthening of the royal power made the popular *sabha* and *samiti* relatively unimportant. But the kings had still to make certain promises to their subjects during their coronations. A significant political development of the time was the rise of

ganas or republican states, the earliest reference to which is to be found in the *Aitareyu Brahmana.*

Complexities developed in later Vedic society, some of them of a far-reaching character. The division of society into four classes (*varnas*) tended to become water-tight. Men of the higher classes were still permitted to marry women from the lower orders, but social stigma seems to have attached to those who contracted marriage with Sudras. The two higher orders arrogated to themselves many privileges, and the prestige and influence of the Brahmins increased greatly. But the supremacy of the priestly class did not always go unchallenged. The three higher orders went through the *upanayana* rituals and had the privilege of Vedic education. But the lot of the Sudras was unenviable. They were not only debarred from reciting the Vedic *mantras* but were looked upon as impure.

The position of women was somewhat lower than in the preceding age. They were now precluded generally from attending the meetings of the *sabha.* Polygamy had become a normal practice in the warrior class, and was by no means unknown among Brahmins. Marriage of girls before puberty was no longer disapproved. Education of women of the upper classes, however, received some encouragement. Earlier, there had been probably some women composers of hymns. During the later Vedic period we have the instances of some highly educated women, notably Gargi, who displayed keen subtlety in cross-examining Yajnavalkya at the court of king Janaka of Mithila, and Maitreyi, one of Yajnavalkya's wives, who preferred going into the deeper problems of philosophy to wasting time over personal decoration.

The rise of a number of castes on occupational basis was a noteworthy development of the age and was the result of the splitting up of the Vaisya and Sudra communities into groups. Equally important was the division of an Aryan's life into four *asramas* (stages)—*brahmacharya* (student's stage), *grahastya* (house-holders's stage), *vanaprastha* (recluse's stage), and *sannyasa* (renunciation). It was, however, more an ideal than something obligatory.

Trade and industry grew in importance. A great variety of industrial pursuits finds mention in contemporary literature,

and there is no doubt that there was an increased scope for specialization. Trade was not merely internal. Maritime intercourse is suggested in a passage of the *Satapatha Brahmana*. Much attention was given to agriculture, and a wide range of crops was grown. Agricultural improvement may have been due in part to the discovery of iron. Irrigation and manuring were not unknown during the period.

In religion, two parallel developments may be traced. On the one hand, the sacrificial aspect was elaborated, if not perfected, from the time of the Atharva-Veda and the importance of charms, spells and incantations emphasized as part of a popular religious growth. On the other hand, the highest philosophical and metaphysical exercises which the human mind is capable of were practised by the *munis*. Away from the din and bustle of life, these silent seekers of truth spent their time in thinking over the mysteries of the universe. They meditated upon the One Ultimate Reality, Brahman, and the identity of the individual with the Universal Soul. They believed also in the transmigration of souls. The earlier gods of the Rig-Veda—Varuna, Indra, Aditi and others—went into the background. Their place was taken by Brahma (Prajapati), Rudra (Siva) and Vishnu. Gradually Vishnu came to occupy the supreme position among them all, and, before the end of the period, he was identified with Krishna Vasudeva.

It was an intellectually productive age. Noticeable strides were made in science, more especially in astronomy and astrology, mathematics, chronology and the science of the elements. *Nirukta* (etymology), *chhanda* (metrics), and *vyakarana* (grammar) also made a distinct advance. As regards literature, the *samhitas* (collections) of Yajur and Sama Vedas probably belong to the end of the early Vedic age. The Atharva-Veda *samhitas*, which appear to have been among the compositions of the later Vedic times, have not much literary merit. More important from the literary point of view are the *Brahmanas* or treatises, mostly in prose, which contain observations about sacrifices, and the *aranyakas*, which are regarded as supplements to the Vedas. The advanced intellectual development of the period is best reflected, however, in the work of the Sankhya and Upanisha-

dic (Vedanta) schools of philosophy, the most important of the six philosophical schools of the Hindus. The Upanishads, most of which may be ascribed to the period 800–600 B.C., form one of the richest treasures in the world's store of knowledge. Directly or indirectly, they exercised a great influence on the subsequent developments of Eastern and Western philosophy. "In the whole world", observes the German philosopher Schopenhauer, "there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life—it will be the solace of my death."

CHAPTER III

THE STRUGGLE FOR A NEW ORDER

DURING THE eight hundred years from 600 B.C. to A.D. 200, through the interaction of diverse, complex forces, India was able to work up by slow degrees a social and political system which, by its nature, was to shape the character and pattern of her future civilization. The first three centuries of the period, roughly speaking, were characterized by the gradual absorption, chiefly through conquest, of numerous independent kingdoms and principalities, resulting in the creation of a more or less united India. The dominant note of the next five hundred years was the assimilation of heterogeneous peoples, some of whom came as political conquerors from outside. Viewed as a whole, the period was one essentially of action, as distinguished from the second half of the preceding period, which had been predominantly an age of contemplation. Even the saints and philosophers of the new age were outstandingly men of action. "Fall not, O Partha, into the slough of inaction" (*Bhagavad-Gita*) truly reflects the spirit of the age.

The political history of India, during the greater part of the period, mainly revolves round the rise and growth of the kingdom of Magadha, one of the four leading states which existed about 600 B.C., the other three being Kosala, Vatsa and Avanti. In the beginning, Magadha embraced the present Patna, Gaya and Shahabad districts in Bihar. But under Bimbisara (*c.* 600 B.C.) it expanded westwards by the acquisition through matrimonial alliance of a portion of Kasi (Varanasi), and eastwards through the conquest of Anga. Bimbisara's son Ajatasatru fought fervently against Prasenajit of Kosala and finally annexed the Vriji republican confederacy in the north. After him several kings of his line (Haranyaka dynasty) ruled, the last of whom was probably supplanted by Sisunaga. The new king, equally ambitious and energetic as the preceding Magadhan monarchs, extirpated the kingdom of Avanti. The dynasty of Sisunaga

was superseded by Mahapadma Nanda, who by a relentless series of wars considerably enlarged his kingdom. The Nanda dynasty produced nine kings, who ruled for about a century. The last of them was overthrown by Chandragupta Maurya in or about 324 B.C.

While the greater part of northern India was, through the working of the process of unification, brought gradually under one man's rule, far different was the story of the north-west corner. The region around Peshawar and Rawalpindi originally formed part of the independent kingdom of Gandhara. Some time in the mid-sixth century B.C., Emperor Cyrus of Persia occupied a portion of it west of the Sindhu. A little later his grandson Darius sent a naval expedition which resulted in the occupation of the Sindhu valley. Thereafter this territory formed part of the Persian empire. But by the third quarter of the fourth century B.C. traces of Persian rule had been certainly wiped out, and the whole region was divided among small autonomous chieftains. This was the situation in 326 B.C. when Alexander of Macedon came with his motley hordes of Greeks, Macedonians and Persians, crossed the Sindhu and fought and defeated a number of Indian chiefs, including Ambhi and Porus. We are told by the Greek writers that in one place women offered armed resistance to the invaders side by side with men, and that the fight with Porus "depressed the spirit of the Macedonians". Alexander retreated from the bank of the Beas and sailed back after a sojourn of nineteen months in this country. He left behind him a number of Greek settlements on the border and a part of his garrison in occupation of Sind and West Punjab.

About this time, in the east, an intrepid Kshatriya youth Chandragupta, having ousted the Nandas with the aid of Chanakya, a Brahmin of Taxila, became the founder of a new dynasty. He had been in the camp of Alexander for a short while, and the Macedonian invasion supplied the immediate inspiration necessary for the accomplishment of his purposes—freeing India from the Yavana (Greek) yoke and uniting the country under his sceptre. Both these tasks he performed heroically. Plutarch's statement that Chandragupta overran and subdued the whole of India with an army

of 600,000 men leaves no doubt that he was successful in bringing the far greater part of the country under the hegemony of Magadha. Later he fought creditably against Alexander's general and successor, Seleucus, which won him the Kabul valley and also the hand of a Greek princess. Chandragupta's empire thus extended up to Afghanistan and Kashmir in the north, and Mysore in the south, while east-westwards it stretched from Bengal to Kathiawar. He ruled for twenty-four years and was succeeded by his son Bindusara. Few details of Bindusara's reign have survived. He is credited by some authorities with the subjugation of sixteen cities and the cultivation of friendly relations with the Hellenic West. He reigned for twenty-seven years (300—273 B.C.), and his second son Asoka succeeded him.

If Chandragupta impresses us by his virile personality, his grandson Asoka inspires us by his sublime character. The former enhanced the prestige of his fatherland by his exertion; the latter strove to elevate humanity by his example. Yet Asoka was no less a man of action than his grandfather. Indeed in combining meditative virtues with executive talents, idealism with practical sense, he was, among the crowned heads of the world, without a peer.

Asoka's formal coronation was delayed by four years. In the beginning he was a faithful follower of the policy of his predecessors and in his thirteenth regnal year made war on Kalinga. The devastating manslaughter involved in the war transformed him into an ardent lover of peace and non-violence. Though Kalinga was annexed, war was banished beyond the empire's frontiers, and thenceforth conciliation was the keynote of imperial policy towards all peoples. The emperor found further solace in Buddhism, became a member of the Buddhist church, and dedicated himself to the service of all creatures. Hospitals were established for men and for beasts, and works of public utility were undertaken.

To raise humanity to a higher ethical level was the cherished goal of this philosopher-king. To this end he devised a new instrument, *Dharmavijaya,* which, according to him, was the "chiefest of all conquests". Asoka's conception

of Dharma was simple and included the elementary principles of right conduct, such as non-killing, truthfulness, obedience to parents and respect for all sects. It was preached with the inspired zeal of a conqueror. That his teachings might survive, he got them inscribed on rocks and pillars scattered throughout his empire. That his neighbours too might "learn this lesson", religious missions were sent to Indian territories in the north and the far south, to Ceylon and Burma, and to the five Hellenic kingdoms as far west as Macedon. Yet, though the Great Maurya exerted himself strenuously in the interests of Buddhism, he showed no apathy to Brahmanism and extended his patronage to all sects. Nor did he neglect the normal duties of a king for the sake of Dharma.

After Asoka's death, which is said to have occurred in 236 B.C., the Maurya Empire fell on inglorious days. Two of his successors, Dasaratha and Samprati, had the empire divided between themselves. They were followed by several other kings of their line. The last Maurya king was overthrown by his commander-in-chief, Pushyamitra Sunga, about 187 B.C.

Pushyamitra was a great king and ruled over an extensive kingdom. He reduced the king of Vidarbha (Berar) to submission, and his grandson Vasumitra won a victory over the Greeks. Pushyamitra is credited with the performance of two Asvamedha sacrifices. He reigned for thirty-six years and was followed by nine successors. Near about 75 B.C. the Sunga dynasty was supplanted by the Kanvas. The total period of rule of the four Kanva kings did not exceed forty-five years.

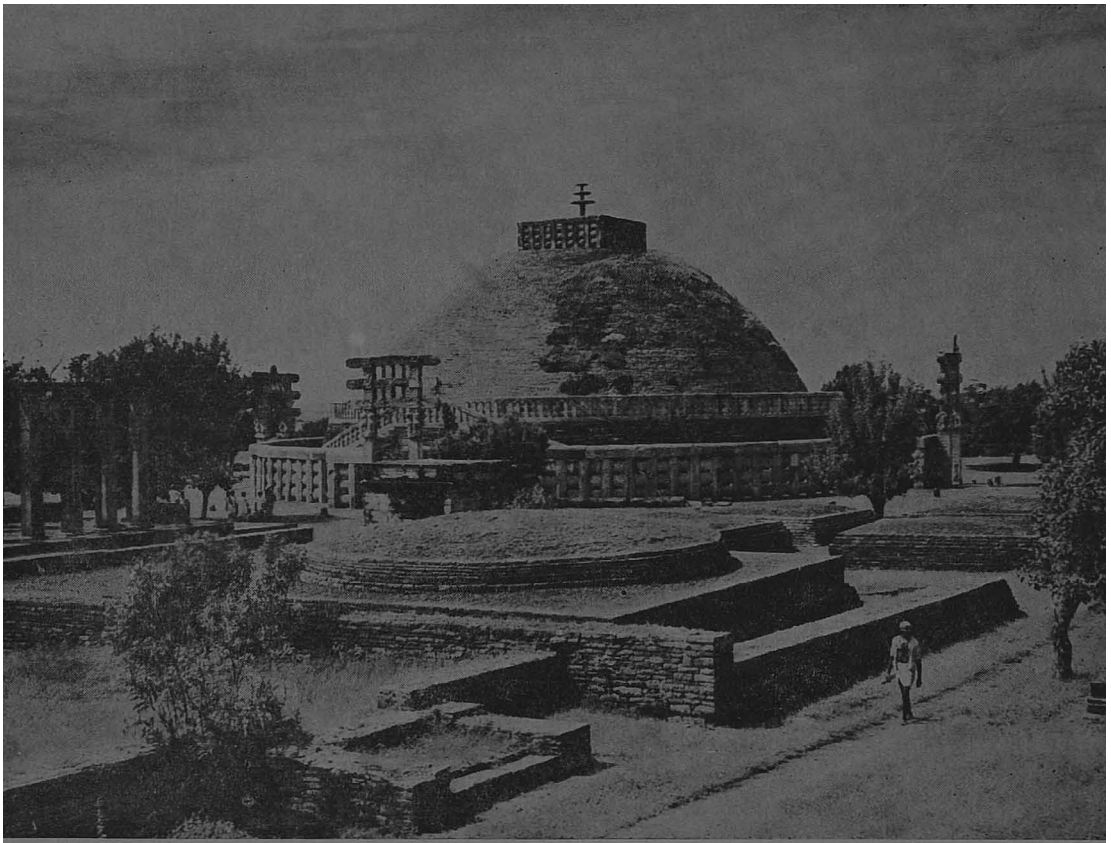
The history of Magadha after the fall of the Kanvas becomes almost completely obscure. The centre of political gravity now shifts to the Deccan, which under the kings of the Andhra or Satavahana dynasty plays a dominant role for nearly three centuries. The founder of the Satavahana dynasty was Simuka, who is said to have destroyed the power of the Kanvas and the remnants of the Sungas. Satavahana records mention several illustrious kings. One of them, Gautamiputra Satakarni, who flourished early in the first century A.D., extended his sway over nearly the whole of the Deccan up to the Krishna in the south. He fought

successfully against the Sakas and destroyed the Kshaharata dynasty; but on one occasion he appears to have suffered a reverse at the hands of the Saka Rudradaman. Another famous king of the line, Yajnasri Satakarni, ousted the Sakas from portions of Western India and the Narmada valley. He ruled in the last quarter of the second century A.D. Under the strong rule of the Satavahanas the Deccan enjoyed all-round prosperity. But the glory of Satavahana power declined during the first half of the third century A.D.

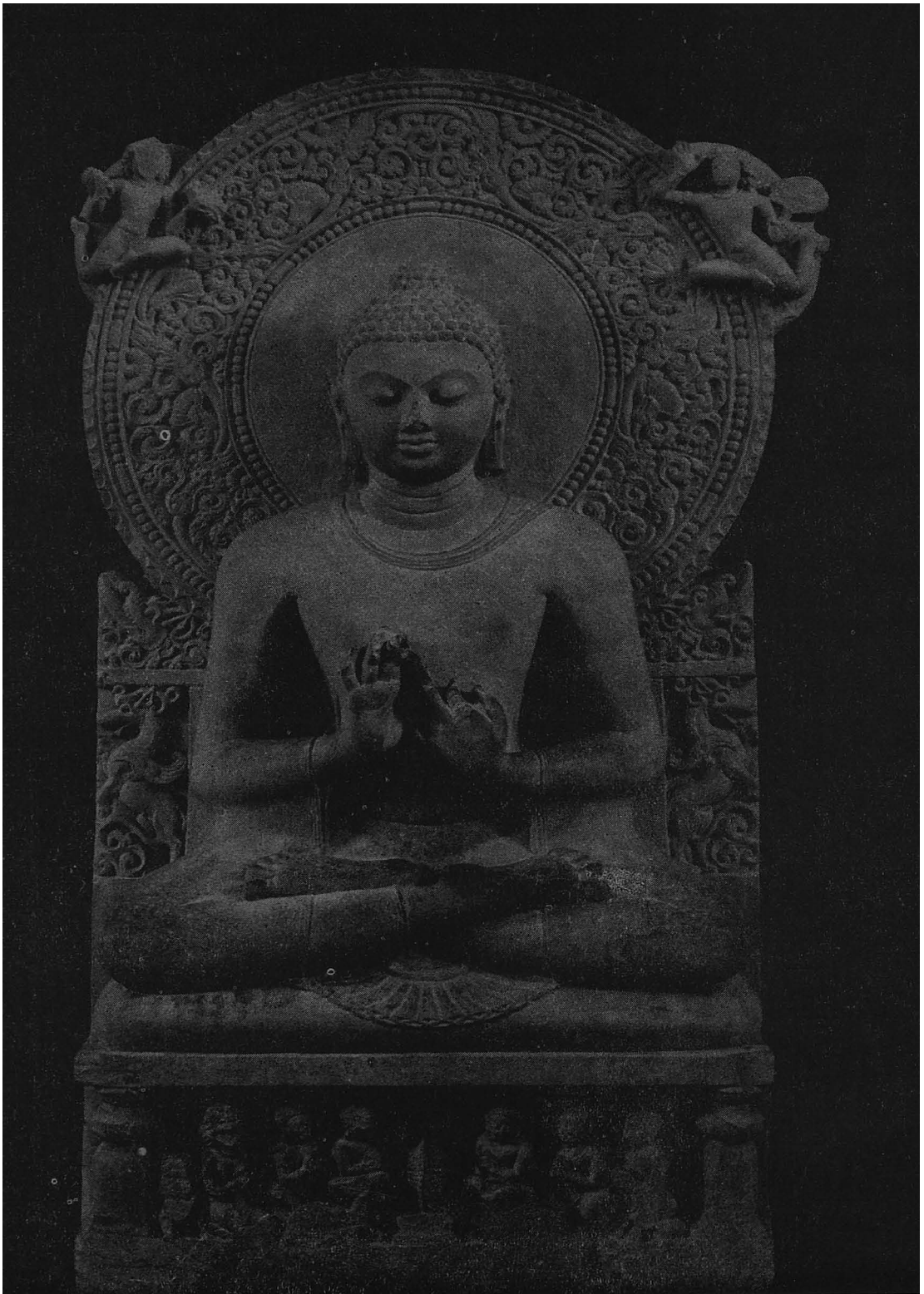
In the first century B.C., Kalinga rose to great fame under its redoubtable ruler Kharavela. He overran the Deccan and marched as far as the north-west frontier. He defeated a number of contemporary princes and achieved a brilliant victory over Magadha. Kharavela was a Jain and belonged to the Mahamegha-Vahana line.

Between 200 B.C. and A.D. 200 a tide of immigration—one of the longest in history—swept from Western and Central Asia to the Indian plains. The immigrants came as invaders, encouraged by the turmoil following the break-up of the Maurya Empire. Already in 208 B.C. Antiochus the Great of Syria had appeared on the north-west border. He was followed by Demetrius, Eucratides, Menander, Antialcidas and many others who conquered portions of the Punjab and Sind. Before the turn of the first century B.C., however, Greek rule in the Punjab was challenged by the Parthians, who soon established their sway over there. Meanwhile swarming hordes of Sakas came from Central Asia and gradually overspread the Punjab, the region round Mathura, Rajputana, Malwa and the Western Deccan. They established strong principalities and some of them like Rudradaman and Nahapana carried on protracted wars against the Satavahanas.

Concurrently came another race of Central Asiatic nomads—the Yuehchis. Of their five branches the most important one, the Kushanas, carved out a principality in Afghanistan under Kadphises I. His son Kadphises II extended his rule over the Punjab. But the most celebrated of the Kushana princes was Kanishka, who established an empire extending from Khotan in Central Asia to Saketa (Oudh) in India. Kanishka ascended the throne in A.D. 78 and founded the Saka era. In Chinese annals, he is famous



4. The Great Stupa at Sanchi



5. The Preaching Buddha, Sarnath

for his patronage of Buddhism. One of his successors, Huvishka, is also well-known for his pro-Buddhist leanings. The empire of Kanishka broke into pieces during the last quarter of the second century A.D.

During the period 600–200 B.C., remarkable strides were made in the domain of political theory and administration. The climax of institutional developement was reached under the Mauryas, as is apparent from the *Arthasastra* of Chanakya (Kautilya). The highly bureaucratic character of the government may be evident from the fact that there were numerous departments of state in the centre under ministers and *adhyakshas*. Besides, the king was assisted by a *mantri-parishad* (Council of ministers). The Mauryan state was the first great welfare state in India and regulated even the moral, social and economic life of the subjects. The military administration of the empire was very efficient, being vested in six boards of thirty members. So also was the municipal administration of Pataliputra, the seat of the empire. But great importance was attached to espionage, and even women were employed as spies. Criminal law was rather unduly harsh, though under Asoka it became more humane. The empire was divided into provinces, each under a viceroy. A unique feature of the administration was that the state made great concession to the spirit of local autonomy and afforded people an opportunity for having training in the art of governance.

Although enlightened autocracy was the commonly accepted form of government in ancient India, there also existed a modified form of republicanism side by side. Indeed long before the growth of Greek democracy in Europe, Indians had made a significant march towards republicanism. About 600 B.C. there were semi-aristocratic tribal republics like that of the Sakyas of Kapilavastu. Much more important were the federated republics of the Vrijis and Mallas. The Vriji confederation included eight clans, of whom the Lichchhavis of Vaisali and the Videhans of Mithila were the more conspicuous. The organization of the Vriji Samgha,[2] based on a highly efficient administrative system, compares favourably with that of modern democracies. Even the Buddha had an admiration for the principles on which it

was worked. Though the imperialist ambition of Ajatasatru proved fatal to its continuance, some *gana* states existed in the north-west until the rise of the imperial Mauryas, and in the border areas republicanism seems to have survived in some form or the other for a considerable time afterwards.

In the sixth century B.C., while India was struggling towards integration on the political plane, there was a momentous stir in another direction which had for its object the emancipation of the intellectual and spiritual life of her people. The movement was the outward manifestation of an inner revolt which had been under way for some time past, and was thoroughly in harmony with the trend of world development at the time, as may be shown from the history of China, Persia and Greece. It expressed itself through the rise of a series of unorthodox religious schools, with Buddhism and Jainism in the forefront.

The founders of these two new schools—Gautama Buddha and Vardhamana Mahavira—were both Kshatriyas of aristocratic descent. Vardhamana, the last Tirthankara (pilgrim) of the Jains and an inhabitant of Vaisali, renounced the world at thirty and, on attainment of knowledge after twelve years' penance, became known as Jina (self-conqueror) and Mahavira (the Great Hero). Thereafter he spent the remaining thirty years of his life preaching his doctrine in Magadha and neighbouring regions. He enjoined upon his followers the observance of celibacy, and taught them that by following the threefold path of Right Belief, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct it was possible for man to become free from bondage. Although Mahavira believed in the existence of the soul, there was no place in his system for a Supreme Creative Spirit. From the outset Jainism laid the utmost stress on the sanctity of life and recommended an extreme course of austerity. Long after Mahavira's death his followers became divided into two sects—Svetambaras (white-clad) and Digambaras (sky-clad), the latter advocating the discarding of all external things whatsoever.

Gautama belonged to Kapilavastu on the Nepal border, and was born in the Lumbini Garden. Having lost his mother seven days after his birth, the young Siddhartha—

for that was his real name—,as he grew in years, developed a strong indifference to the world. His father, who was the head of the Sakya clan, surrounded him with wealth and pleasure, but no allurement would bring peace to a mind that reflected night and day on the miseries of life. While not yet thirty—immediately after the birth of his son—he cut off all homely ties and set out in the garb of a *sannyasi* to solve the riddle of suffering. During his wandering search for the unsearchable, he came in close contact with *yogis*, ascetics and reputed teachers. He saw their ways, practised them, and was disappointed. At last, after deep contemplation and intense exertion under a *pipal* tree at Uruvela, south of Gaya, he saw the flash of light. For seven weeks more the Enlightened One remained under the Bodhi Tree, meditating on the great truth which had been revealed to him. Then at the Deer Park (Sarnath), near Varanasi, he set the Wheel of Law in motion. People flocked to him in increasing numbers and were converted to the new doctrine. Among his lay followers and patrons was king Bimbisara of Magadha. Gifts from him and others enabled the Buddha to establish the Buddhist Samgha, which played an important part in the propagation of Dharma. Before long the door of the Samgha was opened to women. For over forty years the Buddha preached his doctrine among all classes of people, and before he died, Buddhism had won the hearts of many million men and women in northern India.

Gautama's was an enlightened middle path between the extremes of self-indulgence and self-torture. He agreed with Mahavira that salvation lies in one's own hand, but he found no efficacy in the austere rigidity of the Jain doctrine. His middle course included the eightfold path of Right Views, Right Speech, Right Aspirations, Right Contemplation, Right Conduct, Right Effort, Right Livelihood and Right Mindfulness. Through this noble way man could attain *nirvana*, which meant, according to him, extinction of craving and the consequent cessation of suffering. Both Jainism and Buddhism challenged the authority of the Vedas, and yet they accepted some of the basic ideas inherent in the Brahmanical system such as *samsara* (transmigration of souls), *karma* (theory of action) and *moksha* (salvation).

No Indian movement before or since has perhaps contributed in such significant measure to the advancement of mankind as Buddhism. By emphasizing that man's spiritual welfare depended not on the pleasure of the gods, it set forth a philosophy of human emancipation which became a dynamic force in the world. That was the reason why it incited intellectual interest almost from the beginning. Moreover, the Buddha's message of peace and love was an inspiration to generations of thinkers and reformers within and outside India. The simplicity and catholicity of his doctrine won countless adherents abroad. Within India, Buddhism showed the way to a changed social order, in which heredity, caste and privilege counted for little and human equality a great deal. This idea later on had a profound influence on Vaishnavism. From the common man's standpoint the most impressive contribution of Buddhism has been in the field of art, in the rich heritage of monuments, sculptures and paintings it has left.

Much less important than the Buddhist or Jain was the Ajivika school founded by Gosala Maskariputra. The Ajivikas, however, are mentioned as one of the four principal sects by Asoka and retained their place as such for several centuries. Within the fold of Brahmanism itself, noticeable changes occurred. While the old Vedic deities still retained their own, newer objects of worship appeared; and the cult of Yakshas, an inferior category of gods, became very popular. Among the old deities, Siva and Vishnu, and the Mother Goddess in her different manifestations, gained in popularity. Image worship had become an established feature of the Brahmanical religion by the third century B.C. The Vaishnava or Bhagavata cult had a growing hold on the people. A decided change came among the Buddhists towards the first century B.C., leading to their division into two rival schools—Mahayana (Great Vehicle) and Hinayana (Lesser Vehicle). In the Mahayana school, the Buddha was raised to divinity, and temples were set up with his images installed therein.

There was a crystallization of the four principal castes in society, their specific duties and functions being laid down in the *Dharmasastras* of the time. But exceptions to the

general rule sometimes occurred. The Brahmins, as formerly, enjoyed the highest status and many privileges. At the other end of the scale, the Sudras had few privileges and many disabilities. Slavery was prevalent in society. The beginning of the idea of untouchability may be traced to the closing centuries of the period. However, inter-marriages between men of the higher and women of the lower castes were, except in the case of Brahmins, approved by the *Smritis*. The most significant social development of the latter half of the period was the large increase in the number of mixed castes due chiefly to the infiltration of foreign blood. The Greeks, Parthians, Sakas and Kushanas got gradually mixed up with the indigenous population. Some of them like Menander and Kanishka became zealous Buddhists, some embraced Saivism, and others like the Greek Heliodorus turned devout Bhagavatas.

The practice of *sati*, that is, widows burning themselves on the funeral pyres of their husbands, has been referred to by the Greeks who accompanied Alexander to India. Polygamy was common, especially with the Kshatriyas; and the age of marriage showed a constant tendency to go down. With it the *upanayana* (wearing of sacred thread) ritual for higher-caste girls lost its importance and was eventually dropped. But the education of girls flourished and was not frowned upon. A class of female celibates, exclusively devoted to the pursuit of knowledge, finds frequent mention in literature. While chastity and unconditional devotion to the husband on the part of the wife were highly valued, women were permitted to seek divorce and remarry under certain circumstances. Women not only served as bodyguards to kings but often rode with them on hunts, and sometimes also fought as soldiers.

Though the economy was predominantly rural, populous cities with extensive parks and gardens were fairly numerous. Cultivated city-dwellers had no dearth of entertainment. They had their social meetings and open-air literary discussions, music, dancing and moonlight parties. There were special bathing pools, and young men often vied with one another in swimming. Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador of Seleucus at the court of Chandragupta,

remarks that Indians, generally simple in their style of living, loved finery and ornaments. Another Greek writer, Nearchus, tells us that they wore nicely trimmed leather shoes. The Buddhist *Vinaya* texts give us a vivid idea of the common dwelling houses, which were made of stone, brick or wood, and whose inner walls were generally decorated with paintings and engravings. Chairs, bedsteads, cushioned couches, moving screens and carpets, inwrought with gold or silk, also find mention. On the whole, city life provided ample opportunity for enjoyment and luxury to the leisured class. With all that the general standard of morality was high, and Megasthenes pays admiring tributes to the Indians for their truthfulness and honesty.

New manners and new fashions introduced by the foreigners found a receptive soil in India. The trousers and big overcoat of the Kushana princes were gradually adopted by the Indian ruling class. Similarly, blouses, jackets and frocks worn by Greek women were to a certain extent probably imitated by upper-class Indian ladies. The habits imbibed from the Greeks added to the pleasures of everyday life. To them was due at least the popularization of the theatre.

