

WHY INDIA DID NOT REVOLT.

BY D. E. G.

WHEN the present war broke out speculations were rife as to conditions in India to which it might give rise. If predictions of widespread rebellion, or of serious trouble of any kind, have not "gone up like a rocket and come down like the stick," they have at least missed the mark. The least surprised as to what did not happen were those who are intimately acquainted with India. Though there is in India a general feeling of unrest, partly apparent and partly dormant, which has lately been enhanced by a seditious propaganda of a certain educated class, it has been but of small consequence. India as a whole certainly has failed to convince the world that it could do these things or wanted to do them, even at a time that seemed propitious. It is therefore particularly interesting at the present juncture to reflect upon the situation of India.

In no quarter of the globe have the internal conditions of a country been more favorable to England's colonial policies than in India. To such an extent has this been true that she has been able, with but a handful of English troops comparatively speaking, to rule this densely populated country, which is almost as large as the European continent, excluding Russia. There, if anywhere, England's political skill has availed itself of the impotency of a people, and pursued its own interest with beneficial as well as detrimental consequences to the country. Among the natives of India the principal subjects for complaint against England are: The hindrance of the English party government to the development of their country; the obstructions to certain educational problems and community interests as well as to native commercial enterprise; further, the economic disadvantages caused by the use of a silver instead of a gold standard and by the destruction of certain industries by legislation, which is an actual asset to England but of great detriment to India, since it has thrown her population upon the land, raw production being practically the only means of subsistence; and, last but not least, the policy which keeps the highly educated native out of all government service and subjects him to the arrogance of his rulers,—indeed nothing is more galling to the native than the contemptuousness and air of haughty superiority with which the Englishman looks down upon him. Yet however much the natives' indig-

nation or point of view may be justified, the fact remains that by far the largest majority of educated natives are fully aware that their country is not yet ripe for self-government, that in the event of England losing its hold upon India it would lead to bloody strife among the Indian people and the probability of coming under the influence or even dominion of another, perhaps less desirable, foreign power. It is not very long since there was cause for apprehension of a possible encroachment of Russia (to-day England's ally).

No one is more to blame for conditions in India than its own dominant classes. One need but reflect upon the discord, schism and even disdain that prevails among them. Each of these classes, the warrior caste, the priesthood and the wealthy class, pursues its own interest without any consideration for any other. They are devoid of all feeling of responsibility to the people in general, and have more respect for animal life than for the coolie in the street. The warrior caste is the instrument of its rulers. The priesthood, which is either ignorant or bound up in metaphysical dogmas, has no desire to encourage progress of any kind. The wealthy class hoards its wealth to a large extent in the shape of ornaments and jewelry, mainly owing to a haunting fear of civil discord; or it is invested in land, which is a badge of social rank; or, worse still, it is put out in loans to the poor at forty and even fifty percent. Most of the poor people, who live by cultivating the soil, are in the clutches of some local *zemidar* (big landowner), who sweeps their produce into his garners, doling out inadequate supplies of food and seed grain.

Another incubus to the country as a whole is that it consists of a large number of native states, each ruled by the almost absolute sovereign authority of its native prince, at least so far as is compatible with England's policy. Jealousy and opposing interests among these rulers shut out any general political sentiment and prevent the growth of a wider national spirit, thus constituting England's mainstay in India.

The present time, while the greatest calamity in the world's history is taking place in Europe, is indeed but an inopportune moment to speak in a comparative sense about the East and West; however, while a new spirit unfolded its wings in Europe since the Renaissance, the East remained without inspiration. Only in recent years has the spirit of our age dawned upon a hitherto small class in India, but the masses of the Indian people are still as apathetic to their fate as of yore.

Influenced by the climatic and geographical conditions of their country, ground under the heel of ages, crushed by the severe struggle for existence and the terrible incubus of religious caste and social class system, their outlook on life is but a dismal one.

“Born a sweeper you shall die a sweeper, your children shall be sweepers, and there shall be ever upon your brow a mark as clear as the mark of Cain, but it shall be made in dirt instead of blood.”

No little of the gloom which hangs over the people is due to their religion. Ignorant of the sacred text of the Veda or misconstruing the spirit revealed therein, confused by metaphysical dogmas that grew too subtle for the layman's comprehension, and under the influence of a hierocracy that exploited the all-pervading fear of the unknown to serve their lust of luxury and rule, the bright deities of the Veda changed to less kindly objects of worship. They worship the idol that most appeals to them. They are terrified by demons, haunted by the burden of sins which they committed in a previous state of existence; every misfortune is a punishment, and their heaven is hard to reach.

Such is the form of curse under which millions start forth on the journey of the world in the heyday of life. They are some of the great hordes who provide in their lean bodies victims for the yearly sacrifice to cholera, famine and plague. Plague will slay 25,000 in a week, cholera will destroy ten times that number in a year, while the famine of one well-remembered time accounted for five-and-a-quarter millions of dead people. Another impediment is the peculiar position which women are made to hold, as well as the customs and traditions which deprive their lives of opportunities for pleasure and of facilities for advancement. The standard of enjoyment among any people, and indeed the touchstone of a nation's cheerfulness, depends mainly upon the women, and no other nation on earth needs cheer and enjoyment more than the Indian people.

The natives of India are indeed religious people, and their religion finds its expression principally in Hinduism, while Brahmanism still exercises a potent influence over much the largest part of the people; though it has never sought to win proselytes, it competes with rival creeds by offering superior advantages. Deep seated in the heart of the Indian is the craving for the supernatural, and because Hinduism appeases this craving and appeals to the religious instinct which inspires him always to seek in every aspect of nature a symbol of worship and an attribute of the divine, rather

than the means of intellectual interpretation, it has kept its hold upon the people and is indeed the criterion of life in India. By a strange irony, Buddha, the founder of an essentially atheistic creed, has been deified by his followers, and the worship of "Nats," or evil spirits, is widely practiced among them. The same deterioration or inclination to return to the fold of Hinduism is perceptible among the Jains and the Sikhs, which are sects representing early reform movements; even the Mohammedans of the country have to a large extent remained Hindus in many respects. Hinduism is an eminently plastic religion. It remains a unity in spite of its division into mighty sects and constitutes the one common tie of the majority of the people in India. Within it lies dormant a power which, if utilized and properly directed, could be an important factor in bringing about the cooperative spirit so much needed in India.

Without arrogating to oneself Mr. Wells's gift of prophecy, but merely considering India's history, one may venture to say that since India not only has no nationalism but even lacks any sentiment or knowledge of it, she is incapable of forcing her own issue. Those Indians who consider the lack of nationalistic spirit in India as a matter of higher attainment, the ideal of a greater civilization, would do well to apply their minds to a more logical conclusion of the needs of our time.

India needs national solidarity. Nationalism should be the watchword of every Indian who desires better government than that of a British *raj*, and not until they have realized this can they hope to be their own masters.

There is a certain class in India who now hope that on the strength of participation in the war by their fighting classes England may after the conclusion of the war grant them a wider representation in the government than that initiated a few years ago by Lord Minto, a former governor general. Should such expectations be realized, however, it will have little or no effect on the general situation in India.

THE PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA.

BY CHINMOY.

IF India can be said to be a congeries of nations, it is to-day also the confluence of many faiths. Besides giving to the world some of the greatest religious thinkers, Hinduism was never intolerant of other religious creeds; and when the fire-worshippers of Persia