The general complacency and gaiety of civic life is to be explained by the increasing economic prosperity of the age. Though agriculture remained the country's basic industry throughout the period, manufacturing industries grew rapidly in importance. Eighteen major cottage industries are mentioned in the literature of the period. Trade guilds played a prominent part in the industrial organization of the time. Increased intercourse with the West after Alexander's invasion opened up new markets for Indian commodities, and the great growth of commerce with the Roman world during the closing centuries resulted in a regular inflow of gold and silver from outside. The affluence of the Deccan under the Satavahanas in particular is attested by the unnamed Greek author of the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea.* He saw numerous ports and market towns throbbing with life.

In literary pursuits, the age marks a great advance over the preceding one. Besides the vast body of Pali canonical literature of the Buddhists and non-canonical works like the

Milinda-Panha (Questions of Menander), there was a large output of Sanskrit Brahmanical literature, both religious and secular. To the second half of the period belong many of our *Dharmasastras* or *Smritis* and the two monumental epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana,* which to this day form the staple spiritual food of the bulk of the Hindus. The *Bhagavad-Gita,* which is really a part of the *Mahabharata,* is the most sublime literary contribution of this age. Purely secular literature included outstanding works on grammar by Panini and Patanjali, the *Arthasastra* of Kautilya, some legal treatises and works on medicine, such as the *Charaka-Samhita.* The closing centuries of the period produced two dramatists of note, Asvaghosha and Bhasa. The rudimentary compilations of some of the *Puranas* may also be ascribed to this age. Lastly, it was the glorious age of Tamil Sangam literature.

The period witnessed also some of the pioneer achievements of the Indians in art. These may be found reflected in the *stupas* of Sanchi and Bharhut (Central India), the *chaityas* of Ajanta, Nasik and Karle (the Deccan), the rockcut caves of Barabar (Bihar), and the *vihara* caves of Udaigiri and Khandagiri as well as of Ajanta. The florid sculpture on these monuments adds significantly to their attractiveness. Quite as impressive are the Buddha images of the Gandhara school which had its beginning around the first century B.C. This school, a product of the fusion of extraneous—chiefly Hellenic—and indigenous influences, was rivalled by another, the Mathura school, which became active from the first century A.D. Though the art of this period was greatly inspired by Buddhist influence, it suffers in comparison, on the sculptural side, with that of the succeeding period in that it is more sensual than spiritual. The series of relief sculptures at Mathura and Amaravati, representing nude or semi-nude female figures, though highly delicate in workmanship, after all reflect a society in full and free enjoyment of the exuberance of life. Much more elegant than these are the few early Ajanta paintings.

From the middle of the third century B.C. onwards, Indians were seized with a spirit of colonial and cultural expansion which was to produce epoch-making results later

on. The first incentive to propagation of Indian culture in foreign lands came from the Buddhist missions sent out by Asoka. Thereafter the continued influx of immigrants gave an indirect stimulus to going out. Indian emigration, unlike most other folk movements in history, was inspired less by the desire for better economic opportunities than by the urge for religious and cultural conquest. This urge was sometimes reinforced by political considerations and the lure of adventure.

Emigration tended to move mainly in three directions : (*i*) Central Asia; (*ii*) Burma, Indo-China and China; and (*iii*) Malaya and the Indonesian islands. The region beyond the north-western mountain ranges was until the end of Asoka's reign partly within the Maurya Empire, and formed a familiar base of cultural movement to the north and the north-east. Indian settlements grew up between the Hindukush and the Oxus, and the Oxus and the Jaxartes, during the succeeding centuries. The Greeks saw thousands of Brahmins and Buddhist monks in the uplands. But further up the missionaries had begun to push along the ragged lines of march towards the Tarim basin. Kanishka's conquest of Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan brought this region comparatively within easy reach of the Indian missionaries in spite of geographical and other hardships they had to face. Settlements were planted along this line, and one of the earliest Indian colonies in Central Asia was Khotan. Indians took their habits and traditions to these colonies. Numerous vestiges discovered in these rugged regions would testify to Central Asia's indebtedness to India —Buddha images and remains of *stupas,* shrines and *viharas,* as well as Sanskrit and Pali texts. Though Buddhism was the prevailing religion in this tract, Brahmanism too was in a fairly flourishing state.

Burma, then known as Suvarnabhumi (land of gold), was colonized by Indians long before the second century A.D. Chinese annals of the third century A.D. refer to a Buddhist population of 10,000 families in Central Burma. And the adoption of Indian religions by the Burmese is attested by archaeological evidence. With China, India had trade intercourse probably from Mauryan times. And the traders

were the forerunners of the missionaries who went there both by sea and by the overland routes through Burma and Central Asia. The first batch of Indian missionaries is said to have reached China in 217 B.C. From the first century A.D. however, there were regular influxes. Numbers of Buddhist scholars are said to have settled down in China. By the end of the second century A.D., Buddhism had a strong hold on the Chinese upper classes.

A shipload of Bengal adventurers, headed by one Vijaya, is said to have reached Ceylon and established the earliest Indian colony there. But the story is so slightly known that it must remain more of a vague romance than authentic history. There can be little doubt, however, that traders sailed off and on from the port of Tamralipti (Tamluk) for the islands on the Indian Ocean, and also for Burma and Malaya. Most likely the seafaring southerners had quite early trade relations with Burma, Cambodia and Annam. Traders possibly brought with their cargoes many a tale of adventure and romance from those lands to excite the imagination of the stay-at-homes. They were the path-finders for the missionaries, and for those who went there for political bargain. In Cambodia, in the first century A.D., a Brahmin named Kaundinya founded the kingdom of Funan, which later became famous as Kamboja. In Annam, Srimara founded the Hindu kingdom of Champa in the second century A.D. About one of the dependencies of Funan which arose at the time we are told : "More than a thousand Brahmins from India reside there. The people follow their doctrine and give them their daughters in marriage."

CHAPTER IV

THE CREATIVE URGE AT ITS CLIMAX

THE CREATIVE genius of India, which had unfolded itself variously during the period 600 B.C. to A.D. 200, saw its full blossoming during the succeeding age (A.D. 200–700). In art and literature the climax of Indian achievement was reached, while in certain other spheres spectacular beginnings were made which were to have a remarkable growth afterwards.

The political disintegration of northern India at the opening of the third century afforded an opportunity to some of the republican tribes—the Malavas and Yaudheyas in the west, and the Lichchhavis in the east—to reassert their authority for more than a hundred years. The middle of the century, however, witnessed the rise to eminence of two monarchical powers—the serpent-worshipping Nagas who extended their rule over a considerable portion of central and western India, and the Vakatakas who stepped into the shoes of the Satavahanas in the Deccan. The Nagas, also called Bharasivas, performed as many as ten Asvamedha sacrifices. The Vakatakas under Pravarasena and his successors also posed as champions of a Brahmanical revival and celebrated numerous sacrifices. They established matrimonial relation with the imperial Guptas which undoubtedly added to their prestige.

The rise of the Guptas to power was an event of great significance. India—more precisely speaking, northern India—enjoyed under them a unity which had not been known for five hundred years. The founder of the Gupta dynasty, Chandra Gupta I, was enabled to establish his authority over Magadha through his marriage with the Lichchhavi princess Kumaradevi. His accession is said to have taken place in A.D. 320, and his reign does not seem to have extended beyond ten years. Possibly he conquered some territories in the immediate neighbourhood of Magadha.

But the unification of the greater part of India was the work of his son Samudra Gupta, who had a long reign of more than forty-five years. Samudra Gupta won a series of victories over the ruling chiefs of western and eastern India whose names are given in the Allahabad pillar inscription of his court poet Harisena. He also crossed the Vindhyas and obtained the submission of a number of south Indian princes. The conquered territories of northern India were annexed to form the Gupta Empire. Samudra Gupta's fame spread far and wide, and foreign princes sought his friendship and alliance. To his son Chandra Gupta II belongs the credit of finally overthrowing the Saka power whence he obtained the title of Sakari. Chandra Gupta II has been identified with Vikramaditya of Indian tradition whose court was adorned by the "nine gems". He reigned till about A.D. 415 and was succeeded by his son Kumara Gupta I. The Gupta Empire now was at the zenith of its power. But during the later half of the fifth century, when Kumara Gupta's son Skanda Gupta was on the throne, the nomadic Hunas from Central Asia swept through the western provinces of the empire. Skanda Gupta won a decisive victory over these barbarians but was continually harassed by them. His successor, Narasimha Gupta, inflicted a crushing defeat on the Hunas, probably at the beginning of the sixth century. But the glory and greatness of the Gupta Empire was gone by this time.

After the fall of the Guptas, the "imperial tradition was under an eclipse" for nearly a century. In the second quarter of the sixth century, Yasodharman of Malwa made himself famous by finally crushing the Huna power. And soon afterwards Kanauj slowly emerged to prominence under the Maukharis. Late in the sixth century, the principality of Thaneshwar in the north-west made its mark under Prabhakaravardhana, the prestige of whose family was enhanced by the marriage of his daughter Rajyasri with Grahavarman Maukhari. Shortly after this Grahavarman lost his life in a contest with the ruler of Malwa backed by king Sasanka of Gauda (Bengal). Rajyavardhana, who had meanwhile come to the throne of Thaneshwar, also met his end in going to exact retribution from the Malwa prince.

Thereupon his younger brother Harshavardhana was persuaded to accept the vacant throne in A.D. 606.

Immediately Harshavardhana made an end of the ruler of Malwa. For the next five or six years he fought incessantly, reducing most of the north Indian chiefs to submission. The thrones of Thaneshwar and Kanauj were united, and Harsha ruled jointly with his sister Rajyasri. By 619, Magadha and Gauda were fully subdued, though Sasanka eluded his grasp. Late in his reign, Ganjam was conquered. But in 641 Harsha's attempt to conquer the Deccan was repulsed by the Chalukya king Pulakesin II.

Harsha not only brought the greater part of northern India under his direct rule but consolidated his dominions by efficient administrative arrangements. He exchanged embassies with the Emperor of China and was a zealous patron of Buddhism. He welcomed the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang to Kanauj and held a pompous religious festival there. Here as well as at the five-yearly grand gathering at Prayag, Hiuen Tsang was amazed to see the Indian king's splendid generosity. Harsha died in 647. His death sounded the knell of his empire.

In the south, the Pallavas became a formidable power in the second half of the sixth century, and had soon to measure swords with their rivals, the Chalukyas of Kalyani. The struggle for supremacy continued more or less throughout the seventh century. Narasimhavarman Pallava on more than one occasion won decisive triumphs over the Chalukyas. The great Pulakesin, who had baffled Harsha's advance on the Deccan, lost his life in one of these conflicts (642). But his successors overran the Pallava kingdom. Their repeated blows at last proved fatal to Pallava power. But the Chalukyas did not long survive the fate of their enemy.

During these five hundred years, society did not undergo any striking modification. The elasticity of caste and marriage rules, which was a result of the influx of foreigners during the preceding few centuries, was still in evidence. Although attempts were made by some rulers to buttress the social order by keeping the several castes to their respective spheres of duty, we have instances of Brahmins bearing arms as a profession, and of Kshatriyas meddling in merchandise.

The process of absorption of outsiders became strongly manifest again towards the end of this period owing to the advent of the Hunas and Gurjaras. Women seem to have retained a position of respect, and there are several instances of their taking an active part in administration. In well-to-do and cultured families, girls were generally given a good grounding in music, dancing, painting and house-decoration. But the age of marriage was dropping lower and lower, and *sati* cases occurred, as in the past. The Chinese pilgrim Fahien, who visited India in the time of Chandra Gupta II, has noted that Brahmins usually abstained from meat-eating and wine-drinking. And he refers to the pitiable lot of the Chandalas.

Except during grave crises, such as the Huna irruptions, life on the whole went on smoothly and happily. Plenty and prosperity, the concomitants of strong and efficient rule, found warm hospitality in the cities, while complacency was safely quartered in the villages. Poet Kalidasa refers to the apparently self-satisfied village elders and city fathers of Avanti regaling newcomers with old tales of adventure and heroism. His description of Ujjayini, its majestic mansions emitting the fragrance of incense and bearing the dyed foot-prints of damsels wooing the friendly cloud with the refreshing, gentle breeze along the Sipra, and the neighbouring rocks inviting youthful pleasure-seekers, is suggestive of a luxury-loving, easy-going civic life. But Ujjayini had also the vices of a great city—harlots, drunkards, swindlers and cut-throats. Hiuen Tsang's pen-picture of Kanauj, with its flowery groves, limpid ponds, and towers and pavilions on all sides, is somewhat more agreeable.

Not merely the abodes of luxury and pleasure, the cities were intellectual centres too. Early in the period, Taxila was still an educational centre of repute, but later its importance dwindled. Varanasi retained its place as a seat of Brahmanical culture throughout; and Kanauj under the Maukharis and Harsha became equally renowned for scholarship. Vallabhi in Kathiawar towards the close of the period rose to be a Buddhist rival of Kanauj. But the greatest centre of Buddhist learning was Nalanda in Magadha. Its foundation was probably laid by Kumara Gupta I, and a succession of Gupta

kings contributed to its growth by endowing monasteries there. By the seventh century it rose to be a university of international fame and contained several thousand monks. Says Hiuen Tsang, "Foreign students came to the establishment to put an end to their doubts and then became celebrated, and those who stole the name (of Nalanda) were all treated with respect wherever they went." The expenses of the University were met from the revenues of 200 villages.

Under the Gupta empire the economic life of the country was in a thriving condition. With political union achieved, a close contact with the Arabian and Roman markets established, and a balance between order and benignity secured, there opened a serene prospect of peace, prosperity and progress. One of the most flourishing inland marts was Ujjayini, and Kalidasa makes pointed reference to its wealth and varied merchandise. Contemporary literature alludes also to an active trade with the Eastern world, and one of the commodities much prized was Chinese silk. In the seventh century, overseas trade received an added momentum from the coming of Arab traders. Gold and silver were in circulation alongside cowrie shells throughout the period. The standard of living was fairly high. The soil was fertile and a large number of fruits and vegetables was grown. Labour was exacted only when public works required it, but was always paid for. Taxation was light, the land-tax being fixed at one-sixth of the gross produce.

During the period a wave of Brahmanical revival swept all over India. The Bharasivas and Vakatakas were zealous revivalists. The Gupta emperors too were champions of this revival in their own ways. But the renewed ascendancy of Brahmanism did not lead to the persecution of the non-Brahmanical sects, except in rare instances. On the contrary, Buddhism enjoyed the patronage of the Gupta sovereigns, and even of the orthodox south Indian potentates. In the sixth and seventh centuries, however, the influence of Brahmanical revival was deeply felt in the south, where it expressed itself through the popularization of the orthodox Saiva and Bhagavata cults. It is worthy of note that the epic hero Rama was elevated to the rank of a god during this period, his worship becoming fairly well-established in

the fifth century. Within the fold of Buddhism, the Mahayana school achieved increasing importance until it showed a tendency to split up.

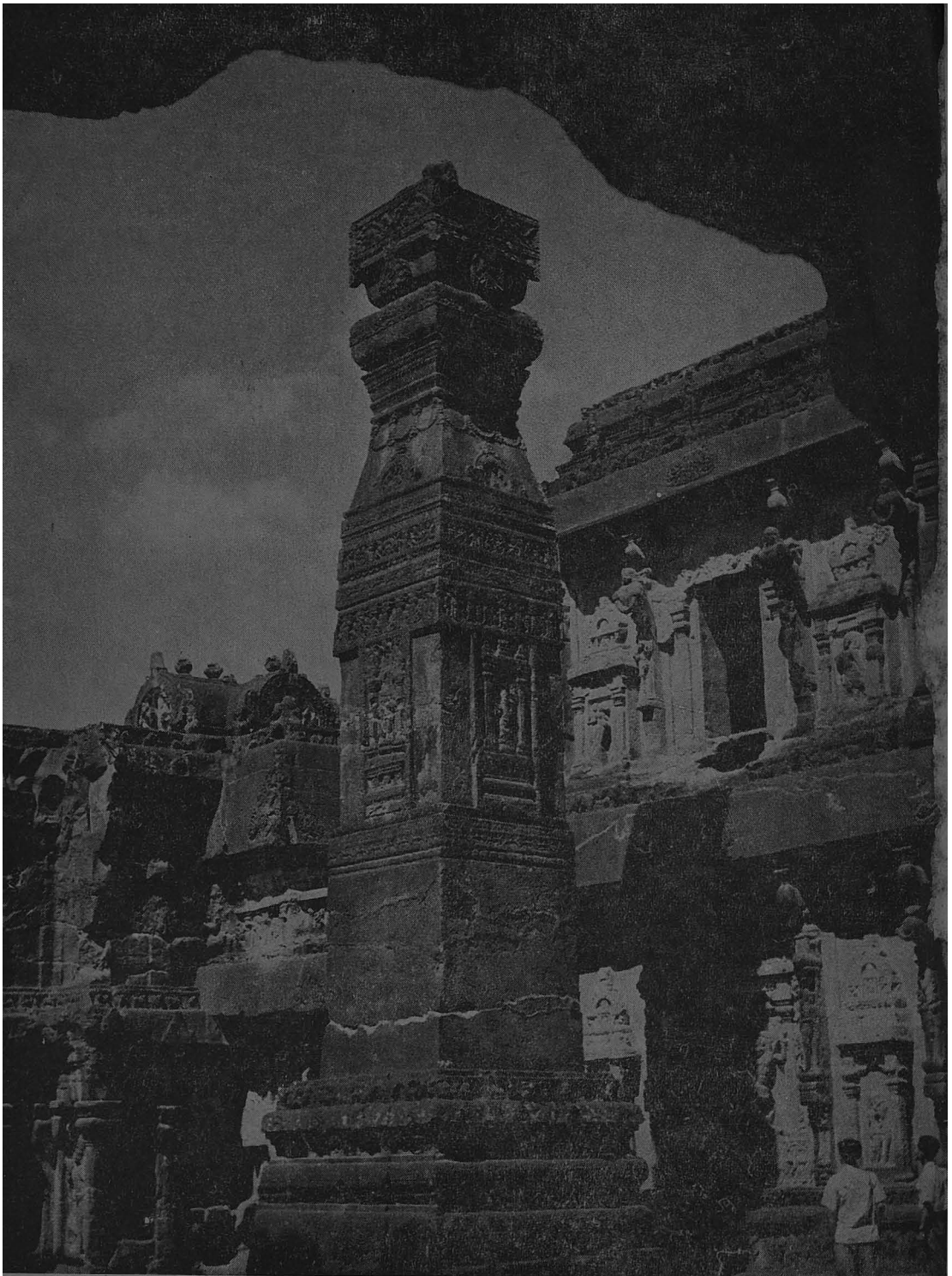
With the revived Brahmanical ascendancy came the reassertion of purely Indian tradition over the exotic in art. For the first time, massive temples of Brahmanical gods and goddesses appeared. The Dasavatara temple at Deogarh in Jhansi district is one of the most conspicuous. The spirit of Brahmanical revival supplied the chief inspiration to the south Indian builders. They produced, mostly in the sixth or seventh century, highly impressive works in stone such as the Varaha cave temple and the monolithic *rathas* at Mahabalipuram, the great Siva temples at Badami, and the magnificent rock-cut shrines at Ellora. The decorative panel work and carved ornamentation on these temples show the artists' skill at its height. The rich and varied sculptural works on the Mahabalipuram temples, such as Krishna lifting the mount Govardhana, Varaha holding the Earth-Goddess in his arms, and Durga trampling on Mahishasura have won almost universal praise. But the most impressive is the "Descent of the Ganga", or "Arjuna's penance", in which a whole world is represented, as it were. Equally great works of art were produced at Ajanta and Karle under Buddhist inspiration, showing that in an age of Brahmanical revival Buddhism had not lost its creative zeal.

The art of this period is generally free from the earthy sensuousness characteristic of the preceding Gandhara and Mathura schools, and to a great extent also of medieval Indian art. The contrast is clearly brought out in sculpture. The figures are characterized by an extraordinary vigour and a calm and graceful dignity. Indeed the Buddha figure reaches the highest pitch of perfection in the Gupta period. This does not mean that art now is detached from life. Its dominant trait, on the other hand, is a harmony between spiritualism and temporal life. The sculptural works and, to some extent, the Ajanta mural paintings, which include themes from the epics and from the Buddha's life as well as scenes of men, animals, birds, trees and rivulets, are almost unsurpassable in their beauty and in the harmonious blending of the ethereal and the terrestrial.

Much of what we admire in our civilization owes its existence to the thinkers and artists of this age. The renewed Brahmanical ascendancy led to a revival of interest in Sanskrit, and increased contact with the Western world stimulated scientific thinking. In religious literature, existing knowledge was systematized by recasting the epics and some of the Puranas in their present form, while several original Pauranic compilations were also undertaken. Outstanding commentaries were written on the Sankhya system of philosophy. But it was in imaginative literature—poetry and drama—that the most remarkable results were achieved. In the rich galaxy of poets of the period were Bharavi, Mayura, Magha, Kumaradasa, Bhatti, "the witty, elegant and versatile" Bhartrihari who made himself famous by his *Sringara-Sataka*, and the poetess Silabhattarika. With the exception of the first, all the others belonged to the seventh century. But of those who made the age glorious, incomparably the greatest was Kalidasa. Much controversy has raged round the question of Kalidasa's date. But it is now more or less accepted that he flourished in the early part of the fifth century A.D. and adorned the court of Chandra Gupta Vikramaditya. His lyric poems—*Raghuvamsa, Kumara-Sambhava, Ritusamhara* and *Meghadutta*—along with his plays are among our richest legacies from ancient India. Of his plays, the best and most widely appreciated is *Cakuntala*. "It is impossible to conceive language so beautifully musical and magnificently grand as many of the verses of Kalidasa." It is not, however, the beauty and elegance of his language—inimitable as it is—which has made him the poet of poets; it is rather his deep understanding of the innermost human feelings and the intimate harmony between the life of nature and the life of man that really has made him great. Among other luminaries, Sudraka and Visakhadatta in the fifth century and King Harsha in the seventh century made notable contributions to the growth of the drama, and Dandin, Subandhu and Bana considerably enriched the prose literature.

To this creative age also belong the greatest scientists of ancient India. Aryabhatta (fifth century), the celebrated mathematician and astronomer, formulated the theory of zero, and discovered that the earth revolves round the sun and

6. Durga fighting Mahishasura, Mahabalipuram



7. The Kailasanatha Temple at Ellora

rotates on its axis. Varahamihira (sixth century) discovered that heavenly bodies are spherical and shine by reflected light. Brahmagupta (early seventh century) anticipated Newton's gravitation theory. The Vaiseshika school of physicists propounded the atomic theory. Medical science was widely studied, and much of the Arabic knowledge in medicine, which reached Europe in the middle ages, was imbibed from Indian treatises on the subject.

Throughout this period Indian emigration to the east continued. The Indian kingdom of Funan (Kamboja) assumed considerable importance in the fourth century. But in the fifth century, a rival appeared in Champa, and the two were frequently at war. Indians introduced their customs and habits into these colonial kingdoms, built temples and installed images. In the Indonesian islands, thriving Indian colonies had begun to be planted even in the first century. The emigrants reached Java in small waves, established settlements and married locally. They had regular trade with India. Colonies grew up also in Malaya. In the sixth century, we find, besides Kamboja and Champa, another notable Indian kingdom in Further India—Srivijaya. Originally it embraced the island of Sumatra but later on developed into an empire and included the Malay peninsula. Brahmanical as well as Buddhist influence was in evidence in all these areas. The result was a new cultural pattern which, although it had a distinct character of its own, resembled Indian society in many ways.

CHAPTER V

FROM ANCIENT TO MEDIEVAL INDIA

KANAUJ, after a short spell of brilliance under Harsha, sank into oblivion during the next half century. In the first half of the eighth century, it emerged again as the dominant centre of political power in the north under its able ruler Yasovarman. From then till the middle of the tenth century it virtually remained the axle round which the political wheel revolved.

In A.D. 712 occurred the first successful Islamic penetration of India, resulting in the establishment of Arab rule in Sind. Attempts made by the Arabs on Malwa, Gujarat and the Deccan were, however, repulsed. In the north, though the Arabs succeeded in gaining a foothold in Multan, Yasovarman in alliance with Lalitaditya Muktapida of Kashmir baffled further Muslim advance. Soon after this the allies fell out, and the king of Kashmir almost completely destroyed the ascendancy of the Kanauj prince. Lalitaditya was the greatest ruler of the Karkota dynasty, which in 855 was supplanted by Avantivarman of the Utpala dynasty.

In the last quarter of the eighth century began that struggle for the mastery of Kanauj between the three leading Indian powers—the Rashtrakutas, Palas and Gurjara-Pratiharas—which was the central factor of Indian politics during the next hundred years or more. The Rashtrakuta empire was built up by Dantidurga, who overthrew his Chalukya overlord (752) and made himself master of the Deccan. The Pala kingdom came into being through the election by the people of Gauda of Gopala sometime towards the end of the mid-eighth century. Gopala's son Dharmapala (770–810) expanded it into an empire. He not only conquered Magadha and Nepal, but extended his sway far to the west. Though his ambition was checked for the time being by Vatsaraja Pratihara, and he as well as Vatsaraja were defeated by the Rashtrakuta king Dhruva the Great about 786, he soon made his authority felt in Kanauj. The reigning

prince of Kanauj, Indrayudha, was deposed by Dharmapala who raised Chakrayudha on the throne and obtained the recognition of the leading north Indian princes to his imperial position.

Meanwhile the Pratihara power, which had suffered a shattering blow at the hands of the Rashtrakutas, was revived by Vatsaraja's son Nagabhata II. He made extensive conquests and brought Kanauj under his control. But Dhruva's son Govinda III "destroyed the valour of Nagabhata" and also compelled Chakrayudha and Dharmapala to surrender. As a result the Pratiharas again fell back. But the Rashtrakutas themselves had to recoil on account of internal troubles, and northern India enjoyed a respite from their attack for half a century. The opportunity was availed of by Dharmapala's son Devapala (810–850) to reassert Pala supremacy in the north. Devapala conquered Assam and Orissa, and checked the power of both the Pratiharas and the Rashtrakutas for some time. In 836, however, Nagabhata II's grandson Bhoja finally established the undisputed authority of the Pratiharas over Kanauj. He appears to have inflicted a decisive blow on Devapala's successor and defeated the Rashtrakutas under Krishna II. He also effectively asserted his suzerainty over Malwa and Gujarat. Mihira Bhoja was the most illustrious king of the Pratihara dynasty and ruled for more than forty-six years.

Bhoja's two immediate successors maintained the tradition of imperial glory of the Gurjara-Pratiharas. But after 915 the Pratiharas were frequently harassed by the Rashtrakutas, and about 963 their empire was reduced to a mere principality around Kanauj. The Rashtrakuta empire itself was overthrown by the Chalukyas shortly afterwards. In the east, the Pala empire, now shrivelled to a mere pocket kingdom, was at the end of the tenth century partially restored to vigour by Mahipala II, and it survived for nearly another century and a half.

The three-power contest for supremacy had favoured the rise, towards the end of the ninth century, of a number of independent Rajput powers in central and western India. Of these the Chandelas ruling over Bundelkhand, the Kalachuris to the south of them, and the Paramaras in Malwa were the

most important. In the Gandhara country, including a portion of Afghanistan, the independent Hindu Shahi kingdom had come into being. In the Deccan, the Eastern Chalukyas and Eastern Gangas held sway during the ninth and tenth centuries. Further south the Cholas vanquished the Pallava imperial line at the end of the ninth century and had frequently to measure swords with the Pandyas during the next century. Besides these, there were many smaller kingdoms and principalities throughout the country.

An India thus divided and devoid of any sense of national solidarity naturally invited aggressors from outside. Sabuktagin, the Turkish ruler of Ghazni, made a successful bid for wresting western Afghanistan from the Shahi king Jayapal, defeated him in 991 and seized Peshawar. Then followed a long series of incursions under Sabuktagin's son Sultan Mahmud between 1000 and 1027. Many temples were desecrated and great and prosperous cities like Thaneshwar, Mathura, Kanauj and Anhilvad were laid waste. Each time an immense booty was carried away by the victorious plunderer. The crowning act of Mahmud's spoliation was the sack of the famous temple of Somnath in Gujarat. After that the invader turned away in haste, probably fearing opposition from Bhoja, the Paramara king of Malwa. But in 1027 he returned and attacked the Jats of Multan.

In the south, which was untouched by all this harassment, the Cholas built up a powerful empire under Rajaraja the Great and his son Rajendra. With their magnificent fleet they conquered Ceylon and a large number of smaller islands on the Indian Ocean, and Rajendra overran the southern part of the Pala kingdom in Bengal. The Cholas fought with the Sailendra kings of South-East Asia with considerable success. The successors of Rajendra also added to the glory of the Chola empire, which lasted till about the middle of the thirteenth century.

For about a hundred and fifty years after Mahmud of Ghazni's raids, India was free from foreign invasions. During this long interregnum, the Rajput states consolidated their position in the north. Towards the end of the period the Chauhans of Ajmer were contending for supremacy with the Rathors of Kanauj. The distracted state of the country and

mutual jealousies among the powers invited Muhammad Ghori's invasions from 1175. In 1191 the invader was swamped by a formidable Rajput coalition headed by Prithviraj Chauhan and narrowly escaped with his life. Next year, however, Muhammad completely routed the army of Prithviraj, who probably lost his life in the campaign. In 1194, Jayachandra Rathor was also defeated, and Kanauj was conquered. The whole region from Meerut to Varanasi soon came under the control of the Muslims. And within the next six or seven years, Bihar and Bengal also were conquered

In many ways, south India contributed significantly to the growth of Indian culture during this, as in the preceding, period. One of its notable contributions was in the sphere of administration. To the imperial Cholas India owed the most important and successful experiment in local government made in ancient times. Chola local government was an improvement upon the tradition handed down at least from the Maurya period. Its unique feature was the village assembly, which managed all local affairs. The members of the assembly were elected from among those who satisfied certain property and other qualifications. This body usually had its meetings in the temple courtyard. The assembly worked through a number of committees; and the inscriptions refer, among others, to the finance and accounts committee, the taxation committee, the water supply committee, the temple committee and the irrigation commitee. The assembly also settled land disputes.

During the transition from ancient to medieval India, the elasticity of the social system and the assimilation of outsiders continued for some time, except for the Arabs. On the other hand, political fragmentation encouraged social division of the four main *varnas* into castes, clans and blocks. The rise of the neo-Kshatriyas or Rajputs, which occurred about the beginning of this period, signified the advent of a new age—the age of chivalry—bearing striking similarity to the feudal age in Europe. Partly as a reaction against the continuing slackness and partly on account of social break-up, a change of outlook gradually came over the Hindus. The caste system and untouchability took on a rigid form, and great social calumny attached to those who violated the marriage laws.

By and by a growing attitude of exclusiveness took possession of the people. Alberuni, who accompanied Mahmud of Ghazni to India, thus deplored: "The Hindus believe that there is no country but theirs, no nation like theirs, no kings like theirs, no religion like theirs, no science like theirs." And he adds that "their ancestors were not so narrow-minded as the present generation is."

But the Muslim scholar has given a rather favourable picture of the position of women. According to him, they were well-educated, could understand Sanskrit, and took an active part in public life. The account of the social life of Kashmir in the twelfth century shows that singing, dancing and acting formed part of the general accomplishments of the girls there. The Rajput girl very often exercised the ancient Kshatriya maiden's right to choose her husband and accompanied the husband on hunts and battles. In other respects, however, women's lot was by no means enviable. The institution of *devadasi* was common enough, especially during the latter half of the period.

It may appear rather surprising that in an age of disintegration education should make spectacular advance. Two Buddhist universities grew up in Magadha in addition to Nalanda, which already existed. The Vikramasila Mahavihara, founded by Dharmapala, rivalled Nalanda as a centre of learning. The establishment had more than a hundred professors and six abbots presiding over its six gates. The Odantapura university near Nalanda also enjoyed great reputation. The Jagaddala Mahavihara in north Bengal, established in the eleventh century, served a useful purpose as a translation bureau and as a cultural link between India and Tibet. This was the age also of Hindu temple colleges, which sprang up in imitation of the Buddhist and Jain monastic colleges. One of these at Salotgi in the Deccan attained great glory in the tenth century. Kanchi in south India was another eminent seat of Brahmanical education. Dhara, Kanauj and Varanasi were the most reputed centres of Brahmanical studies in north India. The Buddhist universities of Magadha continued to be the radiating centres of Indian culture until they were destroyed outright by the Turkish conquerors under Bukhtiar Khilji (1197–1203).

The period saw the progressive assertion of Brahmanism over the non-Vedic religious schools, ultimately leading to its complete victory. Two parallel trends in this process may be traced throughout. On the one hand, religion came increasingly under the influence of the complex Brahmanical ritual called Agama or Tantra. Saivism, Vaishnavism and Mahayana Buddhism felt its effects differently. The immoral mystical practices of the Tantriks particularly had a stronghold on the Vajrayana sub-school of Buddhism which arose early in the period. The Vajrayanists received the active patronage of the Pala kings and their universities. But their Tantrik ways discredited Buddhism and prepared the ground for its downfall. On the other hand, under the championship of Kumarila (early eighth century) and Sankara (early ninth century), a vigorous Vedic revival swept the country. Sankara travelled all over India and entered into serious disputations with the Buddhist teachers. With the edged axe of his logical rhetoric he cut at the root the Buddhist doctrine of *sunyavada* (doctrine of void), propounding his own doctrine of *mayavada* that Brahman alone is real and all else is illusion. He was, however, not an uncompromising revivalist. Really he effected a synthesis between the rival doctrines and thereby made Buddhism's absorption easier.

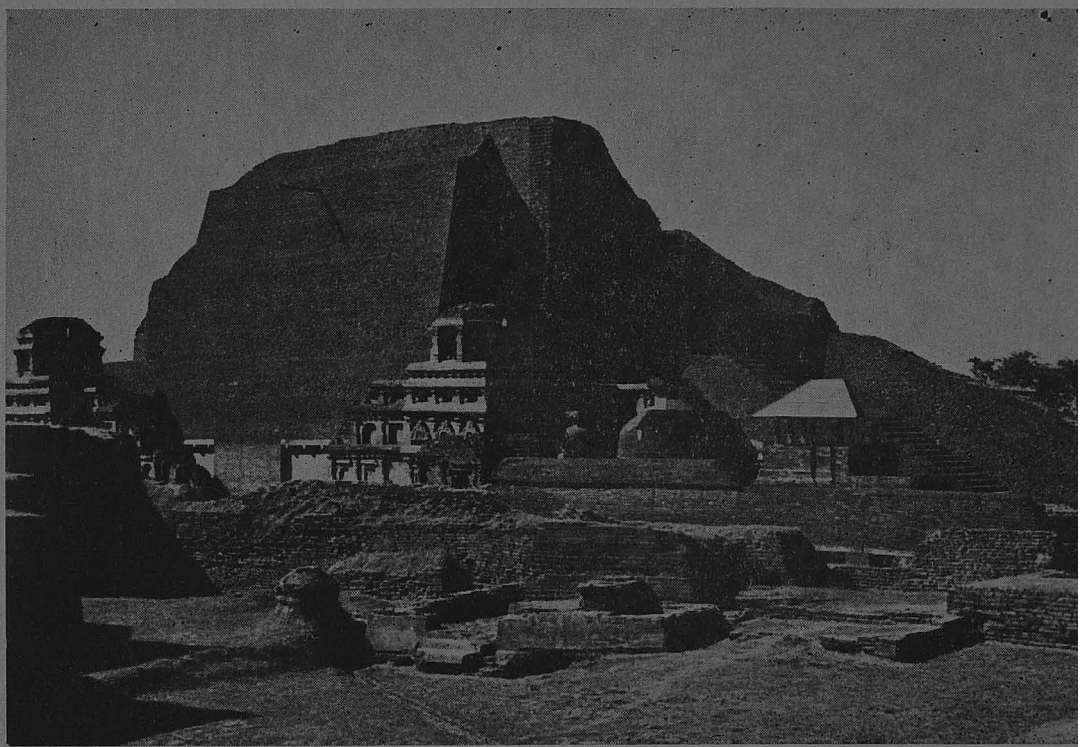
Kumarila and Sankara merely carried near completion a process that had been under way for many centuries. Brahmanism had slowly been casting its spell on its rival since about the first century B.C., and by accepting the Buddha as an incarnation of Vishnu in the sixth century A.D. it had already half assimilated the Buddhist faith. Mahayana Buddhism no doubt withstood for a considerable time the assault dealt against it owing to the support it received from the Pala sovereigns. Whatever may be said against its protagonists, it can scarcely be denied that they did admirable work in propagating India's culture abroad. Moreover, although in their inspired zeal for iconism they went to an absurd length, they made distinct contributions to the growth of education, literature and art.

Saivism made giant strides in Kashmir and south India during this period. In the south, it received the sound backing of the Rashtrakutas, Chalukyas, Pandyas and imperial

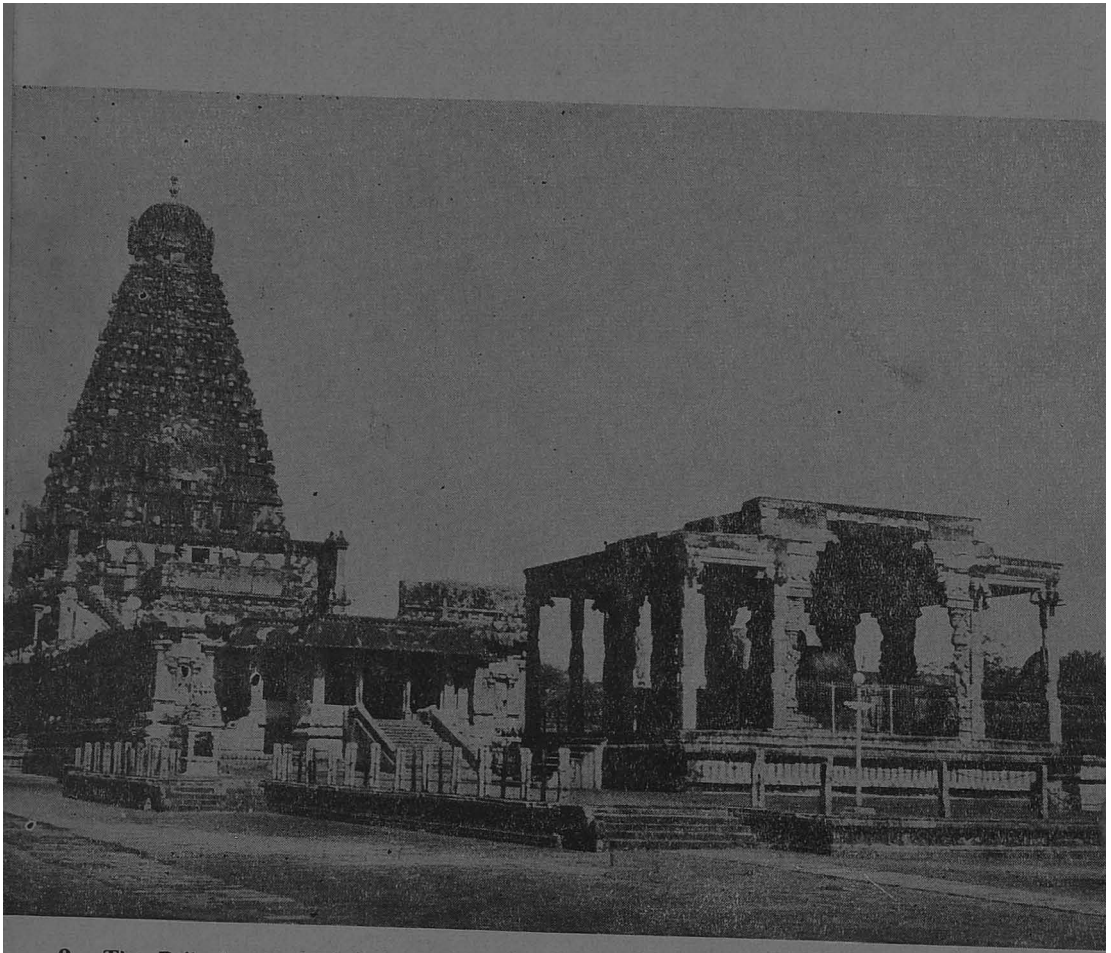
Cholas. The south, which gave India intellectual luminaries like Sankaracharya, produced also a galaxy of Saiva and Vaishnava teachers, the most eminent of the latter being Nathamuni and Ramanuja. Sankara's monism, which identifies the individual with the Supreme Self, influenced all schools of Brahmanism in a greater or less degree. But the Vaishnava devotees saw reason to differ from him. Theirs was a qualified monism, which sought a compromise between dualism (*bheda*) and nondualism (*abheda*). The leading exponent of the new idea was Ramanuja (eleventh century), whose school "blended in full harmony the voices of reason and devotion".

The art of the period is to a certain extent a continuation of the earlier period's monumental stone-work modified by the tastes and conditions of the time. In the Deccan, there was an addition to the rock-cut Hindu and Jain temples and Buddhist *viharas*, all embellished with exquisite sculptures. One of the stateliest and most splendid is the Kailasanatha temple at Ellora constructed by the Rashtrakuta Krishna I. As time went on, the cave-temples were gradually replaced by structural buildings in stone. In the vicinity of Badami are numerous small but beautifully designed Siva temples. Some of the most notable structures of the period were built by the Hoysalas at and in the neighbourhood of Somnathpur. Further south the Cholas constructed gigantic edifices, one of the most magnificent being the Tanjore temple built by Rajaraja the Great. The Chola temple, with a big enclosure and lofty *gopurams* (towers) rich in sculpture, was an improvement on the earlier Pallava style. The group of temples at Bhubaneshwar (750–1200) with bulging spires and cushion-shaped blocks of stone above are no less impressive.

Even more majestic are the temples at Khajuraho in Bundelkhand whose sides are richly decorated with sculpture. A particularly ornate school of architecture grew up in Gujarat under the Solanki kings of Anhilvad. But medieval Hindu architecture has its finest expression in the Jain temples at Girnar and Satrunjaya in Kathiawar, as well as in those on the summits of Mount Abu in Rajasthan. In Bengal, under the Pala regime, a school of sculpture flourished which



8. Ruins of the University at Nalanda



9. The Brihadeesvara Temple, Tanjore

produced stately figures of Buddhist and Brahmanical gods and goddesses in black carboniferous shale. And in south India, under the Cholas, a school of bronze sculpture sprang up which specialized in highly artistic figures of Siva Nataraja.

In the field of *belles lettres* the age presents, in some respects, a contrast to the preceding period. Sanskrit was steadily losing its position as a spoken language, and whatever was written in it was meant for the scholar rather than for the common reader. Small wonder that artificiality and pedantry mark some of the best poetical work of the period. In drama, apart from the work of a number of hack writers, there were a few commendable ventures. The most renowned playwright was Bhavabhuti, who flourished early in the eighth century. After him Bhattanarayana, Bhima, Murari and Rajasekhara (A.D. 900) continued the tradition. In the domain of poetry proper, there were, from the tenth century, anthologies or collections of the stanzas of old poets. There was also a form of mixed poetry and prose called *champu*. The theory of poetics saw its fullest development during the period as may be seen in the *Gita-Govinda* of Jayadeva, the twelfth-century Vaishnava poet of Bengal. Jayadeva is the poet *par excellence* of the *sringara rasa* (erotic sentiment). With sustained dramatic interest he presents the theme of the picturesque cow-boy and the amorous milk-maid of Vrindavana against a colourful background of springtime verdure, delineating the various love-moods in charming, melodious verses.

On the purely religious side the most outstanding work is the *Bhagavata-Purana* compiled in the eleventh century. In philosophy, besides Sankara's commentaries on Vedanta, there were the commentaries of Vachaspati Misra on Mimamsa as well as Vedanta. There was also a considerable output of Saiva and Vaishnava philosophical literature. The twelfth century saw the compilation of a monumental historical work—Kalhana's *Raja-Tarangini*, which may be regarded as the first venture of the Hindus in the domain of pure history.

The Hindu religious revival brought into existence a volume of vernacular devotional literature. The Saiva canon containing the *Tevaram* in Tamil was systematized, while Nathamuni arranged the Vaishnava canon. Non-devotional

literature was even more voluminous both in Tamil and Kannada. From this period dates also the beginning of Telugu literature. The Buddhist *dohas* and *charyapadas,* which form the earliest specimen of Bengali poetry and early Rajput bardic literature, alike belong to this age.

Indians maintained their commercial contact with the eastern and the western world which brought immense wealth to this country, as in the previous age. Their most outstanding colonial achievement during this period was the formation, under the Sailendras, of the kingdom of Sri Vijaya into an empire. The Sailendras were the greatest naval power in the east, and Arab travellers refer to their unlimited resources. They seem to have exercised a supremacy over Kamboja in the eighth century. But both Kamboja and Java threw off their yoke soon afterwards. Till the end of the tenth century Kamboja retained its position as a great empire. The study of Indian literature was a special feature of the religious life of the colonial kingdoms; and the Puranic religion had a strong hold on almost all the colonies. During the rule of the Sung dynasty in China (960–1279) there was a revival of Sino-Indian cultural contact. According to Chinese chroniclers, there were never so many monks at the Chinese court as at the close of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century. A constant contact was maintained also with Tibet. Sometimes in the eighth century, Santarakshita of Nalanda was appointed High Priest of Tibet. In the eleventh century Atisa Dipankara, an abbot of Vikramasila Mahavihara, went to Sumatra and then to Tibet, where he effected important reforms in Buddhism. To this period also belong the numerous massive monuments by Indians overseas. Some of these, especially the magnificent Siva temples at Angkor (Cambodia) and the nine-storeyed stupa at Borobodur (Java) are among the veritable wonders of the art of construction.

Indian culture travelled also, during this period, to the west. Indian scholars were invited to Baghdad, and some of them were appointed chief physicians in the hospitals there. They translated into Arabic Sanskrit books on medicine,

pharmacology, philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, and even literature. From them the Arabs learned the Hindu decimal numerals which revolutionized the science of mathematics in the world. Even the Sufi school of mystics appears to have been influenced by Indian thought.

CHAPTER VI

INDO-ISLAMIC POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CONTACT

WITHIN THE span of about three decades between Muhammad Ghori's first invasion and his death (1206) an extensive Muslim kingdom had sprung up in northern India comprising the Punjab and stretches of the Gangetic plain as far as Bengal in the east. The event was of vital importance for the whole future history of India. It meant in effect that her destiny came to be governed increasingly by foreigners who, while adhering to their ideals, social system and religion, partly adapted themselves to the indigenous culture. In the resulting contact, Indian culture was also modified. The final outcome was the growth of an Indo-Muslim culture conditioned by the traditions and environment of this land.

On Muhammad's death, his lieutenant Qutbuddin was chosen king and he became the founder of the Slave dynasty, so called because some of its rulers had in their earlier days been slaves. The position of the infant Islamic state was not very secure; for the leading Rajput powers did not quite acquiesce in its authority. Moreover, the Sultans were often playthings in the hands of the nobles, who freely exercised their right of deposition and choice of sovereigns. The dynasty nevertheless produced two rulers of outstanding calibre—Iltutmish (1213–1236) and Balban (1266–1286) —and a woman of considerable vigour and ability named Raziya (1236–1240). Iltutmish, admittedly the greatest of the crowned slaves, sternly put down the hostility of the nobles, suppressed his rivals, quelled a number of rebellions, and conquered a wide belt of territory up to Sind. His daughter Raziya, a woman of uncommon talents, put up a manly show as sovereign. But she failed to overcome common antipathy to her sex, and fell an easy prey to court cliques which ended fatally for her and her husband. Balban's chief title to greatness lies in that he restored the dignity of the Sultanate by ruthlessly suppressing internal disorder, and

saved the kingdom from the recurring raids of the Central Asiatic semi-nomads called the Mongols. He set a grim example in dealing with the Bengal rebellion which occurred in his reign.

The Delhi kingdom, revitalized by Balban, however, disintegrated under his feeble successors, with the result that in 1290 it was seized by a Khilji noble who ascended the throne under the name of Jalaluddin. His brief reign saw the first armed penetration of the south by the Turks. Jalaluddin's nephew and son-in-law, Alauddin, who was the leader of the expedition, vanquished the Raja of Devagiri, and on his return slew the aged Sultan and seized the throne (1296). His reign of twenty years is a notable epoch in the history of medieval India. He not only beat back the Mongols, who appeared repeatedly on the north-western border, but between 1297 and 1305 won a sweeping series of victories over Gujarat, Ranthambhor, Mewar, Malwa and certain other territories. Thereafter Alauddin's general Kafur undertook several expeditions to the southern kingdoms and subjugated Devagiri, Warangal, Dvarsamudra and Mabar* in quick succession. Tributes were exacted from all these kingdoms and immense booty was collected.

Alauddin not only was a great conqueror and empire-builder but undertook useful reforms, some of which were conspicuously modern in character. Within the capital and in its neighbourhood he strictly enforced prohibition. He devised a series of market regulations and a system of price control which, though imposed with a certain medieval ghastliness, were far ahead of their time. But all his reforms in the end proved futile. His religious policy was characterized by intolerance. His recourse to excessive repression and espionage led to great and widespread discontent. During his declining years palace intrigues, assassinations and rebellions shattered the vitality of the empire and hastened its downfall.

The Khiljis were ousted by Ghyasuddin Tughluk, who met with an accidental death shortly after his accession. His son Muhammad Tughluk (1325–1351) was endowed with a versatile intellect, and had a genuine love for reform. But

*A name used by Muslim chroniclers for the southern-most part of India

he was whimsical and obstinate, ill-tempered and at times wantonly cruel. Above all, he lacked a sense of proportion. His ill-conceived plan of transferring the capital to Devagiri, and of re-transferring it, brought untold misery to the people of Delhi. His novel scheme of a token copper currency entailed enormous loss on the government. An expedition he sent, probably against some refractory chiefs of Central Asia, met with disaster in the Himalayan snows. Rebellions broke out frequently against the authority of the Sultan. The founding of the independent Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar in the south in 1336 and of the independent Muslim state known as the Bahmani kingdom ten years later took place during his reign. By the time he died, the forces of disruption were everywhere strongly manifest. Muhammad's cousin Firuz (1351–88) was in many ways a sagacious ruler. He saw through well-planned schemes of reform, abolished unjust imposts and undertook beneficial irrigation measures. He was charitable by disposition and a genuine lover of books and antiquities. But he was rather weak and generous to a fault. Thus he allowed the rebellious governor of Bengal to go virtually unpunished, and on more than one occasion let success slip from within his grasp.

Firuz's death was followed by a period of king-making and king-wrecking, with the nobles having the upper hand. His weak successors could not halt the disintegration. As a climax, Timur, the king of Samarkand, invaded India in 1398. He sacked a number of towns, including Delhi, and slaughtered countless innocent inhabitants. His invasion gave the final blow to the tottering Tughluk Empire.

On the death of the last Tughluk, the Delhi nobles placed one Daulat Khan Lodi, an Afghan, on the throne. But he was soon driven out (1414) by Khizr Khan Saiyyad, whom Timur had left in charge of the Punjab. The Saiyyad dynasty produced four kings, none of whom was strong. The last of them made over the kingdom, now a mere fragment of what it had been, to Buhlul Khan Lodi in 1451. Of the three kings of the Lodi dynasty, Sikander, the second, was the ablest. His successor Ibrahim was not wanting in dash or dexterity. Unfortunately some of his kinsmen became his bitterest enemies. They sent an invitation to Babar, who

was already determined to conquer India. Babar easily occupied the Punjab and inflicted a crushing defeat on Ibrahim at Panipat in 1526.

Panipat gave the victor the throne of Delhi, but his position was by no means secure. Though he occupied the Doab and suppressed the Afghans of the north, he had to encounter the opposition of the Rajputs headed by Rana Sanga of Mewar. In the battle of Khanua (1527) the Rana's vast forces were outmanoeuvred by the Muslims. After this Babar stormed the fortress of Chanderi and won a victory over the Afghans of Bihar and Bengal. Babar was a Chaghtai Turk, a direct descendent of Timur. Since, however, he was related on his mother's side to the Mongols, the dynasty he founded came to be called the Mughal dynasty. Babar's sudden death in 1530 gave him no chance to consolidate the Mughal power, while his son Humayun, a youth of twenty-three, proved unequal to the task of steering the ship of state through the rough waters of the time. He succeeded in driving the Afghans from Jaunpur and scored a victory over Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. But the discontented Afghans presently found a leader in Sher Khan. The son of a petty *jagirdar,* that daring, crafty soldier of fortune had made himself practically the master of Bihar and had compelled the ruler of Bengal to cede a portion of his kingdom. In 1537, he again invaded Bengal and within the next two years captured its capital Gaur as well as Rohtas in Bihar. Then, in 1539 and 1540, he defeated Humayan at the Battles of Chausa and Bilgram, and took possession of Agra and Delhi. Mughal rule in India was uprooted by the Afghans within fourteen years of its foundation.

Sher Shah reigned for five years only (1540–1545). Within this brief period, however, he made an end of the independent Bengal Sultanate, subjugated Malwa, conquered Sind and Multan, and obtained the submission of the Marwar chief. His last success was the capture of Kalinjar which resulted in his death in an explosion. He was one of the greatest Muslim rulers of India, and made no distinction between Hindus and Muslims. His greatness consisted chiefly in the administrative reforms he introduced which, in substance, were adopted by the Great Mughals. But his

successors were not as efficient as he. The result was that in 1555, Humayun, after having lived the life of a crownless wanderer for fifteen years, re-established his authority in Hindustan.

A number of Hindu and Muslim kingdoms, besides that of Delhi, existed or arose during the period 1206–1556. The premier Hindu state in the north was Mewar. During the last troublous years of Alauddin's reign it practically threw off its allegiance to the Delhi Sultan, and under Rana Kumbha (1431–1468) fought successfully against the Muslim states of Malwa and Gujarat. Kumbha erected the celebrated Tower of Victory at Chitor. Rana Sanga also was a man of remarkable prowess. Though he was defeated by Babar, his acknowledgment of Mughal supremacy was more nominal than real.

In the thirteenth century, the Ganga kings of Orissa successfully resisted Muslim advance. But late in the century the Gangas were superseded by Kapilendra, who fought creditably against the Vijayanagar and Bahmani rulers. Kapilendra's successor Purushottam lost a portion of his dominion in the south which, however, still extended as far as Guntur district. The dynasty was replaced by another after the death of the next king, Prataparudra, and Orissa went through a period of decline.

By far the largest and most magnificent Hindu state was Vijayanagar. Founded by the two brothers, Harihara and Bukka, with the aid of the sage Vidyaranya, it became an empire under Bukka's son Harihara II. The story of Vijayanagar is one of a continual series of wars against the Bahmani kingdom. In 1486, the original Sangama Dynasty was overthrown by Narasimha Saluva; but in 1505 the Saluva dynasty itself was supplanted by Vira Narasimha Tuluva. The greatest king of the Tuluva dynasty was Krishna Deva Raya. He reduced the *rajas* of Orissa to submission and overran the territory of Bijapur, one of the offshoots of the Bahmani kingdom. The Portuguese traveller Paes describes him as the "most learned and perfect King that could possibly be". Indeed the Vijayanagar empire under Krishna Deva Raya was one of the richest kingdoms in the world.

The Bahmani kingdom to the north of Vijayanagar

became the largest Muslim state in India after the Delhi Sultanate. It had eighteen kings in all. Although its history is characterized largely by court intrigues and palace revolutions, some of its rulers were quite efficient, and acquitted themselves admirably in the wars against Vijayanagar. A few others like Muhammad Shah II were pious and great patrons of learning. In the history of the kingdom, the name of Mahmud Gawan, a minister of State (1561–1581), is memorable indeed. Under his able management it reached the zenith of its prosperity. Between 1484 and 1527, however, the Bahmani kingdom broke up into five fragments—Berar, Bijapur, Ahmadnagar, Golkonda and Bidar.

Late in the period four other Muslim kingdoms rose to prominence—Gujarat, Jaunpur, Kashmir and Bengal. Some of the best and most enlightened Muslim rulers of Indian history were from these states. One of them, Zainul Abdin of Kashmir, was the idol of his Hindu subjects. Two others, Alauddin Husain Shah. (1493-1518) and his son Nusrat Shah (1518–1533) of Bengal, are highly spoken of in contemporary Bengali literature. The Sharqi rulers of Jaunpur were well-known, too, for their liberality to the Hindus, as may be evident from the abundance of Hindu shrines in their capital mentioned by poet Vidyapati.

Early Turkish rule in India was predominantly theocratic. Sometimes the Sultans regarded themselves as representatives of the Caliph of Baghdad or Cairo. But rulers like Alauddin and Muhammad Tughluq were not prepared to allow the church an upper hand in state matters. Hindus in general suffered certain disabilities. They had to pay a poll-tax called the *jaziya*. But civil administration, especially the land revenue administration, remained chiefly in the hands of Hindu officers. Administrative efficiency depended on the personality of the Sultan, and both the army and the spy network played an important role. The amount of taxation often differed; under Alauddin it was excessive; under Firuz Tughluq it was reasonably light. Towards the close of the period Sher Shah effected real improvements in administration. He divided the empire into forty-seven *sarkars*, each under a civil and a military officer, and the *sarkars* into *parganas*. The land revenue administration received his

special attention. Lands were surveyed under a uniform system of measurement and the revenue was generally fixed at one-fourth of the gross produce, option being given to the ryots to pay either in kind or in coin. Wholesome military, police, currency and trade reforms were introduced also, and a system of postal service was instituted by relays of horses. Besides, roads were built, with inns at intervals, and trees were planted and wells dug for the convenience of travellers. The highways were completely safe for travel.

The occupation by the Muslims of a large part of the country had important effects on their social condition. Settling at first in cities and riverside towns, the newcomers quickly adopted an urban mode of life. Differences of dress, manners, customs and outlook kept them divided for a long time from the indigenous population. But as their number increased, many of the city-bred men and women moved to the villages. Besides, conversion and intermarriages tended to enhance the proportion of the rural Muslims. Sharing the same hardships, cultivating the same soil, and following, in some cases, similar trades and crafts as the Hindus, the Muslim masses, while maintaining their individuality, gradually came to adopt the Indian way of living, and even to speak Indian languages. Little by little, in spite of social differences continuing, mutual distrust gave place to an attempt to understand each other's view-points. Indian influence penetrated not only the common man's cottage but also the court. Hindu terms and symbols such as *Sri*, the lotus and the Swastika figure prominently on the coins of the Turkish and Afghan Sultans from Iltutmish down to Sher Shah. Much was done to promote communal harmony by wise rulers like Zainul Abdin of Kashmir, Hussain Shah of Bengal and Yusuf Adil Shah, the founder of the Bijapur Sultanate. The last went so far as to make Marathi his court language.

The influence of the Hindu-Muslim impact was reciprocal. The conservative Hindus, at first reluctant to learn foreign tongues, were in due course obliged to take to the study of Arabic and Persian. But a more important result of the contact was the evolution, from the late thirteenth century onwards, of a common language, Urdu, which was especially cultivated in the Deccan under the patronage of the Bahmani

Sultans and their successors. Even a common form of worship, the cult of Satyapir, originated towards the end of the fifteenth century in Bengal which has survived to this day. The adoption of the *purdah* system by Hindu women is also said to have been due to Muslim influence.

In other respects, the time-honoured Indian customs, such as *sati*, remained unaffected. Polygamy of course was common to both communities. The Rajas of Vijayanagar married numerous wives, while the Sultans and their courtiers maintained big harems. The feudal character of society is well reflected in the fact that almost every aristocratic establishment had slaves. Slaves, however, were accorded quite good treatment, and the institution of slavery was openly encouraged by the ruling class.

Apart from its importance for the growth of Hindu-Muslim harmony on the social plane, the period was memorable for the lasting contribution it made to Indian cultural development in another way. The latter part of this period was the age of Renaissance in Europe; it was also the age of religious and social regeneration in India. But while the European Renaissance appealed primarily to the head, the contemporary Indian Reformation, with its touch of mysticism, appealed to the head and the heart alike. The movement of Martin Luther and Calvin created a sharp cleavage within the Christian church; that of the Indian saint-reformers effected a harmony between the rival faiths and opinions.

The leading exponents of the Indian Reformation, while emphasizing the path of Bhakti as the simplest and truest way to the attainment of spiritual bliss, from the outset laid stress on monotheism. To a certain extent it was the result of Hinduism's contact with Islam, established especially through the influence of the Persian Sufis. Never before had the grace of the One Supreme God been sought with such ecstatic fervour as by the neo-Bhakti school. The leaders of this school preached before the masses what they themselves had realized. The purpose was to combat the inertia of age-old convention, and to inculcate in an animus-driven world the value of love and harmony. In the fourteenth century, Ramananda preached in the north the

devotional doctrine of Ramanuja, the substance of which was that everyone was admitted to divine grace without distinction of creed or caste. His two great disciples were a barber named Raidas and the famous Kabir, who is said to have been brought up in a Muslim weaver's family. A true rationalist, Kabir rejected rituals and penances. He strove hard to remove Hindu-Muslim animosity, saying : "God is One, whether we worship Him as Allah or as Rama." He died in 1418, and his followers today number several millions. In Maharashtra, Namadeva tried in somewhat the same way to oppose unreason. Towards the end of the fifteenth century Nanak, a Punjabi Khatri, took up the mission of Kabir and went about preaching in mosques and temples. He denounced the Vedas, caste and idolatry, and his catholicity shocked his contemporaries. He became the founder of the Sikh religious order which afterwards played a prominent part in the political life of India and commands a large following today. Nanak's two great contemporaries, Vallabhacharya and Chaitanya (1485–1533), were both devotees of Krishna. Sri Vallabha was a Telugu Brahmin who travelled all over the country, calling upon people to follow the path of devotion. Sri Chaitanya had strange mystical experiences in his youth and became a *sannyasi* at twenty-four. He made disciples from among all castes and communities, two of the most famous being Muslims. His method of preaching was by singing and dancing, and at his *samkirtans* Brahmins and Chandalas were accorded equal status. He created a casteless society of Vaishnavas in Bengal and Orissa which afforded an asylum to numerous low-class Hindus whom social tyranny would easily have driven to the arms of Islam.

Literary development during most of the period proceeded along two parallel tracks, religious and secular. Secular court literature included both poetry and history. Amir Khusru, the Sufi, was also poet, musician and historian. But the most notable among the court-historians were Minhai-us-Siraj and Zia Barni. Babar's memoirs in Turki have considerable literary and historical value. Urdu literature made progress under the patronage of the Bahmani Sultans, and of the Adil Shahis of Bijapur, some of whom were poets of merit themselves. The religious literature of the time

abounded in books of mystic doctrines. Among the many mystics was Nizamuddin Aulia, spiritual guide of Amir Khusru, whose *Conversations* form a valuable piece of mystic literature.

The kings of Vijayanagar and their contemporaries, the Reddi rulers, were great patrons of Sanskrit as well as of Telugu literature. One of the Reddis, Komati Vema, wrote scholarly commentaries in Sanskrit. And his court-poet Srinadha earned the title of "Kavi Sarvabhauma" for his elegant compositions in Telugu.

Partly owing to the unintelligibility of Sanskrit to Muslim readers, vernacular literature received an increasing impetus as time went on. Two of the greatest vernacular poets of India, Vidyapati and Chandidasa, were born in the fourteenth century. Vidyapati was a Maithili poet. He at first composed songs in adoration of Siva but later took to the Radha-Krishna love theme, in which his genius had its full flowering. Although his subject matter is religious, his approach is all too human. Like Jayadeva he is a poet of the *sringara rasa*. Chandidasa, a poor Brahmin of Bengal, was a rebel against social convention. He is primarily a poet of pathos, and his Radha is a symbolic representation of the human soul craving for union with the Supreme Self, Krishna. He was not so learned as Vidyapati, but in simplicity of expression and for his deep human sympathies he is almost incomparable. Nowhere does the humanist spirit find such bold utterance as in his poetry, in which he proclaims that man is the truth of truths, above which there is nought. Persian and Arabic words find place in his writings. The religious reformers of the late Turco-Afghan period also helped the growth of vernacular literature. They had to preach in the languages of the people in order to reach the heart of the common man. Kabir's *dohas* are first-rate literature; and Nanak's religious poetry is a unique contribution to Gurmukhi literature. Namadeva enriched Marathi literature and Mirabai the Brajabhasha by their songs. Moreover, vernacular religious literature flourished under the patronage of Zainul Abdin in Kashmir and the Husaini rulers in Bengal.

Sanskrit, though losing its importance, was not quite neglected even towards the end of this period. Some of the

disciples of Chaitanya were inspired Sanskrit poets and dramatists. One of them, Rupa Goswami, wrote *Lalita-Madhava* and *Vidagdha-Madhava* which can compare favourably with modern plays of repute.

The art of the Turco-Afghan period shows the fusion of Indian and Islamic traditions and of the Central Asian and Hindu concepts in a remarkable degree. The Turkish conquerors "brought with them important new ideas, the arch, the dome and the minaret, and combined them with the art of the country." For the most part they employed Hindu craftsmen who either refashioned existing Hindu buildings or used them as a model for new constructions. As a result, widely different styles of architecture, suited to local requirements, arose in various parts of India. One of the earliest and most impressive monuments of the period is the Qutb Minar in Delhi. The elegant structure bears strong evidence of Hindu influence. The tomb of Iltutmish, and the Alai Darwaza, built by Alauddin, are some of the other beautiful buildings in Delhi. More impressive than these is the tomb of Tughluk Shah which stands "in stark and solitary grandeur" in a strongly fortified citadel. Of the buildings outside Delhi, those of the Sultans of Gujarat and the Bahmani kingdom particularly deserve notice. The sandstone mosques at Ahmedabad, with their lofty minarets, and the Great Mosque at Gulbarga are well-known examples. The Sultans of Jaunpur and Bengal also adorned their capitals with mosques and palaces. One of the stately structures erected towards the end of the period is the mausoleum of Sher Shah at Sasaram in Bihar.

Of the buildings constructed by Hindu princes mention should be made especially of the Sun Temple at Konarak in Orissa (thirteenth century), the Tower of Victory at Chittor, and the temples and palaces at Vijayanagar. The Vijayanagar rulers were prolific builders, and among their numerous monuments, which have survived the destruction wrought on the city in 1565, perhaps the most attractive are the Lotus Mahal and the Stone Car-Temple representing the purely Indian tradition in art.

The unbounded economic prosperity of India between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries has been attested by many

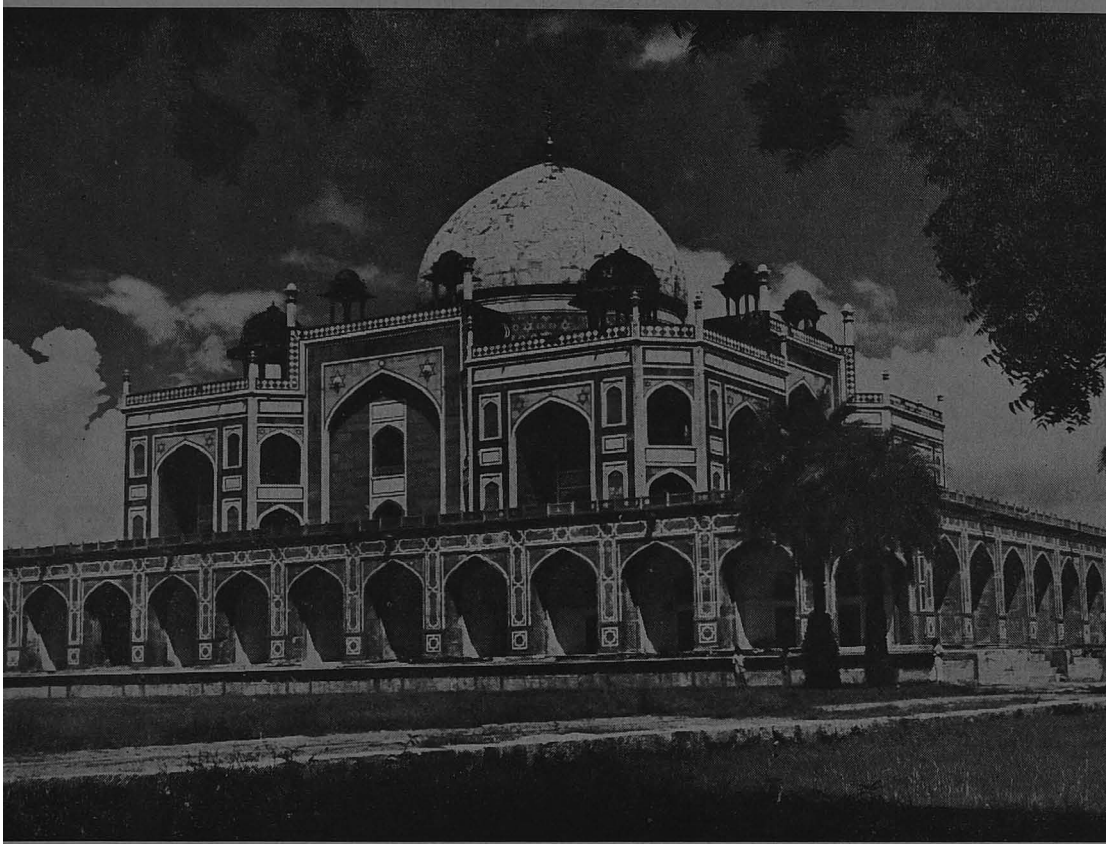
eye-witnesses. Amir Khusru writes that one thousand camels groaned under the heavy load of treasure carried from Warangal to Delhi. Equally large was the amount of wealth drained out of Devagiri, Dvarsamudra and Mabar under Alauddin. Yet this drain had little effect on the south Indian kingdoms because of their extensive trade with the world outside. Marco Polo saw Chinese traders unloading at the southern ports cargoes of gold, silver, copper, gold cloth and silk, and loading their ships with spices. The Arab merchants exported pepper and spices to Europe, and had a monopoly of the import of horses. In the mid-fourteenth century, Ibn Batuta found the Indian coasts fringed with harbours where numerous ships lay in anchor. The Moorish traveller speaks of the trading community of Daulatabad (Devagiri) who dealt in pearls and jewels, and possessed great wealth. The Vijayanagar empire enjoyed almost unbroken prosperity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It had three hundred ports, and many industries throve in the kingdom. All the inhabitants of its capital, according to the Persian tourist Abdur Razzaq, wore gilt ornaments, to say nothing of the nobles and men of rank.

The discovery of the Cape route by Vasco da Gama (1498), opening up direct maritime traffic between Europe and India, made Portugal the mistress of the Eastern seas. The Portuguese soon obtained Vijayanagar's permission to build a settlement at Goa, and almost succeeded in displacing the Arabs from the Indian waters. They established a foothold also in Bengal, and before long they had further settlements on the west coast. They exported Bengal muslins, Ahmedabad calicoes and silks, south Indian pepper and a host of other products to the markets of Europe.

Babar was astonished to see a land remarkably endowed by nature and greatly advanced in art. "It is a wonderful country", he says, with "unnumbered and endless workmen of every kind." All crafts were organized on a caste basis. One of the most important was stone-cutting; and Babar's buildings at Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Biana, Gwalior and Dholpur daily employed nearly fifteen hundred workers in stone. Agriculture was in a fairly flourishing state. But the common people's lot was quite unenviable. Marco Polo was

struck by the contrast between the affluence and luxury of the upper classes and the indigence of the lower ranks in Mabar. At the same time he speaks highly of the mercantile community of Gujarat who "would not tell a lie for anything on earth."

10. Vasco da Gama



11. The Tomb of Humayun, Delhi

CHAPTER VII

INTEGRATION AND DISINTEGRATION UNDER THE MUGHALS

AFTER THE recovery of his long-lost kingdom Humayun lived for barely six months. His fourteen-year-old son Akbar, who was proclaimed king (February 1556), had soon to meet a formidable antagonist in Himu, the Hindu general and minister of Adil Shah Sur. Fortunately for the Mughals, Panipat decided for the second time in their favour. Himu's discomfiture and death gave a shattering blow to Afghan ambitions and left the field open for the extension of Mughal dominion.

Akbar was the real founder of the Mughal empire. His long reign (1556–1605) is memorable in Indian history not simply for the political integration of the greater part of the country but for the fact that he was able to convert an alien kingdom into something like a national empire. He pursued a policy of conquest like others. Even during his minority, Gwalior, Ajmer and Jaunpur were added to his dominion. This was followed by the re-conquest of Malwa and the conquest of Garah-Katanga (1564) in Gondwana in the face of Rani Durgavati's heroic resistance. But political unification was meaningless to Akbar unless India could be united heart and soul under his sceptre. His keen, penetrating eye enabled him to see through the Indian situation correctly and he wisely attempted to win over the leading Rajputs by friendly persuasion wherever possible. This policy was first tried with admirable success towards Amber, whose ruler Bihari Mal submitted to the Mughal and gave his daughter in marriage to him. In return Bihari Mal and his son were given high ranks in the Mughal army. But Uday Singh, the proud prince of Mewar, would not bow before the descendant of Babar. Akbar captured his capital Chittor (1567), and laid waste his territory. Yet the son of Rana Sanga did not bend. The Mughal victory, however, was

sufficient to overawe the chieftains of Ranthambhor, Kalinjar, Bikaner and Jaisalmer who quickly surrendered and contracted marriage alliances with Akbar.

After Udai Singh's death in 1572, Mewar, under his spirited son Pratap, offered a vigorous resistance to the Mughals for nearly a quarter century. Akbar routed his forces at Haldighat in 1576. Yet driven from rock to rock, he held on courageously until his death (1597). In the annals of medieval India, there is hardly a name comparable to Rana Pratap in patriotism and love of freedom. Says Colonel Tod : "Undaunted heroism, inflexible fortitude, that sincerity which 'keeps honour bright', perseverance, with fidelity no nation can boast of, were the materials opposed to a soaring ambition, commanding talents, unlimited means, and the fervour of religious zeal; all, however, insufficient to contend with one unconquerable mind."

Meanwhile imperialist expansion had been in full swing outside Rajasthan. In 1573, Gujarat was finally conquered, and three years later Daud Khan of Bengal was subdued and killed. The veteran Man Singh of Amber, in whom the administration of that *subah* had been vested, brought the refractory Bengal Bhuyans under subjection, and conquered Orissa in 1592. In the north-west frontier, the unruly Uzbegs, Roshniyas and Yusufzais, after prolonged defiance of Mughal authority, were fully curbed. The annexation of Kabul took place in 1585. Kashmir was conquered in 1586, and Sind in 1590-91. The climax of imperialist achievement in the north was reached with the conquest of Baluchistan and the voluntary cession in 1595 of Kandhar to the Mughals by its Persian governor.

The political condition of the south also excited Akbar's cupidity. There the Vijayanagar empire had been dealt a fatal blow by a combination of Muslim powers near Talikota in 1565. More than thirty years afterwards, the Mughals turned their attention to the conquest of Ahmadnagar. Their attempt, however, was foiled by the heroic lady Chand Sultana, and Akbar had to be content with receiving the Berar province. But in 1600 the imperialists succeeded in storming Ahmadnagar, Chand Sultana being driven to die. The same year saw the capture of Burhanpur, the capital of

Khandesh, and the following year the hill-fort of Asirgarh, hitherto considered impregnable, fell.

The seventeenth century opened thus with the Mughal flag flying over three-fourths of India, Afghanistan and Baluchistan. Good arrangements were made for the administration of these vast territories, and the heart of many millions was won by a liberal religious policy. Hindus were allowed to enjoy full social and political rights. The pilgrim tax and the *jiziya* on them were abolished, and the highest posts in the army and civil service were thrown open to talents irrespective of race or creed. To satisfy his thirst for knowledge the Emperor freely received men of all sects in his Hall of Public Worship at Fatehpur Sikri. In 1579, he formally asserted his position as the supreme religious as well as political head of the State. Finally, as a step towards unifying the divergent religious creeds, he founded a new religion, Din-i-Ilahi, which, however, met with cold reception outside the court circle.

There are not many examples in Indian history of rulers who can compare with Akbar. Jahangir, writing about his father, says that the glory of God manifested itself in him. Successful both as a conqueror and a statesman, he loved the company of holy and learned men, and was kind and considerate. He maintained a splendid court and was a man of great intellectual curiosity and artistic taste. One of the greatest of enlightened despots, he was in some of his ideas and actions conspicuously modern.

Salim, who succeeded Akbar with the title of Jahangir, reigned for twenty-two years. Soon after his accession he had to deal with the rebellion of his eldest son Khusru which was put down with a strong hand. On the whole Jahangir followed in the footsteps of his father. He put an end to the Mughal-Mewar hostility, and secured the submission of Rana Pratap's son Amar Singh by offering him as mild terms as he could. He subdued the rebellious Afghans of Bengal, and carried on a desultory war against Ahmadnagar, which had regained its independence. Although Ahmadnagar was captured by Prince Khurram, it soon organized a successful anti-Mughal drive under the guidance of the talented Abyssinian, Malik Amber. In the north-west, Jahangir

succeeded in capturing the fortress of Kangra (1620). But in 1622 the Persians re-conquered Kandhar, which failed to be recovered.

Jahangir was celebrated for his keen sense of justice. But he was rather indolent, and especially after his marriage with Nur Jahan (1611) he left the administration for the most part in her hands. Nur Jahan was a woman of uncommon merit, well-known alike for her beauty and intelligence. But her intrigues provoked the rebellions of Khurram and General Mahabat Khan. She was a devoted wife, and after Jahangir's death lived for seventeen years a simple, unostentatious life befitting a royal widow.

Jahangir's youngest son Shahriyar (to whom Nur Jahan had given in marriage her daughter by her former husband), proclaimed himself king at Lahore. He was soon defeated and imprisoned by Khurram, who ascended the throne as Shah Jahan (1628). On his accession the new king forthwith made away with a number of his possible rivals.

The first half of Shah Jahan's reign, except for the outbreak of a famine of unprecedented severity in Gujarat and the Deccan (1631), was a period of almost unbroken successes. In 1632, the Portuguese inhabitants of Hooghly were ruthlessly punished for their notorious trafficking in boys and girls. Ahmadnagar was conquered and finally annexed to the Mughal empire in 1633. Shortly thereafter the Shia Sultan of Golkonda acknowledged the Emperor's suzerainty, and on the refusal of his neighbour, the Sultan of Bijapur, to follow his example, the Mughals invaded his territory and compelled him to pay tribute. Finally, in 1639, the Persian governor of Kandhar made over the place to Shah Jahan. These early successes encouraged the Emperor to push his speculation beyond the bounds of prudence. He dreamt of conquering the territories once belonging to his ancestors in Central Asia, and fitted out two expeditions to Balkh and Badakhshan. Though the Mughals were able to occupy Balkh (1646-47), they found it impossible to stay on in that rugged, inhospitable wilderness. During its retreat the army suffered terrible losses. An indirect outcome of the disaster was the reoccupation by the Persians of Kandhar early in 1649, and repeated attempts for its recovery ended in failure.

In 1656, Shah Jahan's third son Aurangzeb laid siege to Golkonda, and also to Bijapur early next year. But the Emperor was prevailed upon by his eldest son Dara to cry halt at a time when success was well within his grasp.

Shah Jahan fell seriously ill in 1657, and there at once ensued a war of succession among his four sons—Dara, Shuja, Aurangzeb and Murad. In the bloody contest, Aurangzeb eventually came out victorious. Dara was captured and beheaded on a charge of apostasy. Shuja was driven to the wilds of Arakan, there soon to meet with a tragic and ignominious end with his family. Murad was waylaid in a state of drunkenness and thrust into the Gwalior prison, where he died of slow poisoning. The Emperor was deposed and interned within the Agra fort to bemoan eight long years of agony, attended only by his favourite daughter Jahanara. The most magnificent of the Great Mughals, Shah Jahan is indeed one of the most tragic figures in history.

Aurangzeb mounted the throne in 1658 with the title of Alamgir. He began his reign by remitting a number of vexatious imposts. Palamau in Chota Nagpur was conquered in 1661, and shortly thereafter Cooch Behar and Assam were occupied by the Mughals. About the same time Shaista Khan, the governor of Bengal, conquered Sondip in the Bay of Bengal and wrested Chittagong from the king of Arakan. He also effectively chastised the Portuguese and Mug pirates. In the north-west, the lawless Yusufzais, Afridis and Khataks rose successively in arms against the Mughals, and after long efforts were persuaded to submit.

Aurangzeb was possessed of certain sterling qualities. He had a sincere solicitude for the well-being of the peasantry. His private life was free from the common vices of the time, and he was punctilious in his observance of the daily prayers. He issued a number of regulations to enforce morality among his subjects, and ordered the public women out of the kingdom unless they chose to marry. He also prohibited the practice of *sati*, though the prohibition had very little effect. Unfortunately he thought in terms of an Islamic state, and considered it his duty to wage *jihads* against the unbelievers. In 1669 general instructions were issued "to demolish all schools and temples of the infidels", and a systematic

destruction of Hindu temples followed. Steps were taken also to encourage large-scale conversion, sometimes by holding out the enticement of appointments under the government. The hated *jiziya* was reimposed. The Hindus loudly voiced their objection against the levy, but in vain.

The policy of Islamization as such drove home the conviction among the Hindus that the Mughal empire was an Islamic, not a national, state, and became the entering wedge in a dispute which was finally to tear the empire asunder. In the north, the Jats rose under Gokla in 1669, and though dispirited for a time by their leader's execution, they afterwards rallied round Rajaram and continued to harass the Mughals under him and his successor Churaman. The Bundelas and Satnamis, too, unfurled the banner of revolt, and the warlike Sikhs of the Punjab threw out an open challenge to the Emperor under their leader Teg Bahadur. The undaunted Sikh hero, captured and brought to Delhi, calmly faced the executioner's axe rather than embrace Islam. His martyrdom kindled the flames of the Mughal-Sikh war anew. His son, Guru Govind Singh, organized the Sikhs into a military brotherhood and, despite heavy odds, fought fervently against the Mughals almost till his death in 1708. Meanwhile, after the death of Raja Jaswant Singh of Marwar (1678), to whose support Aurangzeb partly owed his elevation to the throne, an attempt was made to annex his kingdom. But the cause of his infant son was ably defended by the faithful Durgadas, and before long Rana Raj Singh of Mewar came to his rescue. Aurangzeb sent Prince Akbar to deal with the Rajput coalition, but the prince was won over by the enemy and proclaimed emperor. Though Aurangzeb succeeded in breaking this alliance, Marwar failed to be conquered. And the Rajput war caused an enormous drain on the resources of the empire.

What, however, gave Aurangzeb most cause for alarm was the rise of the Marathas under Sivaji. A wave of religious and social reformation had swept through Maharashtra, as through several other parts of India, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. But the political awakening of the Maratha people was brought about by Sivaji in the seventeenth century.

Born in 1627, Sivaji had been inspired by his mother Jijabai and later on by his *guru* Ramdas to strive for the regeneration of the Hindu people. Trained in arms by Dadaji Khonddev, he organized a number of Mavali hill-folk into a fighting force and began to raid neighbouring territories. His father Shahji was a service-holder under the Bijapur government. But that did not prevent Sivaji from molesting Bijapur territories. In 1659, the king of Bijapur sent his general, Afzal Khan, against Sivaji; but the latter quickly killed Afzal in an encounter. Sivaji had begun raiding Mughal territories in 1657, and Aurangzeb felt the need of chastising him. But the Mughal governor Shaista Khan was surprised one night at Poona by the Maratha. He somehow managed to effect his escape, although with great losses. Then, in 1664, Sivaji sacked Surat, and much booty fell into his hands. He was, however, shortly afterwards compelled by Jai Singh and Diler Khan to surrender a number of Mughal forts he had captured, and was persuaded to pay a visit to the imperial court at Agra. Aurangzeb kept him under careful watch within the Agra fort; but the wily Sivaji escaped with his son Sambhaji. Reaching home, he started the war against the Mughals with renewed vigour. At last Aurangzeb was obliged to recognize him as a Raja. In 1674 Sivaji celebrated his coronation at Raigarh with pomp and rejoicing. He continued the guerilla warfare against the Mughals until his death in 1680.

Sivaji was not an 'entrepreneur of rapine', as some people thought him to be. He was a constructive genius of a very high order. Freeing his people from their awe of the mighty Mughals, their social and political superiors, arousing them to action by infusing a new spirit in them, and, finally, creating an independent Hindu kingdom in the face of great and almost continuous opposition were his major achievements. In the midst of his constant preoccupations, moreover, he found time to devise a sound administrative system, and, though a champion of Hinduism, extended his liberality to Muslim saints and mosques. He was a man of stern moral character.

After Sivaji's death, Sambhaji continued to harass the Mughals and sheltered the fugitive prince Akbar. To punish

both, and to deal with certain other problems, Aurangzeb, left for the Deccan in 1681. After long, spasmodic fighting, the Mughal forces captured Sambhaji, and put him to death (1689) after inhuman torture. Certain Hindu principalities in the far south were captured, and the kingdoms of Bijapur and Golkonda were finally conquered and annexed (1686-87). The Mughal Empire now reached the zenith of its expansion. But the Emperor's long absence in the Deccan led to the utter neglect of the administration at Delhi, and put new courage into the Hindu rebels of the north. The provincial governors manifested a spirit of independence, and proved extremely irregular in sending their annual revenues. The troops showed a tendency to mutiny for arrears of payment. Before Aurangzeb died (1707), the disintegration of the empire had gone far enough.

The death of Aurangzeb was followed by a struggle for succession among his three sons. The eldest, Muazzam, who succeeded him as Bahadur Shah in 1708, died after four years. During the next eight years, the two Saiyyid brothers—Abdullah and Husain Ali—played the role of king-makers with consummate skill. In the midst of scheming, intriguing and factious quarrels, one king after another was made away with, until the throne was gained by a grandson of Bahadur Shah. The new king, Muhammad Shah, reigned till 1748. During his reign party dissensions at court became so acute that the affairs of government were grossly neglected. Hindu chieftains administered repeated blows on the tottering empire and became wholly independent. The Marathas, who had already paid a visit to Delhi in 1719 under Peshwa Balaji Viswanath, struck "at the trunk of the withering tree" with relentless force under his son Baji Rao. On more than one occasion Baji Rao outwitted the Mughal viceroy, Nizam-ul-Mulk, and brought a considerable part of the Deccan under Maratha sway. The situation invited the invasion of Nadir Shah of Persia in 1739. Nadir routed the Mughals at Karnal, and shortly after his entry into the capital ordered a massacre of its inhabitants. The invader went away, carrying with him most of Muhammad Shah's ancestral jewels, including the Kohinoor and the Peacock Throne, 300

12. Abul Fazl presenting Emperor Akbar with the second volume of *Akbar Nama*

13. Sivaji

elephants and many thousand horses and camels, besides several crores of rupees in cash.

Nadir Shah's invasion left the empire bleeding and prostrate. Muhammad Shah was followed by two shadowy sovereigns—Ahmad Shah and Alamgir II. One was deposed and blinded, and the other was put to death by the *vizier's* orders. Their reign saw a series of invasions led by Ahmad Shah Abdali of Afghanistan.

The administrative system of the Mughals was partly patterned on those of the Caliphates of Arabia and Egypt, and partly based on Indian traditions. The administration was mainly the work of Akbar. There were quite a large number of departments in the centre, each under a hierarchy of officers. The highest position below the emperor was held by the *vizier;* but finance was in the hands of the *diwan,* who was independent of the *vizier.* The land revenue formed the mainstay of the government, but there were several other sources of state income. The land revenue administration was largely based on the system introduced by Sher Shah. In 1582, however, Akbar got the lands surveyed by Todar Mal, and assessed the revenue according to the productivity of the soil, the state demand being fixed at one-third of the gross produce. The military administration of the empire was based on the *mansabdari* system, there being thirty-three grades of *mansabdars* from the commanders of ten horse at the bottom to those of five thousand at the top. There were also special grades of seven to ten thousand horse. The military character of the government was evident from the fact that most civil officers held ranks in the army. The Mughal government maintained an artillery department for the manufacture and storage of ammunition, and a navy for the suppression of piracy as well as for war. The empire was divided into a number of provinces, each under a viceroy or governor. The important provinces were generally under princes of the royal blood. Justice was administered by *kazis, muftis* and *mir-adls;* but all capital punishment required the emperor's sanction. The attitude of the State towards the subjects was on the whole benevolent.

A typical example of Hindu administration of the time is afforded by the government of Sivaji. It consisted of the

Chhatrapati as the head, with a council of eight ministers (*ashta-pradhan*) to assist him. There were thirty departments of administration, and the kingdom was divided into provinces, *prants* and *tarafs*. A considerable portion of the revenue was spent on public charities and endowments.

The social structure in Mughal India retained in substance the qualities it had taken on in the preceding age. The life of the top ranks—princes and the nobility—was dominated by court influence. The Dutch factor Pelsaert remarks that the houses of the rich were "adorned internally with lascivious sensuality." Delicious fruits and the choicest wines generally ministered to their palate; costly silks, fine muslins and precious jewels graced their persons; rich tapestries, beautiful carpets and gold-embroidered cloths of Gujarat or Khorasan decked their dining halls and antechambers. When a prince or a grandee moved, picked damsels from his harem and numerous dancing girls accompanied him along with drummers, musketeers, cavalrymen and aides-de-camp. With all that, the great majority of the court nobles had neither social nor economic security. They might be ruined overnight if they fell from royal favour; and when a noble died, his assets as a rule were confiscated by the State.

The position of women was in some respects pitiable. Eating the best food and wearing the costliest apparel, the most favoured among them often were the most miserable, being sorely neglected by their polygamous husbands. The poorer women's lot was scarcely better; for polygamy among the ordinary folk was not uncommon, and child marriage was a standing social evil. Moreover, *sati* was prevalent in Hindu society, as of old, which the best efforts of Akbar, Jahangir and Aurangzeb failed to uproot. But the fidelity, forbearance and sense of honour of Indian womanhood were such as enabled them to put up with their worst woes. Instances are not wanting in Mughal history of highly talented and heroic women who have left an enduring name behind. Rani Durgavati, Chand Sultana, Nur Jahan, Jijabai and Jahanara are some of the notable figures.

The growing harmony between Hindus and Muslims—a legacy of the preceding age—was a marked feature of the social life of the time. The Satyapir cult gained increasing

popularity in Bengal. There, as well as in other parts of the empire, Hindus flocked in large numbers to the tombs of celebrated Muslim saints to offer their homage. Akbar's liberalism went a great way to palliate the rift between the two communities. His marriage with Rajput princesses led to the introduction of Hindu rites and customs into the palace; and the Durga Puja was celebrated within the palace then and afterwards. One of the Hindu customs borrowed by the Mughal emperors was weighing themselves, their sons and grandsons once or twice a year against gold and certain other articles. The things weighed against were distributed to the needy. On the other hand, Mughal etiquette and style, Mughal dress and dishes, were meticulously adopted by the Hindu aristocracy. Hindu townsfolk freely participated in the Muharram processions, and Muslims of rank often took part in the Holi and Diwali festivals with their Hindu comrades.

There was a fairly well-organized system of education during the Mughal period. Education depended mainly on private initiative. Numerous Hindu elementary schools were run by Brahmin teachers throughout the country, and the more advanced among them had *tols* or *chatushpatis* for higher education. Old educational centres of repute still retained their importance. Banaras, as ever, was a great intellectual centre. "The town", says the French traveller Bernier, "contains no colleges or regular classes as in our universities, but resembles rather the schools of the ancients." For the education of Muslim boys almost every mosque had a *muktab* attached to it. The institutions of higher learning called *madrasas* were also not rare. The State was not indifferent to learning. Some of the Mughal emperors, especially Aurangzeb and Bahadur Shah II, were scholars themselves. The emperors and most of their provincial governors, as well as the Deccan Sultans, considered it a religious duty to patronize scholarship and learning. During the reign of Akbar, learned men and students in the principal cities of the empire received regular State grants. Nor was the education of women entirely overlooked, for tutoresses were engaged to instruct the daughters of princes and nobles in the essential arts and accomplishments. Even

the womenfolk in ordinary households were not all uneducated. They learnt a good deal by listening to frequent discourses on the *Ramayana,* the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas.*

The Bhakti movement and Sufism had both a profound influence on society during the period. While the rigid monotheism of Islam undoubtedly influenced the trend of Hindu religion, Islam itself came under the influence of Hindu mysticism. In Akbar the twin currents of religious thought met and mingled. Likewise, Dara was deeply versed in the mysteries of Sufism and the doctrines of the Hindu saints alike. Throughout the period, more or less, the Bhakti school of Sri Chaitanya held the field in Bengal and Orissa. The Bengal Goswamis, followers of Chaitanya, wielded great influence in Brajabhumi early in the period. In Rajputana, Gujarat and south India, too, the Bhakti movement retained its wide popularity. One of the greatest patrons of Vaishnavism was Raja Man Singh of Amber. Radha-Krishna was the object of his adoration, as with most votaries of the Bhakti school. But the worship of Sita-Rama also rapidly gained in popularity, owing chiefly to the influence of Tulsidas and his followers.

In the domain of language and literature, the period shows the same harmony as on the social plane. While Urdu continued to be patronized by the rulers of Golkonda and Bijapur, the popular tongues came profoundly under the influence of Persian in the north. Anyone who goes through the numerous Bengali documents of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries will be impressed by the highly Persianized Bengali prose style of the time. In the imperial court, Hindi came to be gradually understood and spoken, and even Sanskrit words acquired an importance with the passage of time. It is interesting to note that Aurangzeb gave the Sanskrit names : *Sudharas* (nectar-juice) and *Rasana-vilas* (pleasure of the tongue) to some delicious Gujarati mangoes sent by Prince Azam. New words also appeared as a result of linguistic fusion, words such as *Jharokha-i-Darsan* and *Rayrayan.*

Literature enjoyed considerable court patronage. Akbar showed great fondness for Hindi poetry, and one of his courtiers, Abdur-Rahim, composed first-rate *dohas* in adoration of Krishna. The desire to probe into the mysteries of

Hindu philosophy led to the translation of Sanskrit works into Persian, and Akbar's poet-laureate Faizi rendered the *Bhagavad-Gita* into Persian verse. The fountain of inspiration did not dry up under his successors. The court of Shah Jahan was adorned by a number of Hindu and Muslim poets. One of the greatest poets of the time was Ras Khan. He composed devotional poems on Krishna which in the depth of religious fervour equal "anything written by any other poet". Prince Dara, an ardent student of Vedanta, had Persian abridgements of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, and of some of the *Upanishads* and *Puranas*, made.

The Mughal court patronized also Persian literature, both historical and poetical. Akbar's court-historian Abul Fazl made himself famous by writing *Ain-i-Akbari* and *Akbarnamah*. Jahangir's *Tuzuk* (memoirs) forms an elegant piece of historical writing. Among other historians were Firishta, Badaoni, Abdul Hamid Lahori, Bhimsen, Iswardas and Khafi Khan. Of the Persian poets there was a rich galaxy. Among the poetesses, the name of Aurangzeb's daughter Zeb-un-nisa deserves mention.

The best poetic talents grew, however, in the humble cottage, away from the court. Krishnadas Kaviraj wrote *Chaitanya-Charitamrita* in Bengali, and Surdas, the blind poet of Agra, composed moving lyrics in Hindi on Radha-Krishna. The greatest poet of the age, however, was Tulsidas, the author of *Rama-Charita-Manasa*. This inspiring epic forms the "one Bible of a hundred million people", and is unrivalled in the field of Hindi poetry. Maharashtra produced a number of devotees who composed songs in Marathi, notably Tukaram and Ramdas. The names of Krittivasa, Kambar and Ezhuthachan, who flourished respectively in Bengal, Tamil country and Kerala, also deserve notice for their compositions on the theme of the *Ramayana*. Among the Muslim writers of Hindi allegorical poetry, Malik Jayasi is renowned for his *Padmavat*.

Mughal culture and refinement are best reflected in stone. Akbar's reign struck a new note in Indo-Muslim architecture, replacing the rugged austerity of the work of the earlier sovereigns by a Persian daintiness, and yet not lacking in manly vigour and simplicity. Among his buildings, those of

Fatehpur Sikri—the Jodhpuri Mahal, Diwan-i-Am, Diwan-i-Khas, Jami Masjid, Panch Mahal and Buland Darwaza—are the most impressive. In these, as well as in the tomb of Humayun in Delhi and the buildings at Agra, the influence of Hindu style is clearly marked. Though Jahangir was not a prolific builder, his one great work—the tomb of his father at Sikandra—is a highly interesting structure constructed somewhat in the manner of a Buddhist *vihara*. The reign of Shah Jahan saw the high-water-mark of Mughal architecture. His passion for building led him to undertake the construction of palaces, forts, mosques and mausoleums in the important cities of the empire. In striking contrast to the conspicuous inconspicuousness of his grandfather's red stone work, especially at Agra, is the showy ornamentation of his elaborately inlaid marble work. The Diwan-i-Am, Diwan-i-Khas and Jami Masjid at Delhi, and the Moti Masjid at Agra, are among his stateliest constructions. But the most picturesque is the Taj Mahal, that 'miracle of miracles', which he built at Agra in memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz. The milk-white structure, embodying the sigh of the crestfallen royal lover, looks as fresh as if it were constructed only yesterday.

The Deccan Sultans, too, evinced a lively interest in building. Of the numerous edifices which once adorned the city of Bijapur, some have survived. Of these, the Gol Gombaz with its gigantic dome, erected above the grave of Muhammad Adil Shah, has distinct marks of Persian refinement and rivals some of the best Mughal stone-work.

Mughal love of nature led to the laying out of many thousand gardens in the various cities of the empire. In addition, the emperors got scenes from nature and life depicted in paintings. Humayun had brought some painters from Persia, the most renowned being Abdus Samad. Naturally Persian influence is predominant in early Mughal paintings. But under Akbar there was a fusion of Persian and Indian styles. Abul Fazl mentions seventeen court painters, thirteen of whom were Hindus. About the work of the Hindu artists he says that "few in the whole world are found equal to them." The art of painting reached its climax under Jahangir, one of whose court painters, Mansur,

excelled in brush-and-colour drawings of birds and flowers. In Kangra and Rajputana, the tradition of purely Hindu painting survived. The Rajput school worked mostly on mythological themes, especially Radha-Krishna love episodes, and on allegorical representation of Indian musical modes. During the Mughal period, two other arts—calligraphy and music—throve, mainly under court patronage. Indian classical music owes a great deal to Mian Tansen, Akbar's court musician. Down to the time of Shah Jahan the court maintained a galaxy of musicians, many of whom were Hindus. A notable outcome of Hindu-Muslim impact was the adaptation into Indian music of the Persian *ghazal*.. But under Aurangzeb all kinds of art suffered a decline for lack of royal patronage.

India during the one and a half centuries from Akbar to Aurangzeb was still a vast repository of precious stones and metals. The amount of gold in the imperial treasury under Akbar and Shah Jahan was almost beyond computation. And the quantity used in plating the domes and ceilings of their buildings, gilding the windows and renovating the throne and crown was altogether lavish. The country's foreign trade until the end of the sixteenth century was chiefly in the hands of the Portuguese. But in the seventeenth century, Portuguese domination of the sea was challenged by two formidable competitors. The English East India Company secured Emperor Jahangir's permission to build a factory at Surat, and before the turn of the century English factories and settlements grew up in many other places—Madras, Bombay, Calcutta, Masulipatam, Balasore, Hooghly, Kasimbazar, Patna, Agra, Broach and Ahmedabd. The other rivals of the Portuguese, the Dutch, also erected factories in many of these places and elsewhere. The French East India Company came late in the field and established settlements at Pondicherry, Chandernagore and several other places. With the coming of the English, Dutch and French an added demand was created for the products of Indian manufacture abroad.

Cotton manufacture, India's staple industry, was more or less spread over the whole country. But certain centres had acquired a reputation for specialization. Around Masulipatam

and Golkonda fine cotton goods were made chiefly for export, and the hinterland of Broach and Ahmedabad produced, according to Pelsaert, "the best known baftas" and many other sorts of cloth. The best varieties of muslin were, however, made around Dacca in East Bengal where there were State workshops producing cloth for the imperial establishments. Various other kinds of manufacture, besides cloth-making, were carried on by craftsmen alongside agriculture, which formed the people's basic industry.

Thriving and populous cities existed or grew up during the Mughal period. Some of these, particularly Agra and Lahore, were among the biggest cities of the world. The city of Burhanpur had five thousand bankers and money-changers, according to Jahangir. But great was the contrast between the wealth and luxury of the richer classes and the squalor and poverty of the common folk. Yet, except during famines, when prices shot up beyond the poor people's reach, they seem to have been on the whole contented with their lot. Normally there was no dearth of employment, and the necessaries of life were very cheap indeed. During Shaista Khan's governorship, for instance, one rupee fetched eight maunds of rice in Bengal.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WESTERN IMPACT

BETWEEN 1757 and 1857 a new India grew up. Within a hundred years the country was transformed politically and economically, and to a great extent socially too. In 1757 the Mughal Empire was virtually a nonentity; at the close of the period it ceased to exist even in name. In the past, the empire had been a great social force; Mughal fashions and ways of life had permeated the upper classes, if not the masses. Western manners and ideals slowly took their place. Persian after 1838 was no more important officially, being gradually replaced by English and the regional tongues. Hindu widows were no longer permitted to burn themselves alive after 1829, and custom was not held to be a bar to the sending of grown-up girls to schools. Furthermore, towards the closing years of these decades, railway lines and telegraph wires brought distant places within quick reach of men and news to an extent undreamt of by the swiftest mail-carriers of Mughal times. But the most significant of all was the change wrought in the economic life of the Indian people—the old order having crumbled down, with vast multitudes thrown out of work, and the country practically reduced to the position of an importer of manufactured goods.

During the eighteenth century the Marathas, the strongest of the indigenous powers, aspired after India's sovereignty. But the untimely death of Peshwa Baji Rao (1740) had left the reins of affairs in the hands of his son Balaji, who at best was a reckless man. The haughty Maratha horse under him trampled the earth from the Krishna to the Sindhu, but the Marathas, in the intoxication of success, failed to win over the Rajputs, Jats and Sikhs.

Consequently, at Panipat, a Muslim coalition headed by Ahmad Shah Abdali inflicted a terrible defeat on the Peshwa's forces in January 1761. The debacle was highly significant, not for the loss of life, unprecedented as it was, which the Marathas suffered, but for the fact that by compelling them

to retreat, at least for the time, it gave a decided advantage to a third power.

That power, the English East India Company, had in a game of chance on a sultry summer day of 1757, in the mango grove of Plassey, got the better of Nawab Siraj-uddaulah of Bengal. In accordance with a prearranged plan, which casts sinister light on the character of contemporary politics, Mir Jafar, the old commander-in-chief of the young Nawab, had been raised to the *musnad* of Murshidabad by Robert Clive. In return for this service Clive and other members of the Calcutta Council had gained for themselves and the Company enormous wealth from the Bengal treasury.

It was, however, no very happy mantle that Mir Jafar wore. Sharp differences between him and the English Council on a number of questions led to his deposition, and to the installation of his son-in-law, Mir Kasim, as Nawab (1760). Between 1745 and 1760 the English had had to contend on the Coromandel Coast for supremacy with the French, led at first by the redoubtable Dupleix, and then by Lally and Bussy. Their final victory over their colonial rival practically coincided with Mir Jafar's dismissal. Both events had the effect of greatly enhancing British prestige in India. In Bengal Mir Kasim did his best to satisfy the greedy councillors. But he was not the man to suffer his sovereign rights to be infringed. He strongly protested against the continuing trade abuses on the part of the Company's servants, and took drastic counter-measures. At last his relations with the Company grew so bad that both parties decided on war. A series of setbacks in the war obliged the Nawab to leave his dominion, and the aged Mir Jafar was recalled (1763). At Buxar Mir Kasim made a last desperate attempt to regain his position, aided by the Nawab of Oudh and Emperor Shah Alam (1764). But fate did not favour him.

Even more than Plassey, Buxar augmented the Company's influence in Bengal, and gave them the sovereignty of that *subah*. British troops occupied Oudh. But Clive on his return to Bengal for the second time restored to the Nawab his possessions, and obtained for the Company fifty lakhs of rupees and two districts. The districts were handed over to Shah Alam, and from him the Company secured the

diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa (August 1765) which, together with the *nizamat* already granted by Mir Jafar's successor, legalized their political status. But the Company did not assume the administration all at once, preferring to leave it to the Nawab's officers. This dual arrangement led to chronic misrule and rack-renting of the ryots. The bordering districts of Bengal became the happy hunting ground of freebooters and a class of yellow-robed gangsters called *Sannyasis*. To cap it all came the famine of 1770, which carried away well near a third of the Bengal population.

Meanwhile, under Peshwa Madhava Rao, a first-rate young statesman and general, the Marathas not only recovered their lost position by 1769 but, by their victories over the Nizam and Hyder Ali of Mysore, once again inspired awe throughout India. Under his direction, and under the command of Mahadaji Sindhia, they overran Rohilkhand, Agra, Delhi and neighbouring territories, and held the Emperor under their protection. Though the Maratha cause suffered incalculable injury by the Peshwa's premature death in 1772, Mahadaji's brilliant feats in the north sustained the prestige of Maratha arms. In his attention and civility to the imperial throne, Mahadaji was second to none, and as long as he lived he served the Emperor with the utmost fidelity. His death in 1794 was a mighty loss to the Maratha power.

Three other Maratha chiefs—Holkar, Bhonsle and Gaekwad—besides Sindhia, held virtually independent charge owing a nominal allegiance to the Peshwa. While the descendant of the house of Sivaji was the titular head of the Marathas, and all power after the death of Sahu, son of Sambhaji, had passed to his minister, the Peshwa, the latter himself became a nonentity after Madhava Rao's death, with the result that his secretary, Nana Fadnavis, held the control of affairs at Poona. A remarkable figure in Maratha history of the time is Ahalya Bai Holkar. She succeeded her father-in-law Malhar Rao to the state of Indore in 1766, and ruled till 1795. Ahalya Bai is "one of the purest and most exemplary characters" Maharashtra has produced; and her memory is enshrined in the numerous works of piety she has left behind.

In 1772 the Court of Directors in England, apprised of the

unfortunate state of affairs in Bengal, sent Warren Hastings as Governor with instructions to assume direct administration of the Company's provinces. Two years later he was styled Governor-General. Hastings checked the abuses in the field of administration and suppressed the *Sannyasis* and other miscreants. However, for the relief of the Company's financial distress he countenanced inhuman brutalities on the part of Oudh troops in the Rohilla country, and dispossessed the Raja of Banaras of his estate on his expressing inability to supply any further money and arms over and above what he had already furnished under repeated demands. Again, he persuaded the British Resident at Lucknow to seize the treasure of the Oudh Begums for the satisfaction of the Nawab's debts to the Company, stopped the annual tribute payable to the Emperor, and drastically cut down the Bengal Nawab's allowance. Hastings, however, sought to maintain friendly relations with the Indian powers. Unfortunately, Madhava Rao's death was followed by a serious rupture among the Marathas in which the English became entangled. In 1778 they were faced by a triple combination—Hyder Ali, the Nizam and the Marathas, with the French in the rear. The next two years were an extremely trying time for them. But Hastings's diplomacy at last succeeded in winning both the Nizam and the Marathas, so that Hyder was left single-handed to carry on the campaign. The war with the Marathas was brought to a close by the Treaty of Salbai (1782). But on Hyder's death his son Tipu continued the fight.

Hastings left India in 1785, considerably strengthening the Company's power. Lord Cornwallis, who became Governor-General in 1786, was, unlike Clive or Hastings, a man of stern morals and did much to reform the Company's administration and to check corruption and oppression. He wanted to adhere to the spirit of that clause in Pitt's India Act (1784) which forbade territorial acquisition in India. But circumstances obliged him to make war on Tipu in alliance with the Marathas and the Nizam. The war dragged on for two years. In the end Tipu sued for peace, paying a large indemnity and surrendering a portion of his kingdom to the victors.

Cornwallis's successor, Sir John Shore, on the whole

followed a policy of non-intervention in Indian affairs. But the next Governor-General, Lord Wellesley, was the very antithesis of Shore. Wellesley arrived in India in 1798, pledged to stand by the parliamentary declaration against Indian conquests. But the situation in India, he wrote, was 'extremely critical'. Zaman Shah of Afghanistan was casting his greedy eyes on the Punjab, and had already more than once appeared with his forces. Napoleon had landed in Egypt and was contemplating designs on India. And Tipu, by no means friendly to the English, was parleying with the French, and permitted a band of French enthusiasts to hoist the Revolutionary flag at Seringapatam. An imperialist by conviction, Wellesley cleverly utilized the French menace for the furtherance of British interests in India. He concluded a series of subsidiary treaties with the Indian rulers, binding them to maintain British troops in their dominions and to defray their expenses either by ceding portions of their territories or paying subsidies. He declared war against Tipu, accusing him of holding treasonable correspondence with the French, and on his fall (1799) divided his kingdom into four parts, one of which was handed over to a descendant of the old Hindu royal family of Mysore, the rest being distributed among the Company, the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Marathas. He also took over the administration of Tanjore, Satara and the Carnatic on the ground of misgovernment which proved a prelude to their eventual annexation.

Affairs in Maharashtra about this time took a positively bad turn with the death of Nana Fadnavis (1800). For nearly twenty-eight years he had sincerely served the Maratha empire, undoing the wily Raghunath Rao's manoeuvres for seizing the office of Peshwa, and maintaining the semblance of Maratha unity amidst dissensions and discord. With his death "departed all the wisdom and moderation of Maratha government". Baji Rao II, quite unworthy of the headship of the Maratha confederacy, created an unwholesome atmosphere at Poona by his dabbling in intrigues. He got the brother of Holkar murdered, whereupon the latter drove him from Poona to take shelter with the English at Bassein. There, on the last day of the year 1802, he signed a dishonourable subsidiary treaty with the Company and was shortly

reinstated in his position. The other Maratha chiefs, with the exception of Gaekwar, resolved to annul the treaty. Accordingly war broke out between the Marathas and the English in 1803. Bhonsle and Sindhia suffered reverses in the war and were forced to conclude treaties surrendering Orissa and the upper portion of the Jamuna-Chambal Doab to the Company respectively. Before the termination of the conflict with Holkar, the Governor-General was recalled by the Directors who had been seriously alarmed by his forward policy.

The stewardship of Lord Wellesley was, in respect of addition to British territory, second only to that of Lord Dalhousie. He acted on the principle that the Company, in relation to the Indian states, must "be viewed in the capacity of a sovereign power". Among his successors, Lord Minto checked the aggressive interference in the Sutlej territories of the Sikh leader Ranjit Singh, making him sign the Treaty of Amritsar in 1809. Lord Hastings, who held the office of Governor-General during 1813–23, also considerably extended British domination and influence in India. He defeated the Gurkhas of Nepal in war and obtained Kumaon and Garhwal from them (1816). He suppressed the band of free-booters called Pindaris, who had been ravaging central and south-east India for some time. He also executed important treaties with the rulers of some Indian states. But the greatest event of his administration was the final defeat of the Marathas in a series of engagements (1817–19) which compelled them to retire from the contest for political supremacy with the English. Lord Amherst, who came as Governor-General shortly after Hasting's departure, expelled the Burmese from the Assam frontier and by a treaty compelled them to cede Arakan and Tenasserim to the Company. During the governor-generalship of Lord William Bentinck (1828—1835) salutary administrative, educational and social reforms were carried out, and the bands of assassins known as Thugs were suppressed. In his time, in 1833, was passed the Charter Act, by which the Company lost their trading rights in India.

The main interest of Indian politics during 1836–1842 was the problem of Afghanistan. For some time past Russia

had been actively seeking to bring the next-door neighbour of India as well as Persia within her sphere of influence. This was sufficient cause for alarm to the British Government. And to counteract it Lord Auckland espoused the cause of Shah Shuja against the pro-Russian Dost Muhammad, and in alliance with the Sikhs dispatched in 1839 a British army which won remarkable success in the beginning. Dost Muhammad was driven out and Shah Shuja was solemnly enthroned. But the rebellion of Dost Muhammad's son undid the whole thing. Three British officers were murdered. But Auckland, failing to take action, agreed to a dishonourable treaty with the Afghans. His successor, Lord Ellenborough, determined to strike a blow, sent a fresh British force to Kabul which made a spectacular demonstration. Eventually he accepted Dost Muhammad as the ruler of the Afghans, and the latter thenceforward remained on friendly terms with the English. On the unfounded plea that the Emirs of Sind had proved hostile to the British during the Afghan war, Ellenborough sent Charles Napier to Sind, which was conquered in 1843.

Meanwhile the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839 had created utter confusion in the Punjab. Ranjit Singh, after his treaty with the English, had steadily enhanced his power, and had conquered Multan, Kashmir and Peshawar. He had ruled his kingdom as an enlightened despot for a long period, and introduced wise and wholesome reforms. He had maintained, moreover, a friendly attitude to the British throughout. After his death the Lahore court became a scene of factious quarrels; and because of the anti-British attitude of the Sikh army Lord Hardinge declared war on the Sikhs. The Sikhs suffered a succession of setbacks and were obliged to make peace, surrendering half of the Punjab to the English (1846).

The next Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, completed the work of British expansion in India. His administration saw the outbreak of the Second Anglo-Sikh War, which resulted in British victory and the annexation of the rest of the Punjab (1849). It also witnessed the Second Anglo-Burmese War, leading to the conquest of Lower Burma. An imperialist like Wellesley, Dalhousie refused to concede to the Indian chiefs their right to adopt and annexed Satara, Nagpur,

Jhansi and Sambalpur. Applying the same Doctrine of Lapse, he stopped the pensions of the adopted heirs of the late rulers of Tanjore and the Carnatic, and refused to sanction any pension to the ex-Peshwa's adopted son Nana Sahib. The crowning act of Dalhousie's aggression was the annexation, on the ground of misgovernment, of the kingdom of Oudh in 1856.

Dalhousie's administration was important for the opening of railways and telegraph lines, road construction, the undertaking of irrigation projects, educational reform and the passing of the Widow Remarriage Act (1856).

The evolution of the administrative system during the Company's rule was along the line of expediency. In particular instances, time-honoured institutions were swept away on the ground of "the good of the governed". In general, however, a balance was sought to be maintained between respect for traditional institutions and the desire to import Western administrative ideals. According to the Regulating Act of 1773, the Governor-General of Bengal had a supreme controlling power over the Governors of Madras and Bombay. And by the Act of 1833 he was styled Governor-General of India. The Act deprived the Madras and Bombay Governments of their separate power of legislation. The Governor-General and the Governors were assisted by councils and a number of departmental boards. District administration underwent various alterations from time to time. At the outset, in the Bengal Presidency each district had a European collector and an Indian *diwan* to supervise the collections. In 1774, the office of collector was abolished, and six provincial councils were instituted under the Committee of Revenue in Calcutta. Then, in 1781, the provincial councils were dispensed with and the collectors reinstated with purely fiscal duties. In 1787, the collectors were in most cases vested with magisterial functions in addition to their revenue work. Finally, in 1793, the collector was divested of judicial and magisterial powers which were vested in judge-magistrates. The administrative arrangements in Madras and Bombay followed somewhat on the lines of those in Bengal. But whereas in the Bengal Presidency revenue commissioners were appointed over the collectors in

1829, no commissionership was created in Madras. Bombay came to have two revenue commissioners.

The reform of the diverse and complicated land revenue systems of British India engaged a good deal of the attention of the administrators. The system generally obtaining in Bengal and Bihar prior to 1789 was to let the lands, usually for one year or five years, to farmers of revenue. The arrangement was found extremely defective and Cornwallis, on the suggestion of Shore, instituted decennial settlements in 1789. In 1793, the decennial settlement was declared permanent, recognizing proprietary rights of the *zamindars* in the soil. The Permanent Settlement was introduced in hot haste over considerable areas. Over others the temporary settlements continued as late as 1833, and even afterwards. During the next quarter century, however, most of the temporary *mahals* were permanently settled. The Permanent Settlement proved ultimately beneficial to the *zamindars* and immediately ruinous to many who failed to pay up the revenues within the schdeuled dates. Moreover, from 1819 on, the Company's Government resumed and assessed numerous *nagris* and other revenue-free grants, most of them dating from Mughal times, on the ground of invalidity or lapse. In a few parts of the Bengal Presidency, as also in most parts of Madras and in Bombay, *ryotwari* settlements were effected, settlements being made in most cases directly with the ryots. Steps were taken also to combat the evil of "excessive, unequal and unsystematic asssesments" as far as was possible.

The extension of British political ascendancy over India during the hundred years went almost hand in hand with the economic decline of the country. The decline was due in no small measure to the continued drain of gold and silver from the Company's provinces in several forms, such as the sending out of bullion to England by the Company's servants, the transportation of the Company's surplus revenue in the shape of goods as well as bullion, and regular shipments of silver to Canton to pay for the Company's China investment, and afterwards to the other British settlements in the East. On a modest reckoning, there was a drain to England alone

of 500 to 1,000 million pounds between Plassey and Waterloo.

In spite of the 'Plassey plunder', as the drain is generally called, which among other things caused an acute silver shortage in Bengal until the close of the eighteenth century, and of temporary setbacks due to political factors, trade and industry during the first half of the period were, on the whole, in a flourishing state. While agriculture was the mainstay of the people, as in the preceding ages, manufacturing industries were numerous. Indeed the goods produced by Indian craftsmen, besides supplying almost fully the needs of the local population, met the demands of foreign markets.

Cotton manufacture was the most widespread industry of all, and it afforded, in different stages, part-time employment to well over eighty lakh people throughout India. Considerably more than two-thirds of this number were women employed in the spinning industry. About a hundred varieties of piece-goods were normally exported to foreign countries. There were various centres which were renowned for specialization in particular fabrics. The lot of the weavers, it is true, was not enviable; for in the two to three hundred cloth factories of the Company in British India a system little better than bondage prevailed. Yet employment was assured to this class. Unfortunately the Industrial Revolution of England became the bane of India's economy. After 1813, machine-made British fabrics flooded the world's markets which had so long been India's customers. Before long, the Indian market itself was inundated by 'England-made' cloths because the import duty on British cloths was reduced to 2½ per cent only in India, while Indian piece-goods had to pay 45 to 85 per cent duties in England. Within two decades the tragedy was nearly complete. "Cotton piece-goods", wrote the Governor-General in 1832, "for so many ages the staple manufacture of India, seem thus for ever lost." In a short time sixty to seventy lakh people practically lost their work. The manufacture of mixed cloths of cotton and silk, as also indigenous jute manufacture, suffered much the same fate during the next quarter century.

While textile industries fast dwindled, the production of

semi-manufactured stuffs and raw materials—raw silk, indigo, opium and raw cotton—showed spectacular progress. As early as 1769, the Company had given serious attention to silk-winding in Bengal to meet the growing demand for raw silk in their home market. The silk manufacturers were frequently compelled to work as winders in the Company's factories; and from 1793 the annual investment in raw silk was vastly increased. But towards the end of the period, owing to foreign competition, there was a noticeable slump in the silk trade. European indigo plantation was started in Bengal about 1780, and made remarkable strides during the next eighty years. According to a parliamentary estimate of 1830, the total number of indigo factories in the Bengal Presidency then was near 1,000. But indigo was a source of perpetual annoyance to the ryots; for great was the oppression they suffered at the hands of the planters and their servants.

During the eighteenth century Indian society was struggling under a 'crushing load of unreason'. Child marriage, polygamy, *sati,* female infanticide, human sacrifices and the extreme rigidity of caste rules were some of the worst abuses of the time. Not to speak of inter-caste marriage or widow-remarriage, even travels in foreign lands were regarded as preparing for a journey straight to hell. The tyranny of social convention, which in the past had driven many Hindus to become Muslims, encouraged conversions to Christianity as time went on.

But contact with the progressive, rational civilization of the West stimulated during the early nineteenth century a searching criticism by some Indians of their habits and ways. The pioneer among them was Raja Rammohan Roy. Born in a Bengali Brahmin family in 1772, Rammohan served the East India Company for some time, and after resigning his job dedicated himself wholly to the cause of social reform. His deep study of ancient Indian literature, as well as of Persian, Arabic and English, made him realize the need for reforming the Hindu religion. Universal brotherhood was his motto alike in social and religious reconstruction. With a view to this he established the Atmiya Sabha in Calcutta, and in 1828 founded an organization which later on became

known as the Brahmo Samaj. From the beginning the Brahmo Samaj stood against idolatry, caste, child marriage and *purdah,* and upheld the worship of the One, the Absolute or Brahman. Rammohan also advocated the education of women and their right to property. His greatest contribution to society, however, was his stand against *sati* which enabled Lord Bentinck to declare the cruel custom illegal in 1829. Rammohan favoured foreign travel and himself went to England. A humanist, thoroughly imbued with the rationalism of the West, Rammohan may be regarded as the bright morning star of the modern Indian renaissance. After him the Brahmo Samaj continued the work of social reform in Bengal and also inspired reformers outside. In 1849 was established the Paramhansa Sabha in Maharashtra whose object was primarily religious reform. In Bengal, Rammohan's work for the improvement of women's status was taken up by Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, whose effort bore fruit with the passage of the Widow Remarriage Act in 1856.

Indigenous schools were fairly numerous all over India. But the system of instruction followed was antiquated and little conducive to the awakening of the critical faculties in the student. The Company's Government at first evinced no interest in the education of Indians, although some of their officers were enthusiastic pioneers in this direction. Warren Hastings founded the Calcutta Madrasa in 1781, and Jonathan Duncan established the Sanskrit College at Banaras in 1792. For the first time, the Charter Act of 1813 set apart a modest sum for the encouragement of education in India. Independently of the Government, Christian missionaries and some European and Indian individuals exerted themselves in the cause of education. In Bengal, the Serampore missionaries, led by Carey, Marshman and Ward, extended their encouragement to English and vernacular education. The Madras missionaries also did useful work for the spread of learning. In Bombay, Mountstuart Elphinstone sought to encourage vernacular education. Rammohan started some free schools in English. In 1818 he submitted a petition to Government strongly supporting the case for English education in India. The establishment of the Hindu College in Calcutta was a momentous event of the nineteenth century. The students

of this institution, under the influence of teachers like Derozio, imbibed the true principles of science and rationalism. But the new wine of Western learning, as a contemporary put it, went straight to their head and made them sceptical about everything Indian. This, however, was a purely temporary phase. Shortly after this, opinions in the Government became sharply divided on the question of encouraging English education in India. Eventually the Anglicists scored a victory over the Orientalists when the cause of Western learning was strongly put forward by Lord Macaulay in an exhaustive minute in 1835. English education in India gained a solid footing after this in all the three presidencies. Female education also progressed, partly through missionary efforts, and partly through the exertion of men like Alexander Duff, David Hare and Drinkwater Bethune and of the Brahmo Samaj. An important step in this direction was taken with the establishment in 1849 of the Hindu Balika Vidyalaya in Calcutta. About the same time, some philanthropists opened girls' schools in several cities of the Bombay Presidency. Wood's Educational Dispatch of 1854 is a landmark in the history of education in India. It recommended, among other things, the establishment of education departments under directors of public instruction, grants-in-aid to schools, a system of scholarships for meritorious students, and the encouragement of girls' education.

There was also a revival of interest in India's past. The pioneers in this field were Europeans. Sir William Jones established the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784 for "enquiry into the history and antiquities, arts, sciences, and literatures of Asia." The Society rescued from oblivion many things of value about India, and contributed significantly to the cultural progress of the country. Another European, H. H. Wilson, did much to encourage the study of Sanskrit. "The history of mankind," he wrote, "can be but imperfectly appreciated without some acquaintance with the literature of the Hindus." It was mainly owing to him that Sanskrit was introduced in the curriculum of instruction in the East India College at Haileybury. The Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, having originally started as the Bombay Literary

Society in 1804, also did very useful work in throwing light on India's rich heritage.

An important result of the Western impact was the growth and development of prose literatures in the Indian languages. The Serampore missionaries, through their translations of English works, greatly enriched Bengali prose. Thereafter notable contributions were made to its development by Rammohan, Akshay Kumar Dutta and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. During the thirties and forties of the nineteenth century, Ishwar Chandra Gupta enriched Bengali poetry with his "witty and interminable verse". Hindi literature during the period flourished mainly under the patronage of the chiefs of Bundelkhand, Jaipur and certain other places. The most outstanding Hindi poet of the period was Padmakar (1753–1833) whose *Jagat-Vinod* and *Ganga-Lahari* won high tributes from critics. Among the other poets were Din Dayal Gir and Giridhar Das (1833–1860). The establishment of the Fort William College in Calcutta at the beginning of the last century gave an impetus to Hindi prose literature. Two of its associates, Lallu Lal and Sadal Misra, made pioneer contributions to Hindi prose.

CHAPTER IX

A NATION IN FERMENT

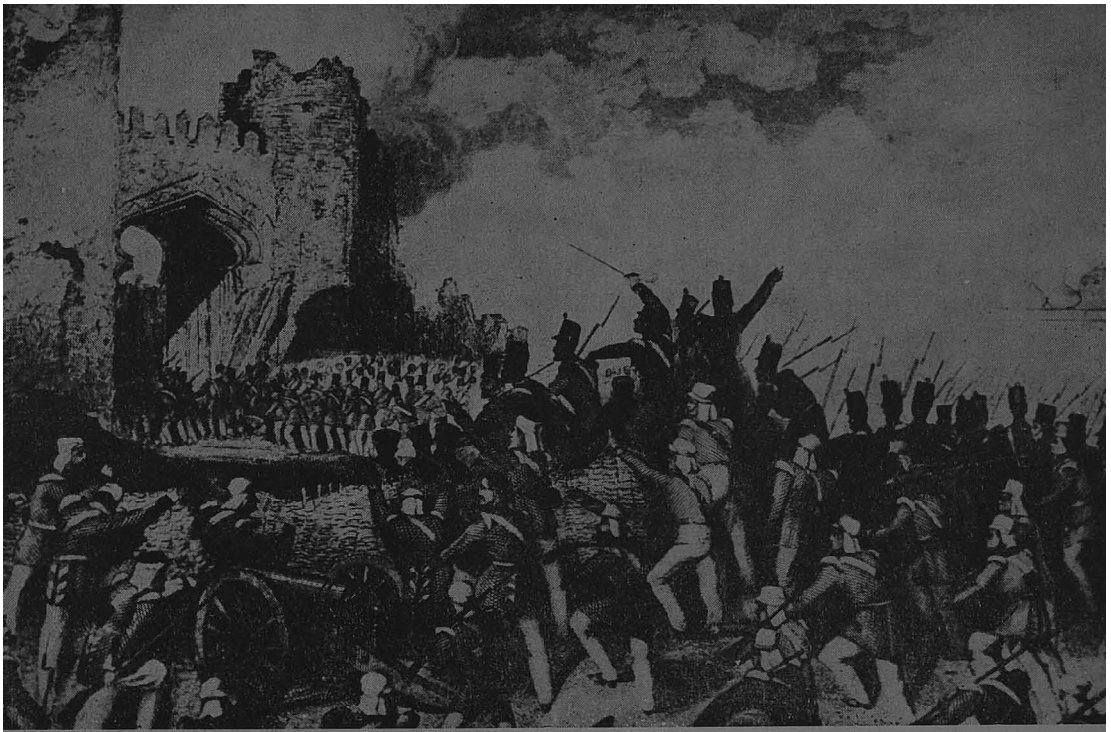
A GROWING discontent with foreign domination, an awakening of national consciousness among the intelligentsia and a sense of pride in India's glorious past together led to an increasing demand for political rights, which was the striking feature of the period 1857–1917. Although the political or economic progress of the country was not appreciable, the psychological advance was remarkable, and by the end of the period India was ready for a direct, face-to-face reckoning with the British Government.

Indeed an occasion for such reckoning arose at the very opening of the period, when Lord Canning was Governor-General. There had been for years past a feeling of annoyance in the minds of many Indians against their foreign masters. This was turned to hatred by Dalhousie's ruthless annexations and orders for stopping the pensions of Indian chiefs. And hatred was mingled with alarm at the sight of railway lines and telegraph wires set up along considerable distances, and particularly at the passing of the Widow Remarriage Act, which was regarded by many as an inroad into their social and religious sanctity. There was also perhaps a veiled murmuring among the Indian soldiery against the haughtiness of English officers. It was at this unpropitious moment that Indian sepoys were asked to use a new type of greased cartridge. A false rumour spread by word of mouth that the new cartridges contained the fat of cows and pigs which outraged their religious susceptibilities.

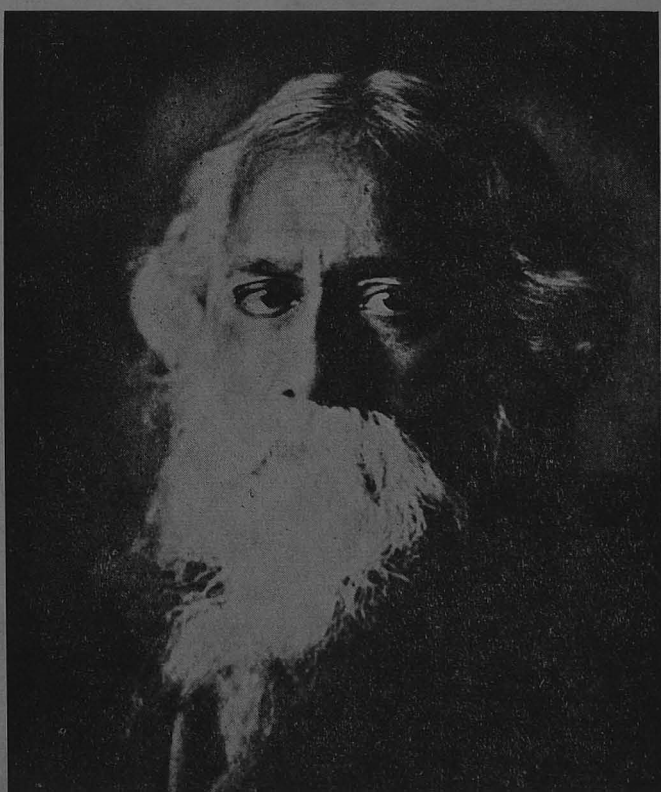
While "cantonment after cantonment fermented with the story of the greased cartridges", signs of an impending crisis became visible at Barrackpore to the north of Calcutta by the end of January 1857. Within a few days the telegraph station at the place was burnt down. This was followed by the throwing of incendiary sticks at the bungalows of some officers and the holding of night meetings. But more than this did not happen at the moment. The contagion, however,

travelled northwards to Berhampore, where the 19th Native Infantry got panicky and excitcd. On February 27, news got round that the regiment had risen. Luckily for the Government, the rising was quickly suppressed. But after a month Barrackpore was stirred to excitement anew. One Mangal Pande, in a state of utter bewilderment, summoned his colleagues to mutiny before it was too late. Two European officers who went out to deal with him received serious injuries, and Pande himself had a severe wound. He was, however, caught, court-martialled and executed after a few days.

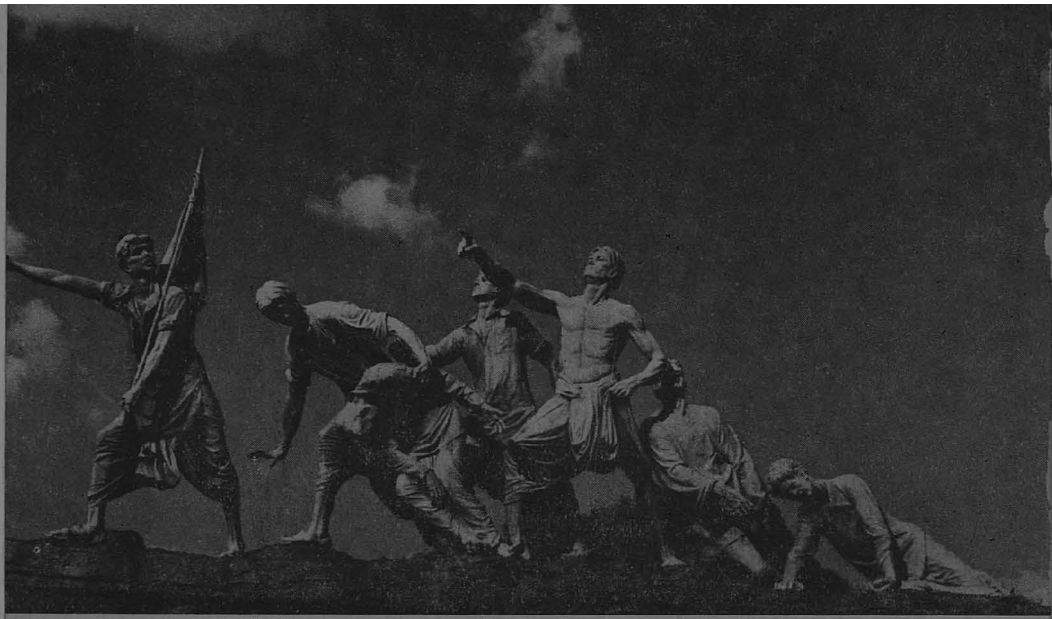
Before long there were disturbances at Ambala and many other up-country towns. The month of April saw the sepoys of Meerut in ferment. A number of them who declined to touch the new cartridges were sent to gaol, whereupon the rest broke into an open insurrection. They were speedily joined by a reinforcement of the town's civil population, and on May 10 the inflamed crowd broke open the prison gate, set the prisoners free, and cut down a few Englishmen. Lack of effective counter-measures put heart into the rebels, who at once made off for Delhi. The imperial city was already seething with revolt when the Meerut mutineers arrived. Some of the citizens as well as the Indian sepoys of Delhi jumped into the fray, massacred a number of Europeans, and proclaimed Bahadur Shah II Emperor of India. Before any attempt could be made to recover Delhi, insurrections had broken out at Lucknow, Aligarh, Bareilly, Etawah, Kanpur, Moradabad, Allahabad, Jaunpur, Banaras, Patna and several other places. The Lucknow flare-up of May 30 was instigated and aided by Begum Hazrat Mahal, wife of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, and his minister Naqi Ali. It had the support of the Oudh *talukdars* and peasants. For upwards of a month Sir Henry Lawrence bravely defended the Residency there against numerous assaults, but on July 4 he met with a sudden end. One of the most influential leaders of the movement was Nana Sahib, whose pension the British Government had refused to sanction. He is said to have sent his agent Azimulla Khan to Crimea for getting Russian help. In June Nana Sahib occupied Kanpur and proclaimed himself Peshwa. The English garrison, unable to



14. The British storming Kashmiri Gate to retake Delhi in 1857

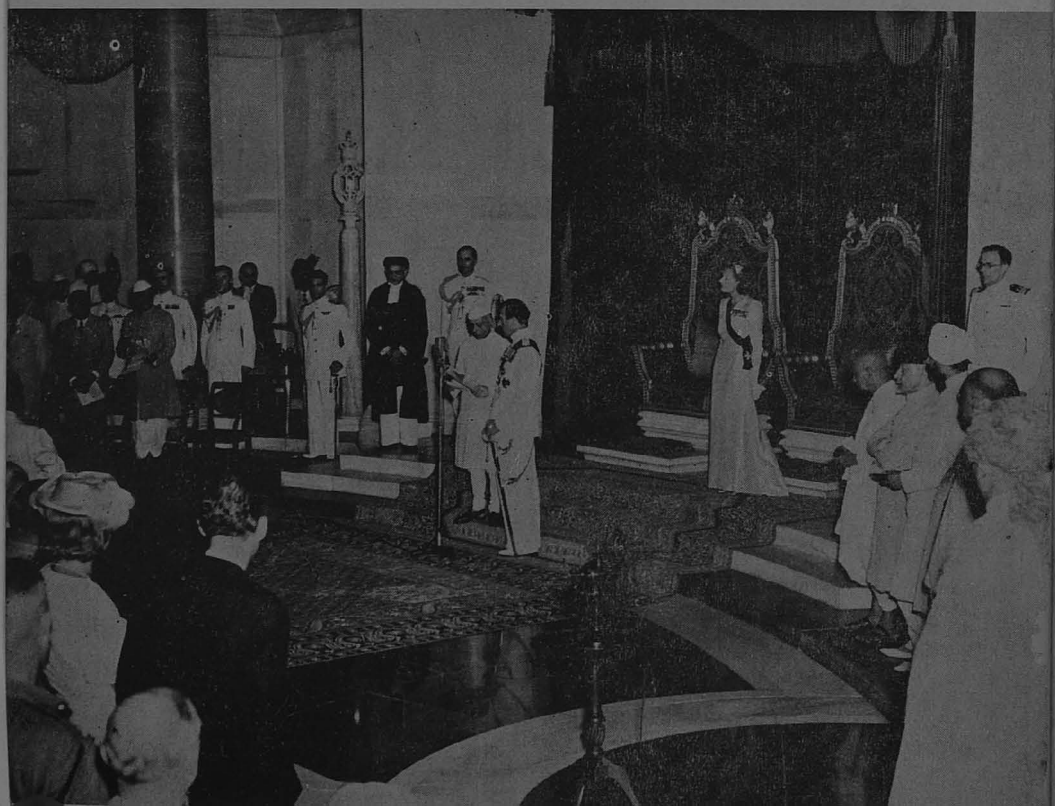


15. Poet Tagore



16. The Martyrs of 1942, the Bihar Government's Memorial at Patna

17. Jawaharlal Nehru being sworn in as Prime Minister of India, August 15, 1947



hold on, surrendered and, although permitted to take the boat to cross over to the other side of the Ganga, was suddenly fired upon in mid-stream, which resulted in about two hundred deaths. Nana Sahib's friend, Tantia Tope, who led the movement in Central India, proceeded with a large force from Gwalior to Jhansi, where Rani Lakshmi Bai had unfurled the banner of revolt. The Bihar leaders of the insurrection were the aged Kunwar Singh, Raja of Jagdishpur in Shahabad, and his brother Amar Singh, and a commoner named Pir Ali. Kunwar Singh was "one of the few rebel leaders who had the instincts of a real general". On July 25 three Indian regiments of Dinapore revolted. Crossing the Sone, they joined Kunwar Singh's men, and they together marched to Arrah and there released the prisoners, and plundered the treasury. They had in some places stubborn and free fights with the English. In September Kunwar Singh entered Mirzapur district, and soon occupied Azamgarh. In March 1858, however, he came back to Bihar and in the following month won a decisive triumph over the British Captain Le-Grand. There were sporadic outbreaks also in Chota Nagpur and the Santal Parganas which were backed by some local *zamindars*. Indeed the whole territory from the borders of West Bengal to Delhi, including Bundelkhand and Central India, was for more than a year and a half in a state of war against the British Raj. In many places, the administration seemed well-nigh paralysed.

Yet, in spite of the common spirit of patriotism which inspired the leaders and their followers, the war ultimately turned against them for lack of effective organization and concerted action, and especially because their military equipment was inferior to that of the English. In December 1857, English forces recovered Delhi. Bahadur Shah was arrested and deported to Rangoon, most of his sons being mercilessly shot down. Though Tantia Tope with an army of twenty thousand marched to Kanpur, and at the end of November inflicted a crushing defeat on the English, early in December, Kanpur was lost too. Late in the same month Lucknow was reoccupied by English forces, and in March of the following year they entered Jhansi. Rani Lakshmi Bai herself led the command against the enemy, and set the noblest and most

heroic example of patriotism. But in June, Jhansi fell and the heroic Rani met her death after losing the battle of Gwalior. Kunwar Singh, the irrepressible octogenarian, had retired to Jagdishpur after his victory, and died of gangrene on April 26. Later Tantia Tope was executed, but Nana Sahib had fled towards Nepal. The British who thus survived the most serious challenge to their rule in India "ravaged the country with fire and sword, hanging, impaling or blowing from guns the innocent and guilty alike."

The war of 1857-58 left a bitter memory in the minds of British administrators, and taught them that henceforward they were to be more prudent and cautious in governing the Indian Empire. It convinced them also of the need for increasing their military power as a security against similar eventualities. Its immediate consequence was to sound the doom of the East India Company and transfer the administration of India to the Crown by an Act of 1858. The Court of Directors was replaced by a Secretary of State and a Council, and the Governor-General as the Crown representative was given the title of Viceroy. At the same time a "Queen's Proclamation" assured the Indians of equal treatment and non-interference with their religious pursuits and guaranteed the treaties concluded with the ruling chiefs. Lord Canning, who became the first Viceroy, cultivated friendly relations with them. Those chiefs who had helped the English during their fateful crisis were rewarded with titles and *sanads*. The Doctrine of Lapse was revoked and the native princes' right to adoption was recognised.

Lord Canning left India in 1862. During the next fifty-five years, thirteen Viceroys, besides acting incumbents, ruled India. The administrations of Lytton, Ripon and Curzon were the most eventful. Lord Lytton, immediately after his arrival in 1876, was confronted with the growing menace of Russo-Afghan friendliness, and declared war against the Emir of Afghanistan. Though the Emir's son concluded a treaty with the British Government in 1879, the murder of the British Resident at Kabul compelled Lytton to take drastic action again. Before, however, the Second Afghan War was over, the Governor-General had left India (1880). Lytton, a spokesman of the Conservative Party in England, held a

grand *durbar* in Delhi (1877) at which Queen Victoria was proclaimed Kaiser-i-Hind (Empress of India). The Viceroy made himself unpopular by the Vernacular Press Act (1878) which seriously interfered with the free expression of opinions on the part of Indian newspapers, and also by the Arms Act which forbade Indians to carry arms without licence.

Lytton's successor, Ripon, was a true representative of Gladstonian Liberalism. He recalled the British Army from Afghanistan, and concluded a treaty with the Emir, offering as mild terms as possible. He restored to the Ruler of Mysore his territory, which had been taken over by Bentinck. He passed a number of beneficial measures, including the Factory Act of 1880, appointed a commission to suggest educational reforms, and repealed the Vernacular Press Act. The introduction of local self-government through a series of Acts was his most constructive work in India. The Acts provided for the appointment of non-official chairmen of municipalities, and created district and local boards for the management of local affairs. Ripon sought to remove the difference between Europeans and Indians in the eyes of law by conferring on Indian magistrates the right to try Europeans in certain cases. But the unfortunate Ilbert Bill stirred up such a hornet's nest that it had to be dropped. A sincere friend of India—perhaps the most sympathetic of all Viceroys to the rights and aspirations of Indians—Lord Ripon had the courage to court unpopularity with his own countrymen in India. He resigned his office in 1884.

The administration of Lord Curzon (1899–1905) was important in several ways. He was an unabashed champion of British imperial interests, and maintained friendly relations with Afghanistan. He also attempted to check the growth of foreign influence over the Persian Gulf and Tibet. He pursued a spirited foreign policy, organized a frontier militia, and created the North-West Frontier Province. He undertook educational reforms seeking to tighten the Government's hold on the universities, and opened up new departments relating to the preservation of old monuments and records. He reformed the police and provided for effective famine relief measures. His policy towards the Indian States was plainly high-handed. He interfered in their internal affairs and

in 1902 obtained, or rather wrested, from Nizam the province of Berar. In 1904, Curzon proposed to divide the Bengal Presidency into two separate administrative units—(i) Eastern Bengal and Assam; and (ii) Western Bengal, Bihar, Chota Nagpur and Orissa. The proposal was carried out despite violent protests against this policy of 'divide and rule' and led to the birth of the Swadeshi movement in Bengal.

The constitutional concessions extended to the Indians during the sixty years between 1857 and 1917 were extremely limited in character. The Indian Councils Act of 1861 increased the number of additional members of the Governor-General's Council from six to twelve; half of whom were to be nominated non-officials and one-fourth were to be Indians. The Act restored the law-making power of the Bombay and Madras governments. The door of the Indian Civil Service, too, had been opened to Indians. The decades following the Great Rebellion of 1857 gave middle class opinion an opportunity to organize itself and gather strength. The growing political and economic discontent of these decades, partly accentuated by the arrogance of English official and non-official classes, and stimulated to a certain extent by the Press and by literary men, led to an urge for larger administrative and constitutional rights. The Indian Association came into being in 1876, mainly through the untiring zeal of Surendranath Banerjee. During the Ilbert Bill controversy, the consciousness of educated Indians was roused to great height by the slanders and invectives showered by the Anglo-Indian Press and the European community on Ripon and the 'black judges.' The success of the European agitation in knocking down the Bill led the Indian Association to summon a national conference. About the same time a suggestion was thrown out to the graduates of Calcutta University by A. O. Hume, a retired Civil Servant, to form an organization "for the mental, moral, social and political regeneration of the people of India". The two proposals coming simultaneously culminated in the founding of the Indian National Congress.

It was a gathering of seventy notables that assembled in Bombay in the winter of 1885, during the governor-generalship of Lord Dufferin, "for the fuller development and consolidation", as its President, Woomesh Chandra Bonnerjee,

expressed it, "of those sentiments of national unity that had their origin in our beloved Lord Ripon's memorable reign". Having no anti-British bias, and agitating for certain rights of Indians through constitutional means, the Congress initially enjoyed the Government's tolerance and even confidence. But the Indian middle class, inspired by the writings of European patriots, fast developed an inclination of opposition to the Government. By and by the Government's attitude of indulgence towards the Congress changed to one of step-motherly inhibition. However, to alleviate discontent the Indian Councils Act of 1892 was designed. The Act provided that the Governor-General's Legislative Council should consist of no fewer than ten, and not more than sixteen, additional nominated members, four of whom should be returned by the non-official members of the four Provincial Councils. The Provincial Councils were also expanded and made partially representative of the local self-governing bodies, and the right to ask questions and discuss Government measures was conceded.

While the Congress contented itself with regretting the insufficiency of these concessions, which gave Indians no right to elect their representatives, many young nationalists, disapproving its wary ways, began to think in terms of extremism and direct action. They drew inspiration from European revolutionary nationalism. In Maharashtra, the birth-place of extremism, they found an articulate leader in Bal Gangadhar Tilak. In his journal entitled *Kesari,* Tilak assailed not only the British and the Congress but certain leaders of Muslims who had broken away from the Congress and established an association of their own. The extremist movement from the beginning assumed a religious colour. Annual processions taken out in honour of the God Ganapati, as well as of Sivaji, marked the activities of the Maharashtra extremist school. In Maharashtra, too, a society was formed "for removing obstacles to the Hindu religion", two of whose members, the Chapekar brothers, assassinated, on the day of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations at Poona in 1897, two British officers employed on anti-plague duty. The Government struck back promptly. The assassins were executed, and Tilak was sent to jail for two years on a

charge of sedition. A Sedition Act was hastily introduced, and the Penal Codes were amended to give wider powers to the police and magistracy.

With the turn of the century the extremist cult spread from the Deccan to Bengal, where it had a strong emotional appeal. The Bengal extremists found two powerful leaders in Bepin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghose. They adopted as their war-cry Bankim Chandra Chatterji's 'Bande Mataram' (Hail, Mother). Meanwhile the proposed Partition of Bengal, ill-timed and dogmatic, afforded an outlet for the pent-up fury of the Bengali youth. Giant protest meetings were held all over the province, and processions paraded the streets. The far greater number that rallied behind this agitation had no concern with terrorism, and included Moderate Congressmen, poets, lawyers, journalists, teachers and students. In many places, British cloth was burnt, and a boycott instituted against goods made in England. Zealous propaganda was carried on in favour of India-made goods whence the movement came to be called the Swadeshi movement. The Bengal Partition practically coincided with Japan's victory over Russia; and both events put spirit into the terrorist cause. Secret revolutionary societies were set up whose members took stern oaths for the liberation of their motherland. In April 1908, a nineteen-year-old Bengali, Khudiram Bose, threw bombs to kill the Sessions Judge of Muzaffarpur which unfortunately killed two innocent English ladies. Khudiram was caught, tried and hanged. And all over Bengal his martyrdom was sung from door to door. Shortly thereafter, a magistrate was shot at a railway station, and an attempt was made on the life of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. During the trial of the Alipore Conspiracy Case relating to the smuggling of arms, an approver was shot dead within the jail.

In spite of severe Government intimidation, terrorism spread to the Punjab, "where Lala Lajpat Rai had already sown the seeds of aggressive nationalism". Several Indians abroad lent their active support to the terrorists. Among them were Krishnavarma and Savarkar in Europe, Hardayal in America, and Rashbehari Bose in Japan.

Though Moderate Congressmen under Surendranath

Banerjee had hailed the Swadeshi movement with great fervour, and the Congress at its annual meeting of 1905 had supported boycott and expressed the intention of fighting for India's rights, the extremists declared open war on Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Banerjee and Pherozeshah Mehta at the Calcutta Congress next year. At the Surat Congress in 1907, the Moderates met to devise a constitution aiming at a government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing colonies within the British Empire. The previous year the Muslim League had come into being, and it led a deputation to the Government for the rights of Indian Muslims. To placate Indian sentiments, Lord Morley, then Secretary of State for India, in consultation with the Governor-General, Lord Minto, got through a new reform measure in 1909. The Morley-Minto Reforms raised the maximum number of members of the Indian Legislative Council from 16 to 60, of whom not more than 28 could be officials. The Act of 1909 for the first time introduced the elective principle, and slightly increased the powers of the councils.

The economic scene presented a complex picture. On the one hand the decline of the traditional industries continued: on the other, some new industries began to make their appearance. The silk industry dwindled to insignificance on account of foreign competition within a quarter century (1880–1905), causing woeful distress to the Bengal silk weavers. But raw material production manifestly increased. On the export side, opium continued to thrive, as previously, until the British Government, by an agreement with China in 1907, stopped its export altogether. Raw hides and skins, raw cotton, jute, oilseeds and cereals gained both in bulk and value. The exports of raw jute and jute manufactures represented at the beginning of the period 58 per cent of the country's total exports. Imports consisted chiefly of British cloth, hardware and machinery, some American cotton and silk fabrics, Persian oil, Chinese silk and Java sugar. The early years of the present century saw the Indian market inundated with a large variety of German and Japanese goods. On the whole, India's foreign trade expanded remarkably during 1870–1914, owing partly to the opening of the Suez Canal.

At the beginning and end of the period, indigo manufacture came in for bitter condemnation. Oppression was inherent in indigo cultivation because of the system of semibondage, under which the ryots were compelled to work. In 1859 the discontent flared up in the form of a rising in two Bengal districts. Dinabandhu Mitra, in his *Nil-Darpan*, arraigned with burning emotion the heartless conduct of the planters in the factories. The Indigo Commission, appointed by the Government in 1860, remarked that the system of indigo cultivation was such as could be worked only by "oppression and ill-usage". After this the relations between the planters and indigo-growers noticeably improved. But towards the end of the century the advent of a German synthetic dye killed Indian indigo, except in north Bihar, where it lingered for another three decades. Once more, in 1916-17, indigo gained notoriety when the ryots of Champaran rose against it. The incident brought Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi on the scene. A proved fighter for the rights of Indians in South Africa, Gandhi entered Champaran in April 1917 despite a magisterial ban, conducted a thorough inquiry into the relation between the planters and ryots, and forced an official investigation into the matter. As a result, some of the highly objectionable practices in the indigo factories were interdicted. The Champaran Satyagraha was essentially a peace mission. But Gandhi's visit instilled a new spirit in the north Bihar tenantry.

A meagre start towards the industrialization of the country had been made with the establishment in the 1850's of a few cotton mills in the Bombay Presidency. But the progress of the industry was painful and slow. Quite different was the case with the jute industry, which, after the establishment of the first power-mill on the bank of the Hooghly in 1859, made spectacular progress in the next fifty years. Headway was also made by collieries in Bengal, the mica industry in Bihar, tea plantations in Assam and Bengal, and the tanning industry in Madras. The Tata Iron Works, floated in 1907 at Jamshedpur in Bihar, was expanded in 1911. During the years of the Great War (1914–18), home spinning and weaving revived somewhat owing to the falling off in the supplies of Lancashire cloth.

With the growth of railways and factories, it was felt necessary to assure humane working conditions for labour. This was done through several Acts from 1880 onwards. Legislation to protect tenant interests was also undertaken in 1859 and afterwards, and a tolerable lowering of the land-tax had been effected already before 1857. But a number of factors, such as the decline of the handicrafts, agricultural indebtedness, the frequency of famines—some of them of appalling severity—and the unchecked growth of malaria, contributed to the decay, often the ruin, of the villages. The rise of a new moneyed middle-class, as a result mainly of the growth of commerce, doubtless brought visible signs of prosperity in the cities and towns, and even in some villages. But standards of living as a whole were miserably low.

The nineteenth-century zeal for humanitarian reform gave rise to a number of progressive social and religious organizations partly in line with the Brahmo Samaj. The Brahmo Samaj itself, despite internal division, gave a good account of itself under the inspiring guidance of Keshab Chandra Sen and Devendranath Tagore. In Maharashtra, the Prarthana Samaj, started early in the period, did useful work for the uplift of women and the backward groups. The Maharashtrian enthusiasm for reform, greatly inspired by Justice M. G. Ranade, resulted in the founding by Gokhale of the Servants of India Society in 1905. The Society set up free night schools for the depressed classes and orphanages for destitute women. It organized relief during famines and epidemics. Another reformer from Maharashtra was Karve, who established a women's university. In the eighteen-nineties, Swami Vivekananda won world-wide fame for the Hindu religion by his brilliant lectures on Vedanta in America, and established the Ramakrishna Mission named after the sage of Dakshineshwar. The Mission soon earned a reputation for public welfare work. A major socio-religious influence was the Arya Samaj founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati of Kathiawar in 1875. A born foe of idolatry and superstition, Dayanand vehemently criticized the Puranic conception of Hinduism and harked back to the purity of Vedic days. He advocated remarriage of widows and

women's education, and denounced caste and the *purdah*. Unlike the Brahmo Samaj movement, which mainly affected the middle classes, the Arya Samaj inspired mass fervour, and spread quickly all over north India. A feature of the activities of the Arya Samaj was the *shuddhi* movement, or reconversion of people to Hinduism. About the same time Mrs. Annie Besant popularized the Theosophical movement, whose mystical appeal attracted many educated Indians.

The passion for reform animated also the Sikh, Parsi and Christian communities, and more particularly the Muslims. The really progressive among the nineteenth century Islamic reform movements in India was the Aligarh movement sponsored by Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan. On his return from England Sir Saiyid established in 1875 the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh which later became a university. He called upon his co-religionists to shake off conservatism, discard the *purdah,* and adopt the western system of education. He "challenged the accepted standards of authority in matters of doctrine and practice" which led him to be regarded as an unbeliever. He persisted nevertheless in his views, and there is no doubt that the Aligarh school went a great way to rouse Islam in India to a new consciousness.

Another gift of the nineteenth century Indian renaissance was the awakening of women to a realization of their unequal position in society. The girls of enlightened families in Bengal, thanks to the liberal influence of the Brahmo Samaj, were receiving the benefit of English education and coming out of seclusion. Two of them, the young Aru Dutt and Toru Dutt, surprised their contemporaries by writing elegant verses in English. By and by, women outside Bengal, too, awoke to a sense of their importance. Women began to take an active share in social and humanitarian work. A turning point in the history of women's emancipation was the holding of the first All-India Women's Conference in 1914.

The spirit of national self-confidence found utterance in an outpouring of vernacular literature. Michael Madhusudan Dutt transferred his allegiance from English to Bengali poetry, and made himself immortal in the domain of letters. Bankim

Chandra Chatterji made splendid contributions to Bengali prose literature. He was the first Indian worth the name to venture into the realm of fiction, and also the first great patriotic writer. He was followed by a host of poets, dramatists, novelists, essayists, biographers and critics, the most outstanding of whom was Rabindranath Tagore. In imperishable verse and prose, Tagore expressed the yearning of the soul for union with the Absolute. He was a master artist, and in 1913 won the Nobel Prize for his *Gitanjali*, a book of lyric poems which has been translated into all the major languages of the world. Hindi literature was greatly enriched by Bharatendu Harischandra, a versatile writer whose writings are infused by a profound patriotic feeling, and later on by Mahabir Prasad and Ram Chandra Sukla. Among the first great nationalist writers in Hindi was also Swami Dayanand Saraswati. A new era began in the history of Marathi literature with the publication in 1875 of Vishnu Sastri Chiplunkar's *Nibandha Mala*. Unlike the earlier Marathi writers, who had been "dazzled by western civilization", Chiplunkar was inspired by a love of his own country, religion and language. Among the Marathi dramatists of the period, mention should be made particularly of V. J. Kirtane and Anna Kirloskar. Tamil literature during this, as in the preceding, period owed its development mainly to the fertilizing influence of the West, and had a galaxy of authors, Christian and non-Christian. Modern Telugu literature may be said to have begun in 1878 with the publication of the first Telugu novel. Its author, K. Veeresalingam, was the founder of a new school of letters which produced many eminent writers. The first great modern writer of Urdu was the famous poet Ghalib of Delhi. Sir Saiyid Ahmad and his fellow workers of the Delhi School of literature, and Ratan Nath and Abdul Halim of the Lucknow school, "completed the superstructure on the foundation laid by Ghalib". Early in the present century the scholar-poet, Sir Muhammad Iqbal, preached the nobility of man and denounced the rank materialism of the West in a series of excellent Urdu and Persian poems.

CHAPTER X

THE ERA OF NON-VIOLENT NATIONALISM

THE PERIOD 1917 to 1947 is important in Indian history for the rapid growth of mass consciousness. In politics, moreover, methods untried before were now applied, and in the social sphere bold and new experiments were made. During the whole of these three decades, the country reacted, for the most part, to the voice of one man, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, whose entry into Indian politics generated a new force—the force of Satyagraha or soul-force as he chose to call it. Predominantly an era of non-violent revolt, the period witnessed a stern struggle against alien domination and inherited social injustices, and the formulation and initiation, on the economic plane, of measures for recovery and betterment.

The second half of 1917 seemed to bring a certain spell of optimism in spite of the growing severity of a world war that had been raging for three years. India had already contributed, and was still contributing, to Britain's war efforts in men, money and munitions. Moderate Congressmen had been moving round and exhorting the people to stand by her at this critical hour. On August 20, 1917, the assurance came from Britain that the policy of His Majesty's Government was "that of increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and of the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire".

The political aspect of the country had by now become somewhat complex with the death in 1915 of Gokhale, one of the ablest Moderate leaders, and the re-emergence of Tilak, the extremist. Another personality, Mrs. Annie Besant, appeared on the political stage with her Home Rule League, which aimed at self-government for Indians within the British Empire. The increasing intensity of the Home Rule agitation alarmed the Government which, while making

serious efforts to curb it, admitted the need to satisfy nationalist demands in their own way. A scheme of reforms was drawn up by Mr. Edwin Montagu, Secretary of State for India, in collaboration with the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford. The publication of the Montford scheme (1918), however, shattered the hopes of the nationalists. Its proposals, incorporated in substance in the Government of India Act, 1919, made barely one-half of the provincial administration responsible to the legislature, the other half, together with the whole of the Central administration, continuing to be the preserve of the Secretary of State. Besides, even in respect of the provincial administration, wide authority was given to the head of the executive; and the powers of the Central Legislative Assembly and the provincial Legislative Councils were greatly limited. The disappointment felt at these reforms, coupled with the discontent due to the war, was responsible for seditious agitation on an aggravated scale. To choke off the fountain-head of sedition, two Acts were speeded through in 1919. The Rowlatt Acts authorized judges to try political cases without juries in notified areas, and empowered the provincial governments to intern suspects for an indefinite period without trial.

The moment was opportune for a mass awakening, especially on account of the economic severities of the war. The Rowlatt Acts compelled Gandhi, then living a quiet life in his *ashram* at Sabarmati, to come out and form a Satyagraha League in Bombay as a protest against what he described as "destructive of the elementary rights of the individual". His call to the nation to observe a *hartal* evoked an unprecedented response. But before the date fixed for the action, there was a riot in Delhi, and a number of people were shot down. Serious riots broke out also at Amritsar and Lahore—all against the wishes of Gandhi, who had never intended violence. The Amritsar outbreak cost the lives of a few Europeans, with the result that Sir Michael O'Dwyer, Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, deputed General Dyer to occupy the city of Amritsar and issue a proclamation forbidding public meetings. The very evening the proclamation was made, a meeting was held in an enclosed ground called Jallianwala Bagh. Unable to stand such

defiance of authority, the hot-headed Dyer instantly gave orders for indiscriminate firing on the unarmed crowd. According to an official reckoning, 1,605 rounds were fired, resulting in 379 deaths. Some 1,200 others were injured. Not content with this outrageous deed, O'Dwyer ordered the machine-gunning of Gujranwala and proclaimed martial law throughout the Punjab.

The Jallianwala Bagh massacre sent a thrill of horror all over India, and fired patriotic minds with an aggressive determination for vengeance. Outside India the news was received with shock. About this time a movement had been started in favour of the Sultan-Caliph of Turkey and against the policies of British imperialism. The Khilafat movement soon gained ground among Indian Muslims; and counting on their help, Amanullah, the Emir of Afghanistan, invaded the Punjab. The invader, however, got no response and was easily beaten back. Amanullah's defeat did not cool the ardour of the Khilafat propagandists, who had the zealous support of the Muslim peasantry driven desperate by their economic suffering. In October 1919, Gandhi called a meeting of Muslims and Hindus in Delhi to devise ways and means of aiding the cause of the Sultan-Caliph. This friendly gesture won the Congress the support of leading Muslims, who had already shown an inclination to co-operate with Hindus during the Home Rule agitation. In the following September, a special meeting of the Congress was summoned in Calcutta. Gandhi, in the face of opposition from the more moderate members, succeeded in inducing the gathering to accept his programme of 'non-violent non-co-operation' for the attainment of Swaraj, which at that time was not regarded as complete independence. Once the decision was made, there began a countrywide campaign under the leadership of Gandhi calling upon the recipients of Government honours to return them, lawyers to renounce their practice, Government servants to resign their jobs, school and college students to leave Government institutions, and litigants to boycott the law-courts. Men of diverse social callings rallied round his banner. Among the notables were Motilal Nehru, Sarojini Naidu, Ajmal Khan, the Patel brothers (Vithalbhai and Vallabhbhai), the Ali brothers (Muhammad

and Shaukat), S. Srinivasa Iyengar, Ansari, Abul Kalam Azad, Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalachari and Jawaharlal Nehru. C. R. Das, the renowned Calcutta barrister, and Lala Lajpat Rai, who were at first somewhat opposed to non-co-operation, were won over in no time. And Subhas Chandra Bose, a fresh recruit to the Indian Civil Service, tendered his resignation and jumped into the current. The movement had the active support of the poor as well as the rich, peasants as well as town-dwellers.

The non-co-operation movement did not prevent the Moderates from contesting the elections under the new Constitution. A number of Liberals were elected, and they formed the opposition in the Central Assembly and the provincial Councils. In the provinces, dyarchy was introduced immediately, and Indian ministers took charge of departments like education and health. At the same time the authorities were active in dealing with the political situation, and thousands of non-co-operators were thrown into prison. Meanwhile, in March 1921, the puritanical Sikh peasants of the Punjab, hard hit by the economic effects of the war, rose against the licence and luxury of some Sikh religious proprietors. One hundred and thirty of the Akali rebels were shot down by watchmen employed against them. In this war between poverty and property, the Government took up the cause of the latter, so that the Akali movement ultimately turned against them. No sooner had it subsided than a fresh peasant rising occurred in the south. In August, the Muslim peasantry of Malabar, known as the Moplahs, revolted against the money-lenders and landlords, most of whom were Hindus. The rebellion was crushed. But it was given a communal colouring, and had an unfortunate effect on Hindu-Muslim unity.

Communal outbreaks in Bombay and elsewhere obliged Gandhi to shelve non-co-operation, and to decide on civil disobedience whose object was to defy the laws. But a sudden peasant attack on the police station at Chauri Chaura in U.P. changed the situation. The incident, which resulted in the killing of twenty-two policemen, led to the publication of Gandhi's Bardoli resolutions, suspending both non-co-operation and civil disobedience, and adopting instead a

programme of limited agrarian reform. The country needed, in his opinion, a course of discipline before there could be any thought of resuming Satyagraha. This should not be taken to mean that non-co-operation had failed. A large number of people had unhesitatingly exchanged a life of comfort and ease for economic insecurity and rigorous strife. Thirty thousand persons had gone to prison unmindful of their near and dear ones. Moreover, the movement had demonstrated the overwhelming efficacy of passive resistance and the power of organized mass action. Above all, it raised Gandhi's prestige and popularity to a new height. There was one man's name on everybody's lips—Mahatma Gandhi's. The chief features of the movement, apart from non-violence and non-co-operation, were the boycott of British goods and an increased insistence on the use of home-spun cloth. Indeed the *charkha* (spinning wheel) and Khadi became symbols of nationalism throughout the land.

After the suspension of the non-co-operation movement, however, there was a certain torpor in Congress activities, and the number of its votaries tended to fall off. Mahatma Gandhi had been sentenced to six years' imprisonment for his alleged share in the Chauri Chaura disturbances but was released early in 1924. A split in the Congress had occurred in the meanwhile leading to the formation, under the leadership of C. R. Das, Motilal and Ajmal Khan, of the Swaraj Party. The party decided to fight the elections of 1923 and was returned with large majorities to the Councils and the Assembly. The Swarajists carried on a parliamentary campaign within the Councils with appreciable success. But the acceptance of office by some of them somewhat discredited the Swaraj Party. Revolutionary fires were smouldering in Bengal and certain other provinces at this time. And some vague, tentative offers of constitutional changes were made by the Government. The Congress did not consider these offers seriously. On the contrary, Motilal declared himself in favour of Dominion Status for India, and C. R. Das warmly supported it.

In 1926, Lord Irwin succeeded Lord Reading as Viceroy. Next year the British Parliament appointed an Indian Statutory Commission, with Sir John Simon as president, to

report on the working of the constitutional reforms of 1919 and to suggest further advance in the direction of responsible government. The Commission, which included no Indian representative, visited India twice in 1928 and was twice acclaimed with shouts of "Simon, Go back." In the same year, a committee appointed by an All-India All Parties Conference, with Motilal Nehru as chairman, met and recommended a form of Dominion Status analogous to that enjoyed by the Irish Free State.

The majority of the Indian nationalists had by this time outgrown the glamour of Dominion Status. So the Nehru Committee's recommendation virtually fell on deaf ears. Nationalist fervour rose to fever pitch and Independence Leagues were formed in several places. In the next session of the Congress, which met amid tense excitement in Calcutta in December 1928, the young opposition leaders, Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose, moved a stirring resolution in favour of launching a campaign for the attainment of complete independence. Mahatma Gandhi, however, persuaded the Congress to give one year's time to the Government to accord Dominion Status.

Outside the Congress the Government had to grapple with the rising tide of industrial unrest accentuated by the newly organised trade unions. The blows that the Government and the industrialists aimed at the labour movement had only the effect of making it lean more towards the revolutionary doctrine of socialism. A Public Safety Bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly in September 1928, which sought to empower the Government to confiscate funds coming from foreign lands for Indian labour organizations. The Bill was twice rejected and had to be eventually "certified" by the Governor-General. Simultaneously with the introduction of the Bill, thirty-one Leftists, including three Englishmen, were arrested on a charge of conspiracy against the King and confined in Meerut jail. The Meerut Conspiracy Case dragged on for four years. At the end of the trial, most of the accused were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. The discontent of the middle-class youth once again found expression in terrorism, which revived with all its former fury. A passenger train near Lucknow was looted by the terrorists, and

some of the accused in the Kakori case, as it was called, received death sentences. Some time later, two police officers were killed in Lahore. And in March 1929, during the discussion on the Public Safety Bill, a bomb was thrown from the public gallery of the Assembly by two young men, Bhagat Singh and B. K. Dutt. One of the accused in the Lahore Conspiracy Case, Jatindranath Das, died after a prolonged hunger-strike. The execution of Bhagat Singh and the death of Jatindranath created intense emotional excitement in the country.

Meanwhile the Congress ultimatum to the Government had produced nothing more than a vague assurance from the Viceroy in October 1929. At the Lahore session of the Congress, held in December, Jawaharlal and Subhas Chandra forced the gathering to accept complete independence as its goal. The Lahore Congress demonstrated the victory of youth over age. But when the time for action came, the young as well as the old turned again to the Mahatma. On January 26, 1930, Gandhi formally launched a civil disobedience campaign. The programme began with a march to Dandi on the west coast to break the salt law. At first salt-making for the sake of law-breaking did not evoke much enthusiasm. But soon afterwards people threw in their weight behind the movement. Men and women, dressed in homespun, assembled in mass meetings, boycotted foreign cloth and picketed liquor shops. In their zeal for boycott, veteran smokers found substitutes for cigarettes, students preferred to use country-made ink and paper, and fashionable ladies, who could scarcely do without foreign scents, rejoiced in Swadeshi luxuries. Inspired bands of patriots cheerfully offered themselves to the police for being *lathi*-charged, and eagerly embraced the rigours of a jail life. In a few months, the prisons became overcrowded, and make-shift jails had to be provided. From Kashmir to Cape Comorin, and from Assam to Kathiawar, the country poured its soul, as it were, into the movement.

Yet civil disobedience did not hold much charm for those who thought in terms of militant action. The happenings in the Punjab under Bhagat Singh's leadership have been mentioned. In April 1930, the terrorists under Surya Sen successfully raided the police armouries at Chittagong in

Bengal. Later in the same month, there was a demonstration of workers and peasants at Peshawar, and three to four hundred processionists were killed by police fire. A demonstration of textile workers at Sholapur on May 8 likewise incited the police to shoot down twenty-six persons.

The British Government, anxious at the same time for a solution of the Indian question, had invited Indian leaders of the various political parties to a Round Table Conference in London to meet the members of the British Cabinet. Actually there were three conferences—in 1930, 1931 and 1932. Towards the beginning of 1931, Gandhi and other members of the Congress Working Committee, who had been sent to jail, got their release. And as a result of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in March, civil disobedience was suspended. In September, Gandhi sailed for London to attend the Second Round Table Conference. During the interval of calm between his departure and return, anti-British agitation in India was for the most part kept alive by the peasant class, and took the form of a no-rent campaign. On his return from London 'empty-handed', the Mahatma resumed civil disobedience.

Lord Willingdon, Lord Irwin's successor, dealt with the situation with a strong hand. Gandhi and his associates were imprisoned again, and the Congress was declared an unlawful organization. While Gandhi was in jail, the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, issued his Communal Award (1932) providing separate electorates under the new constitution for the untouchables. This was regarded by the Mahatma as a step which would result in a division among Hindus, and as a protest against it he undertook a dramatic "fast unto death." But a compromise was soon reached, and Gandhi was released. His attention was now diverted from the political to the social sphere, and his efforts led to the signing of the Poona Pact, by which leaders of the various groups and parties guaranteed just treatment of the 'Harijans,' as he called those who had been considered untouchable. An announcement made by him, however, that he and some of his followers would publicly defy the law led to his being sentenced to one year's imprisonment. Released from jail in less than a month's time, he lived the life of 'holy obscurity' for the time being.

In England, as the Round Table Conference was nearing its end, a Joint Parliamentary Committee was appointed in April 1933 to draft a constitution for India. After numerous sittings the Committee published its report in November 1934, which somewhat modified the recommendations of the Simon Commission. The Government of India Act, which was based on the report of the Committee, was passed in 1935.

The Act of 1935 embodied proposals for an all-India federation and autonomous provinces, with responsible government in the provinces and a form of dyarchy in the centre. But the special powers and responsibilities given to the Governor-General and the Governors appeared to be the very negation of democracy. The Act was characterized as too sweeping and dangerous by die-hards in England, and too timid and parsimonious by nationalists in India. New forces had by now appeared in Indian politics. The grim romance of terrorism had practically faded, chiefly through Gandhi's influence. Socialism was in the air. The formation of the Congress Socialist Party by Jayaprakash Narayan, Achyut Patwardhan and others was significant. No less significant was Jawaharlal Nehru's declaration in the Lucknow session of the Congress (1936) that the only solution of the world's and India's problems lay in socialism.

In 1936, Lord Linlithgow succeeded Lord Willingdon. The provincial part of the Government of India Act came into operation in January 1937. After some months the Congress agreed to form ministries in several provinces. These ministries embarked on a vigorous programme of reforms, such as liquidation of agricultural indebtedness, land legislation for the eventual abolition of landlordism, prohibition, and an intensive literacy drive among the masses. A tolerable measure of success was achieved in each of these fields. But with the outbreak of World War II in September 1939, a sudden blight fell on everything. The Viceroy declared that India was at war with Germany, and he did it without even consulting the Indian legislature. The Congress took strong exception to it, and the Working Committee of the organization, which met at Wardha, passed a resolution demanding a clear exposition by the British Government of their war aims. On failure to receive any assurance that Britain's war aims

included self-government for India, the Congress ministries resigned, and the Viceroy and the Governors carried on the administration with the aid of advisers appointed from among the civil servants.

Willingly or reluctantly India did give considerable help to Britain during the War, as in 1914–18. Young men enrolled themselves in the armed services, and large sums were given to war loans and subscriptions. Preparations were made to ward off possible invasion by the Japanese, and troops, including British and American, were quartered at numerous centres. The swift success of the Japanese in south-eastern Asia prompted the British Government to reopen negotiations to meet the nationalist demand. A member of the British Cabinet, Sir Stafford Cripps, visited India in March 1942. Unfortunately the situation at the time was complicated owing to a growing tension between the Congress led by Mahatma Gandhi and the Muslim League dominated by Muhammad Ali Jinnah. However, Sir Stafford made an offer which envisaged the institution of an Executive Council composed of Indians but without any effective voice in the conduct of the war. There was also a vague assurance of self-determination on the cessation of hostilities. But the Congress demanded immediate freedom to be able to shoulder properly the responsibilities which the war situation called for. The negotiations finally broke down on this issue.

The failure of the Cripps Mission was followed by an interlude of uneasy calm. In July 1942, the Congress Working Committee passed a momentous resolution demanding the withdrawal of British rule from India. And it was understood that in case the proposal did not elicit friendly response from the Government, there would be a mass movement. The acceptance of the resolution by the All-India Congress Committee on August 8 led quickly to the arrest of the Congress leaders. This served as the signal for a mass rising. On August 9 and the days following, shouts of 'Long Live the Revolution' and 'Down with Imperialism' rent the sky in towns and villages. In Bihar, U.P. and Bombay, particularly, excited rural folk joined hands with townsmen in cutting off communications and in setting fire to governmental properties. Attempts were also made to attack police stations, treasuries

and post offices; and in a few places infuriated mobs killed magistrates and officers deputed to control the situation. Students came out of their classrooms to parade the streets. Typical of the scenes of nationalist fervour was the procession taken out by the students of Patna who marched to the Secretariat with the intention of hoisting the national flag on its turret. Seven of the demonstrators met with instantaneous death in police firing. Deaths and injuries were reported from practically the whole country. For days the administration in certain areas seemed paralysed, tranquillity being ultimately restored with the aid of the military. After the movement was quelled, the Government inflicted drastic penalties on individuals and groups, and imposed punitive taxes on villages whose inhabitants had taken an active part in it. Mahatma Gandhi voiced his emphatic protest against these accusations and penalties.

The year 1942 was exciting in quite another way. With the growing intensity of the war and the massing of Japanese troops on the Indo-Burma frontier, India's defence measures were considerably increased. In the big cities and around, trenches were dug and night 'black out' became a regular feature, while aeroplanes reconnoitred the skies night and day. The possibility of a Japanese invasion of Bengal seemed imminent in view of the fact that a few Japanese bombs had been dropped on the Calcutta dockyard. But beyond that nothing very alarming happened within the country. During the next two years, however, the attention of the Government and the people was focused mainly on the war issue. Lord Linlithgow's long tenure of office ended in 1943. His successor, Lord Wavell, released Mahatma Gandhi from jail early in 1944. A new army, the biggest volunteer force in history, was made ready for offensive action in the Far East.

A development which had a bearing on the Indian political situation was the formation of the Azad Hind Fauj (Indian National Army) and Azad Hind Government in the Far East. In 1941, Subhas Chandra Bose, ever indomitable in spirit and daring in action, disappeared from his Calcutta home, where he had been under internment. After many adventures he reached Germany and later went to Japan. In Japan, he came in active contact with the Indian revolutionaries in exile.

And in Malaya and Burma, the soldiers and officers of the Indian Army who had been captured by the Axis powers rallied behind him. Inspiring them with the cry of 'Delhi Chalo', he actually put a fighting force into the field against the British. But with the surrender of Japan in 1945, many of the officers of the I.N.A. were taken prisoner by the latter. The legend of Subhas Bose, and of the Azad Hind Fauj, greatly strengthened the nationalist urge.

In 1945, as the Second World War was drawing to a close, the British Government, partly under American pressure, sought to reopen 'the Indian question'. Lord Wavell announced Britain's intention of constituting an Executive Council consisting solely of Indians, upon whose advice he would act, and of restoring popular rule in the provinces. The announcement was followed by the release of political prisoners, among whom were Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel and Maulana Azad. On June 25 a Round Table Conference was summoned at Simla to which representatives from the Congress, the Muslim League and certain other parties were invited. But failure to effect an agreement between the League and the Congress defeated its purpose.

In the General Elections held in Britain, the Labour Party was returned with an overwhelming majority—a victory which was significant for India. Shortly after this, the Viceroy announced that elections would be held throughout 'British' India in the beginning of 1946. In these elections, the Congress secured an absolute majority in most provinces and Congress ministries came into being in these provinces. Bengal and the Punjab were notable exceptions.

Suddenly in February 1946, officers of the Indian Navy, probably inspired by the example of the Indian National Army and disgruntled over a number of grievances, mutinied in Bombay. Though the rising was promptly controlled, it clearly showed the authorities that even the armed forces were infected. The trial of the I.N.A. officers held in the Red Fort of Delhi fanned the fires further. There was jubilation when the principal accused, ably defended by some of the foremost lawyers of the country, were released.

A Parliamentary Delegation had been sent to India in December 1945 to study the country's situation. And in

February 1946, Prime Minister Attlee declared in the House of Commons that a new approach was needed to the Indian problem. The next month a Mission of the British Cabinet came to India. After prolonged discussions with Congress and League leaders, it submitted its plan to both parties for acceptance. The plan, in short, envisaged a federal form of government and divided the country into three zones. For the time being India was to remain within the Commonwealth; but the assurance was given that she would be free to decide this point herself. Both the League and the Congress accepted the plan. Jawaharlal Nehru was invited to form an interim government, and he in his turn invited Jinnah to join him. Suddenly at this juncture Jinnah rejected the offer; and the League Council decided to resort to "direct action" on August 16, 1946. The decision led to grave consequences. The League, which was determined to have an independent State of Pakistan for the Muslims, virtually waged war on the idea of a united India. On the Direct Action Day, the City of Calcutta was plunged in "an orgy of bloodshed, murder and terror"; and for months following there were clashes and brutalities in East Bengal, West Bengal, Bihar, U.P., the Punjab and Bombay. In the midst of these happenings, the Interim Government under Nehru came into being in September. For the next several months both he and Mahatma Gandhi hastened from place to place to restore communal harmony. Meanwhile, in December, an elected Constituent Assembly under the chairmanship of Dr. Rajendra Prasad had begun its work of drafting a constitution for India. Two months later, on February 20, 1947, Prime Minister Attlee startled the British Parliament by announcing his Government's determination to withdraw from India at a date not later than June 1948.

Leaving the story of transfer of power to the next chapter, we might briefly survey the economic and social conditions of these thirty years. Although World War I brought a spell of optimism to the economic field, and served as a fillip to Indian industry, the rising prices of commodities soon afterwards caused great hardship to the poor and middle classes. As the war ended, scarcities bordering on famine conditions stalked the land. A rather modest programme

of industrial development with governmental participation was begun following the recommendations of the Industrial Commission appointed in 1916. Encouragement to industry came at first in the shape of State assistance to technical training and research. Industries departments were constituted in the provinces in the early 'twenties, and several technical institutions were set up. Steps were also taken to assist private enterprise, on which depended, to a great extent, the industrial growth of the country. Another welcome change which was felt was that, as the years passed, Indians, at first shy of investing their capital in industry, came forward to have an increasing share in it. This put an end to the long-existing European monopoly in the field.

Noticeable progress was achieved in coal and mica industries as well as in the iron and steel industry. The Tata Iron and Steel Works at Jamshedpur produced nearly 200,000 tons of pig iron and 70,000 tons of rails in 1918. Large extensions to the existing plant, carried out during the next two decades, resulted in ten crore rupees' worth of iron and steel being produced annually. At the same time new steel works were started, such as the factories at Burnpur and Kulti in Bengal, while the E.I.R. locomotive workshops at Jamalpur in Bihar employed something like ten thousand workers by 1920. The total coal production of the country, which was 20 million tons in 1918, rose to 29 million tons by the end of the Second World War. The mica of Bihar found a world-wide market because of its quality. Another industry which recorded advance was the jute industry of Bengal which, however, was the victim of the trade cycle. Striking achievement was registered in the cotton textile industries. On the one hand, the languishing handloom cotton industry of India, which received some impetus from reduced cloth imports during World War I, was stimulated further by the non-co-operation and civil disobedience movements. On the other hand, new textile mills were started to meet the rising demand for cloth. The sugar industry, which had been progressing rather slowly, achieved a spurt in the early 'thirties. On the whole, the Government was forced by public opinion to adopt a policy of protecting young Indian industries.

State legislation to ensure improvements in labour conditions undertaken during the 'twenties did little to allay labour discontent accentuated by the effects of World War I. On the contrary, from 1917, trade unionism forged ahead, bringing with it a succession of strikes in the mills and factories. Trade unions, which at first had a hard time with the Government, obtained legal recognition in 1926. During the next twenty years several labour associations were formed and the number of registered and unregistered unions reached a strikingly high figure. The end of World War II served as a signal for the outbreak of an epidemic of strikes for securing higher wages.

The years immediately following World War I were particularly hard for the agriculturists, and were responsible, as already noticed, for widespread peasant unrest. The Agricultural Commission Report (1928) referred to the wretched indebtedness of the great majority of this class. In the early 'thirties, the abrupt fall in prices on account of the world economic depression made their lot worse still. Vast numbers of cultivators were virtually reduced to the starvation level. And not until after 1942, when war conditions raised the prices of foodstuffs, was there any prospect of improvement of the lot of the peasants. In Bengal, the benefits of better price were delayed still further owing to the terrible famine which swept the province in 1943.

Measures for the intensification of agriculture included the implementation of minor irrigation projects and the encouragement of co-operation among the agriculturists. In addition, there were a few major irrigation schemes, of which the Sukkur Barrage across the Sindhu (now in Pakistan), opened in 1932, especially deserves mention. The co-operative movement in India, which had been slowly forging ahead since 1904, received a momentum after the First World War, leading to the establishment of a large number of co-operative societies and some technical institutions for imparting training in co-operation.

Though inflation greatly reduced the value of money after 1943 and high prices led to a burdensome increase in the cost of living, large accumulation of cash in the hands of individuals, among other things, fostered banking activities

in the country. Quite a good number of new banks were opened during the war period, some of which, however, crashed within a few years. There is no doubt that the war opened many new avenues of employment to both middle and lower-income people. On the whole, despite loud complaints about shooting prices, there was a perceptible rise in the standard of living, particularly of the lower classes. The exodus from villages to towns received an increased impetus during and immediately after the Second World War.

It is worthy of note that the new turn that the nationalist movement took spread to the 'native states,' where people were swayed by the same aspirations of self-government as in the rest of the country. The States' People's Conference came into being, and State Congress organizations sprang up in several princely dominions where the cry of responsible government was heard. Although the State Congress organizations could not be part of the National Congress, their goals and ideals were the same. Thus was paved the way for the future integration of the country under one unified system. Simultaneously, there was an awakening in those parts of India which were under Portuguese and French rule.

A dynamic move towards the building up of a better social order was initiated by Mahatma Gandhi side by side with his struggle for the political emancipation of the country. As firm in his faith in the possibility of changing the hearts of men as in his opposition to all forms of injustice, he spared no pains to strike persistently against the evils that long usage had sanctioned. One of his hardest fights was in the cause of the depressed classes whom he called Harijans. The unjust denial of ordinary human rights to the unfortunate untouchables was pointedly criticized by the Mahatma in his speeches and writings. Both by his example and his exertion, the relentless Satyagrahi succeeded at last in forcing public recognition of the rights of the untouchables. Though a Bill to secure their access to temples had to be withdrawn in 1933, the Civil Disabilities Removal Act was passed in Madras in 1938 which extended the same rights to them in secular matters as were enjoyed by caste Hindus. After a few years the ban against their entry into temples was removed too. It was chiefly owing to Mahatma Gandhi, again,

that the sacrificial slaughter of animals, the crude survival of an ancient custom, was largely dispensed with in public pujas.

The era of non-violent nationalism was also the era of a new awakening among the women of India. They responded to the call of the nation, making their presence felt, and their voices heard, in education, religion, public service, industry and politics. The number of school-going girls in 1917 was in the neighbourhood of 1,230,000; in 1947 four times as many were attending schools. In the field of higher education, too, their advance was noticeable. The practice of purdah was given up by many households that used to observe it. As the years went by, the number of women clerks, teachers, doctors and nurses increased. The growing popularity of the theatre and the radio in the 'thirties and 'forties gave an opportunity to many middle-class girls for developing their talents. Girl guides, desh-sevikas and women volunteers became part of the social and political life of the nation. Among the women who contributed in no small measure to the nationalist struggle and cultural advancement of these years were Sarojini Naidu, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, the Begums of Bhopal, Kasturba Gandhi, Hansa Mehta, Abala Bose and Vijayalakshmi Pandit. Their example inspired thousands of stay-at-homes to come out into the wider world. The Sarda Marriage Act of 1930 did a service to women by fixing their minimum age of marriage at 14. But, of course, economic pressure of itself raised the age of matrimony in middle-class families.

Between the two world wars the youth movement in India made rapid strides. Young men listened to the impassioned oratory of the political leaders, frequently discussed politics among themselves, and took an active part in the nationalist movement. The formation of students' unions in the universities and colleges gave them an opportunity for concerted action. Under the impact of new forces, there developed, at the same time, a certain agnosticism among them. The new generation, moreover, became increasingly susceptible to forces tending to the break-up of the joint family system.

But religion did not lose its sociological importance altogether. On the contrary, the influence of the Gandhian

way heightened the spiritual and moral awareness of large groups of people. Socio-religious organizations like the Ramakrishna Mission continued to play their part, and several Gandhian *ashrams* sprang up all over the country. Sri Aurobindo's *ashram* at Pondicherry grew to be an institution attracting international attention. Tagore's Santiniketan, founded in 1901, was not a religious school; yet its object was to inculcate the 'religion of man'. In 1921, he established the Visva-Bharati at Santiniketan whose motto was universal love and the growth of world-mindedness. This small institution, where East and West met, made appreciable contributions to the advancement of art, culture and philosophy.

Since the establishment in 1857 of universities in the three Presidency towns, education had expanded rather slowly. In 1917, the Sadler Commission suggested reforms in the working of Calcutta University which were partially carried out. But that University owed its expansion and development really to the wisdom and energy of Asutosh Mukherjee. Another famous name in the history of education is that of Madan Mohan Malaviya, who founded the Banaras Hindu University during the First World War. By 1937 there were eighteen universities in India. However, the spread of higher education did not radically alter the situation in which the vast bulk of the population were without knowledge of the alphabet. The British system of education was not calculated to meet the needs of the nation. As early as 1917, Gandhi wrote : "I look upon our present system with horror and distrust. Instead of developing the moral and mental faculties of the little children, it dwarfs them." The Mahatma established some national schools designed to give a craft-bias to the education of boys and girls. Out of his experiments grew up the 'basic system of education', the aim of which was to provide vocationally trained young men to the nation.

The regional literatures, reflecting the social, political and economic forces of the time, gained in scope and strength. Rabindranath was at the summit of his glory. Sarat Chandra Chatterji revolutionized the Bengali novel, using it as an organ for exposing social vices, while Prem

Chand gave a new shape to Hindi fiction. In Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu, as well as in Bengali and Hindi, the Western influences were strongly felt, leading to the rise of poets, dramatists, novelists, essayists, critics biographers and humorists. Vitality and variety are two of the outstanding characteristics of the literature of this era; and the variety is due, to a large extent, to adaptations and translations from foreign languages. The enrichment through translations was most marked in Urdu literature. From the thirties socialism had acquired a growing hold on the mind of the younger authors, and writings dealing with the conflict of the classes became numerous.

Notable advances were made by Indians in the field of science. Jagdish Chandra Bose's discoveries in regard to plant life were a partial compensation for the non-recognition of his research into the wireless. The 'Raman Effect' of C. V. Raman obtained for him the Nobel Prize in physics. The Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science in Calcutta, and the Academy of Science at Bangalore, in particular, promoted much research work of value. The historical and philosophical investigations by Jadunath Sarkar and Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan respectively won wide recognition in India and outside. The advancement of knowledge in the humanities as well as in science, stimulated to a great extent by the numerous literary and research organizations which grew up during these years, was an indication that the nation was moving gradually in the midst of handicaps and hardships towards a better future.

During these 30 years, the Indian press grew not only in size but in strength also. Newspapers, particularly in the languages, functioned as a means of political education. A new medium of mass communication came into being in India as elsewhere in the world, namely, broadcasting. By carrying news quicker than newspapers to many places, it served to knit the country closer together. It also gave a fillip to classical and light music. The cinema came to be the principal form of popular entertainment, although its potentialities in public education were still to be explored.

CHAPTER XI

THE BIRTH OF A NEW NATION

The 'Quit India' decision of the Labour Government—one of the wisest and greatest acts of British statesmanship—was acclaimed with joy all over the country. Lord Mountbatten, who took over as Viceroy and Governor-General from Lord Wavell in March 1947, at once set himself to working out the details of the transfer of power. A White Paper embodying his scheme was issued on June 3. The plan entailed the division of India into two separate Dominions, the Muslim majority provinces being formed into the State of Pakistan. The All-India Congress Committee met on June 14 and gave its reluctant assent to the plan, although some members pleaded for an undivided India. The partition idea was supported by the Sikhs, who were anxious for a solution of the communal tangle. Public opinion in Bengal, too, at the instance of Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, the working President of the Hindu Mahasabha, accepted the inevitability of the division. There was, however, a difficulty in regard to the North-West Frontier Province. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his brother, Dr. Khan Saheb, leaders of the Khudai Khidmatgars, did not desire their province to be included in Pakistan. A plebiscite was held and the issue went against them. The North-West Frontier Province, British Baluchistan, the western part of the Punjab, Sind and the eastern half of Bengal were to constitute the Dominion of Pakistan. Though June 1948 had been announced as the appointed day for quitting India, the British Government, in view of the comparatively quick settlement of affairs, chose to complete the transfer earlier. The Independence of India Bill was introduced in the House of Commons on July 5, 1947, and, on being accepted by Parliament, it received Royal assent within two weeks. The Dominion of Pakistan came into being on August 14, 1947, and the Indian Dominion a day later.

August 15, 1947, was a day of rejoicing throughout the country. Freedom had been won—and won after decades

of hard and dreary struggle. For India a dream and for the British a pledge had been fulfilled. Lord Mountbatten became the first Governor-General and Jawaharlal Nehru the first Prime Minister of free India. The Constituent Assembly, for the time being, functioned as the legislature of the Indian Union in addition to its task of constitution-making. Independence gave Indians a place in the family of nations they had not so far had. It also unlocked new hopes and aspirations. Above all, it gave them an opportunity to prove their worth and their capacity for self-determination.

Beneath the rejoicing, however, there was sorrow. Independence had been achieved, but the country had been divided. It was not a peaceful division either, but one in which much blood was shed, many homes were broken, and enormous property was lost. Indeed, while the Tricolour went up the mast of the Red Fort and the Viceregal Lodge, the architect of our freedom was away in Bengal on his mission of mercy. There were communal atrocities in East and West Punjab, and these had their repercussion on the capital. On the morrow of Independence, Delhi saw the outbreak of killing. The fanaticism in the capital and in other parts of India caused indescribable mental anguish to the leaders of the nation. Mahatma Gandhi completed his work in Bengal and went to Delhi, where he undertook a fast demanding an assurance from the people that the madness would end, the minority community would be allowed to live in the fullest safety, and the damage to Muslim shrines in Delhi would be repaired. The assurance was given and Gandhiji broke his fast. But a small section of Hindus failed to appreciate his work. The outcome of their frenzy was tragic for India and the world. On January 30, 1948, while about to address a meeting at the Birla House, New Delhi, the Mahatma was shot by a fanatic.

Incomparable as a reformer and a politician, Mahatma Gandhi had, by his faith in the ultimate goodness of the human heart and his ceaseless service of the poor and lowly, enjoyed the common man's confidence and love to an uncommon degree. A defender of the rights of the oppressed and downtrodden, he had also the ability to give his philosophic idealism a practical shape. No one did more

to prove India's fitness to be free and to promote harmony among people of all creeds, races and religions. Rabindranath Tagore once asked : "Who else has felt like him that all Indians are his flesh and blood ?" Yet it is not in what he did for India alone that we must seek to measure his greatness; he lived for other nations as well. In life and in death, he was among the great moulders and martyrs of mankind.

Independence brought India face to face with a series of complex problems on the domestic front. One of the most pressing was the question of reorganization of the Indian States over which the paramountcy of the British Crown had ceased. Instruments of accession to the Indian Union had been signed by the rulers of most States before August 15. Junagadh and Hyderabad, however, did not follow their example. In Junagadh, the people decided, soon after Independence, to join the Union. In Hyderabad, the Nizam at first claimed the right to be an independent sovereign, refusing accession to either India or Pakistan. While this in itself could not be viewed by India with equanimity, the lawless activities of a band of terrorists called Razakars further complicated the position. When repeated protests seemed to be of no avail and the danger to people's life and property continued, the Government of India, at the instance of the Home Minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, undertook police action (1948) which restored normal authority in the State within five days. The Nizam finally decided to accede to India, and the people of the State ratified the decision. There was one State, however, which presented a peculiarly complex issue, namely, Jammu and Kashmir. Those who had been agitating for a separate Pakistan had always included Kashmir in their calculations, but the popular movement within the State had always aligned itself with the Indian National Congress. After the two separate Dominions came into being, the Maharaja of the State sat on the fence for some time. But when he found that tribesmen from Pakistan, with the support of the Government of Pakistan, marched into Kashmir with the obvious aim of forcing the issue, he sought India's help. The Union Government accepted the Maharaja's accession to India and rushed units of the

armed forces to save Srinagar in time and to repulse the raiders from Pakistan. At the same time, responsible government was established in Kashmir. When Pakistan's support to the raiders continued, India took the matter to the United Nations, offering to abide by the wishes of the people of the State.

The process of integration of the States was completed by the beginning of 1950. The smaller States were merged in the adjoining territories; some, like those of Rajasthan, were formed into unions of States, and certain others were, for purposes of administration, placed directly under the Central Government. The three largest States—Jammu and Kashmir, Hyderabad and Mysore—were permitted to exist as separate units.

Rehabilitating the displaced non-Muslims who poured into India from Pakistan was a task of tremendous difficulty for the new administration. Shelter had to be found for several million uprooted persons, their lives and what few belongings they could bring away had to be safeguarded, food and medicines found for them, the missing members of their broken families traced, and an opportunity afforded for them all to start life all over again. The Government of India and the State Governments concerned faced the situation courageously. The evacuee lands left in East Punjab by those who migrated to Pakistan were distributed among farmers who had owned lands in West Pakistan. A much larger number of tenants and others from both West and East Pakistan were provided lands and loans to build hutments in rural areas, as also houses in cities and towns. Delhi itself became the home of nearly half a million displaced persons, and new suburbs were built to accommodate them. Besides, the Government offered employment to as many of the refugees as they could, and extended monetary and other concessions to those who wanted to start business.

The vast expenditure involved in meeting these and other liabilities, and in promoting long-delayed nation-building activities, combined with the unsettled economic conditions all over the world, offered serious obstacles to solving the problem of scarcities and high prices. The persistent problem of food shortage, due mainly to the separation of Burma from

India in 1935 and the loss of food surplus territories as a result of Partition, was solved partially by rationing and other regulations, and by importing vast quantities of foodgrains from abroad. The national Government also took up the question of the agricultural development of the country. To enhance production, a programme was instituted in 1947 which, besides emphasizing the need of intensive cultivation, had in view the reclamation of waste lands for cultivation. Early in 1949, a self-sufficiency campaign was begun for an increased production of foodgrains; and within a year many thousand wells had been sunk and tanks constructed or repaired.

Although at the end of the war in 1945 the prospects for industrial production had looked promising, political uncertainties and the partition of the country led to a decline in output. The jute mills of Calcutta got cut off from the bulk of the jute-growing areas which went to East Pakistan, and the textile industry was deprived of supplies from the cotton-growing regions in West Pakistan. This state of affairs demanded immediate remedial measures. Accordingly, in December 1947, a tripartite conference on industrial development was convened. Plans were drawn up for increasing production through intensive exploitation of existing resources which covered thirty-two industries. In 1948, the Government of India announced their industrial policy, which aimed at improving productivity, efficiency and management in industries. The lines of demarcation between State and private enterprise were also indicated. The Government undertook (or proposed) several industrial ventures, such as the establishment of a fertilizer factory at Sindri in Bihar and of a workshop for the manufacture of steam locomotives at Chittaranjan in West Bengal, the development of the Hindustan Aircraft Factory, the starting of a telephone industry at Bangalore, and the setting up of a machine tools factory. They had also in view a number of river valley projects both for irrigation and for the supply of electric power. Active encouragement was given at the same time to the private industrial sector as a part of Government policy to tone up the textile, plantation, chemical and engineering industries.

The success of Government's industrial policy rested on continuing industrial peace, which in turn required that the reasonable demands of labour should be satisfied and machinery should be evolved for peaceful settlement of disputes between capital and labour. This desire was responsible for the Industrial Disputes Act of 1947 which replaced the Trade Disputes Act of 1929. This piece of legislation was followed by the Employees' State Insurance Act intended to ensure proper labour welfare, and the Coal Mines Provident Fund and Bonus Scheme Act (1948) as a step towards social security. A Factories Act was also passed in 1948 for regulating the general living conditions in factories and guaranteeing the safety, health and welfare of industrial workers.

The reorientation of education, encouragement of scientific research and promotion of health services were some of the other important tasks which engaged the National Government's attention. Stress was laid on technical education on the one hand and social education on the other, while for the reorganization of university education a commission was appointed under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in 1948. The commission made far-reaching recommendations. For expanding scientific research on a systematic basis, an independent department was set up in 1947, and several national laboratories were started. In respect of the promotion of health, the main attention of the Government was directed towards extending medical facilities to rural areas. Nation-wide campaigns were undertaken to eradicate malaria and fight tuberculosis.

In the domain of foreign affairs, free India had to deal with a number of delicate and potentially dangerous questions. Her stand in every instance was calculated to promote peace and justice and prevent conflict. The evil principle of colonialism and racial domination was denounced in every international forum and the country's support extended to all the colonial peoples of Asia and Africa striving to be free. When North Korean forces invaded South Korea, India was quick to condemn the aggression. Likewise, she registered an emphatic warning when the Korean war was in danger of spreading to Manchuria. It

was made clear that India's policy was not to align herself with any power group, but to maintain friendly relations with all. These friendly ties would naturally be closer with the nearer neighbours. The desire to retain existing ties of friendship was responsible for her decision to continue to be a member of the British Commonwealth. The allegiance to the cause of world peace and amity was seen in India's active support of the United Nations and of its subsidiary organisations like UNESCO, WHO and FAO.

In 1948, C. Rajagopalachari became the Governor-General on the retirement of Lord Mountbatten. He was the first and last Indian to be Governor-General. The work of the Constituent Assembly was completed after three years' patient labour, and the draft of the new Constitution was ready by the end of 1949. The Constitution proclaimed India to be a Sovereign Democratic Republic based on the principle of social, economic and political justice. India was to be a Secular State, and the Constitution guaranteed to all citizens, after the manner of the American Constitution, certain fundamental rights, such as the right to equality, the right to freedom of speech and expression, the right of assembling peacefully and forming associations, of moving and residing, of acquiring, holding or disposing of property and of practising any profession or occupation, the right to religious freedom, cultural and educational rights, and the right to constitutional remedy. The right to equality specified the abolition of untouchability, and the Constitution made its practice punishable by law. Certain Directive Principles were also set out in the Constitution to ensure a real welfare State in India. For example, the Constitution specified it as the duty of the State to secure for the people adequate means of livelihood, or equal pay for equal work for both men and women.

It was a flexible, federal Constitution, India being defined as a 'Union of States'. The executive power of the Union was vested in the President, who was to be elected by the elected members of both the Houses of Parliament and State Assemblies and was to hold office for five years. There was also to be an elected Vice-President. But the real executive was to be the Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister at its head. The

Central legislature or Parliament was to consist of a Council of State (Rajya Sabha), indirectly elected and with a maximum strength of 250 members, and a House of the People (Lok Sabha) directly elected on the adult franchise basis, with not more than 500 members. Except in the case of the Centrally administered areas, the executive authority of a State was vested in the Governor (in some cases, the Rajpramukh) who was to be aided and advised by a Council of Ministers. The powers and responsibilities of the Centre and the States were demarcated through three lists of subjects —Union, State and Concurrent. The Constitution empowered the judiciary—headed by a Supreme Court—not only to ensure the rule of law but also to judge whether legislative enactments were in accordance with the Constitution. One of the Schedules of the Constitution listed fourteen of the major languages of India which were to be regarded as national languages. Hindi in Devanagari script was declared to be the language of official communication, but the use of English was to be retained for fifteen years. Another important feature of the Constitution was the provision of special transitional protection for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, for whom a large number of seats in Legislatures and posts in Government services were to be reserved to enable them to overcome their handicaps.

The new Constitution was promulgated on January 26, 1950, as the world moved into the second half of the century. The new nation, born out of the old, had within two and a half years after the winning of freedom taken mighty strides towards a new order. As trumpets and bugles heralded the birth of the Indian Republic, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, its first President, declared : "Let us launch this new enterprise of running our independent Republic with confidence, with truth and non-violence and, above all, with heart within and God above."

EPILOGUE

THE HISTORY of India shows a continuous process of development from remote antiquity to the present day. Diverse exotic cultures have frequently broken into the fortified arena of Indianism. And forces have been at work, at times violently from within, tending towards disruption. But the central continuity of Indian culture remains unbroken.

Many different peoples came and became metamorphosed in this great ethnical laboratory. And each people contributed in some way or other to the cultural growth of the land, giving a complex character to its civilization. India has been a land of variety from the earliest times to the present. Bewildering differences, geographical, racial, linguistic, religious, ideological and economic, have persisted here. Equally striking are the diversities in diet, dress, customs and manners. Sitting in a railway compartment, one would frequently find a motley group chatting around one in ten different tongues and wearing a dozen different dresses. They are all Indians none-the-less, held together by a common tradition and common ways of thought and behaviour.

It is the immense vitality of Indian civilization that would account for its continuance through the storms and turmoils of the ages. The secret of this vitality lies in the fact that behind it there has been a purpose which has seldom been lost sight of by the people who have evolved it. The purpose is not material advancement. Not that the material side of life was quite neglected by the people of India in the past. The remarkable thing about them is that they sought a harmony between material objects of life and things of the spirit. Indian emigrants established kingdoms and empires overseas. It was not, however, the lure of empires or the lust for conquest which impelled them to go out. That was of secondary consequence. Generations of Indian adventurers braved the wild waves, or toiled through the uplands of Central Asia, primarily with a view to spreading their culture abroad. For the same reason, the people of India looked

upon the devastating foreign invasions they had to face with a certain philosophic indifference. The Greek writers have referred to Indian philosophers who cared not a whit for Alexander of Macedon, however great his achievement might have been. Indian civilization, with all its emphasis on action, has been essentially calm and contemplative; life here has gone on from the earliest times in a quiet, leisurely way. The ploughman has tilled the ground and the handicraftsman plied his shuttle unperturbed by oft-recurring political upheavals. It is this philosophic calm which enabled the Indian artists to build such marvels in stone as the Kailasa temple at Ellora, the Brihadeesvara shrine at Tanjore and the Taj Mahal at Agra, to produce such inimitable fabrics as Dacca *malmal-khas,* and to develop musical melodies capable of elevating both the singer and the listener to the highest spiritual flights.

The contributions of the Indian people to human growth have by no means been negligible. Indian literature, both ancient and medieval, has many insights to give and abundant lessons to impart. Indian philosophy, consciously or unconsciously, exercised a significant influence on the development of Western and Eastern philosophy. Even in the domain of science, India gave the world something of lasting value. Indian religions became the accepted religions of a considerable part of the globe, and one of these, Buddhism, is even now the faith of a large portion of the world's population. The modern world has also acknowledged its indebtedness, among others, to Ramakrishna, Sri Aurobindo, Tagore and Gandhi whose ideas have influenced the present age and will inspire generations to come. To the maintenance of international amity and world peace independent India has contributed powerfully. Adopting and emphasizing the Buddhist Panchsheel as the basis of her foreign policy, she has played an important part in Asian and world affairs. But India has no desire to be the leader of Asia. As the Prime Minister told the House of the People in 1953, India only believes "in the co-operation of all nations, big and small".

The question has sometimes been asked whether India is a nation in the real sense of the term. Culturally, the country has been an integrated unit during the last three thousand

years or more, in spite of manifold diversity. Under the impact of foreign rule, a sense of political unity developed, too. This occurred by slow degrees during the nineteenth century and more rapidly during the twentieth. Independence itself is an expression of this political unity, and the integration of the Princely States with the rest of the country gave further substance to it. A good beginning was made in the direction of economic integration by the national plans of development. During the First Five Year Plan, which was inaugurated in 1951, a capital expenditure of more than two thousand crores of rupees was incurred on programmes of agricultural and co-operative development, irrigation, electrification, improvement of communications, industrial development, social services and rehabilitation. The Second Five Year Plan, which was launched in 1956, had as its objective the further industrialization of the country and the reduction of inequalities of income between man and man and region and region. Recently we were in the midst of the Third Five Year Plan, which was designed to take the economy very near the self-generating stage.

Meanwhile centrifugal forces were at work in some spheres. Among these forces, "linguism" or excessive love of one's language led to a demand for linguistic States shortly after independence. It became a major issue and a States' Reorganization Commission had to be appointed in 1955 which recommended the re-drawing of some inter-State boundaries within the country. Linguistic dissonance was in evidence also on the issue of making Hindi the official language of the Union.

These were, however, passing phases in the life of a nation struggling for all-round development and progress. What really presents a formidable obstacle in the way of national integration is the peculiar social conditions still obtaining in the country. Of these, the caste factor is the most important. The four *varnas*, originally devised according to *guna* (mental qualities) and *Karma* (occupations), might have been well-suited to conditions in the Vedic age. But in course of time caste stratification came to be synonymous with stagnation. Of late, under the pressure of historical forces, the institution of caste has begun to lose its hold, although

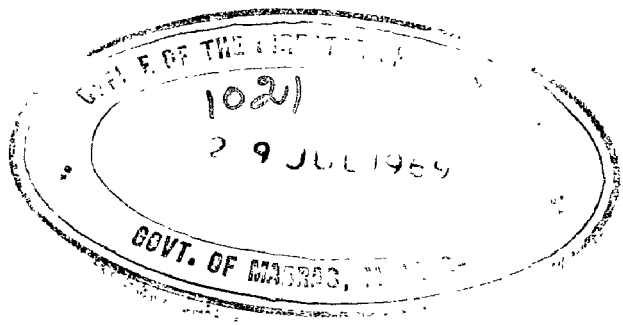
marriages outside the caste, or even the sub-caste, are still the exception rather than the rule. Untouchability, the anathema of Indian society, has all but died out, thanks to the relentless efforts of Mahatma Gandhi. It has been banned by the Constitution of the Union. The expansion of education, increasing urbanization and the growth of an international outlook have gone a long way to weaken caste prejudices and to foster a spirit of equality among most sections of the people.

The period of the Third Five Year Plan was, in some respects, a trying time for India. Communist China's desire for aggrandizement manifested itself in aggression on the Sino-Indian borders and, eventually, in October 1962 the Chinese came out openly for an assault. But India proved equal to the occasion, and the conflict terminated within a short while.

In May 1964 Jawaharlal Nehru passed away. His death was an irreparable loss to the nation. His successor, Lal Bahadur Shastri, however, steered the ship of State gallantly and coolheadedly. His brief tenure of office witnessed, on the external front, aggressions from Pakistan, mainly on the question of Kashmir. There were, in 1965, a series of aggressions on the north-western frontier and along the Rann of Cutch. The matter ultimately drifted to a war in which India acquitted herself quite creditably and a number of enemy outposts were captured. Finally, the issue was settled by an agreement signed in January 1966 at Tashkent between Prime Minister Shastri and the Pakistan President Ayub Khan. The very night following the signing of the agreement Lal Bahadur suddenly died of a heart-attack. After a brief interim arrangement, Indira Gandhi was elected Prime Minister of India.

Internally, there were troubles in Kerala. The soaring prices of commodities there and elsewhere during the last one year or so have been the most pressing domestic problem for the Government. It has not, however, seriously arrested the progress of nation-building activities. Education, for instance, has expanded greatly during the past few years. And the number of universities has exceeded sixty. There has also been marked industrial progress throughout the country. Increased irrigation facilities have been offered, too, to the

agriculturists and steps taken towards the further betterment of the conditions of labour. The Fourth Five Year Plan promises to ensure a better future for the masses of the Indian population and to bring India in line with the prosperous nations of the world.



L25DPD-66—15 4 67

PUBLICATIONS DIVISION
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
Government of India