



By G. K. CHESTERTON.

MATTHEW ARNOLD, among much that was arid and arbitrary, said at least two very sound and useful things: first, that we, the modern English, are much too prone to worship "machinery"—that is, the means rather than the end; and secondly, that we ought to cultivate to a great extent the habit of letting our thoughts "play round" a subject. This page of this paper seems to be an admirable and specially appointed place for playing round. Nevertheless, if you allow your mind to play round anything that is worshipped as machinery, you will probably get into trouble. I have myself, for instance, been sternly rebuked of late for saying that what I wanted was not votes, but democracy. People spoke as if this were some sort of awful apostasy from the Liberal position; whereas, it is a humble remark of exactly the same sort as saying that I want, not the Brighton express, but Brighton; not the Calais boat, but Calais; not a Polar Expedition, but the North Pole. The test of a democracy is not whether the people vote, but whether the people rule. The essence of a democracy is that the national tone and spirit of the typical citizen is apparent and striking in the actions of the State, that France is governed in a French way, or Germany in a German way, or Spain in a Spanish way. Votes may be the most convenient way of achieving this effect; but votes are quite vain if they do not achieve it. And sometimes they do not. I venture to say that the average Frenchman was much more behind the conscription of Napoleon I. than the average Englishman was behind that mass of anti-civic nonsense, the Children Bill. The art of politics is not managing a machine, but managing a personality. Parliament is called "it," but England is called "she." Yet the extent to which this sense of national or local colour has been lost is really amazing. A man in a train told me the other day that some Model Settlement or Garden City or some such thing that he lived in "had the real life of an old English village." When I asked him about the inn, he told me that they had voted for having a teetotal inn. He seemed to have no sense of how he had painted out the whole picture with one sweep of the brush. It is as if he had said, "How charming is an old English village at evening, when the Muezzin is calling from the shining pinnacle of the Mosque!"

It is this lack of atmosphere that always embarrasses me when my friends come and tell me about the movement of Indian Nationalism. I do not doubt for a moment that the young idealists who ask for Indian independence are very fine fellows; most young idealists are fine fellows. I do not doubt for an instant that many of our Imperial officials are stupid and oppressive; most Imperial officials are stupid and oppressive. But when I am confronted with the actual papers and statements of the Indian Nationalists I feel much more dubious, and, to tell the truth, a little bored. The principal weakness of Indian Nationalism seems to be that it is not very Indian and not very national. It is all about Herbert Spencer and Heaven knows what. What is the good of the Indian national spirit if it cannot protect its people from Herbert Spencer? I am not fond of the philosophy of Buddhism; but it is not so shallow as Spencer's philosophy; it has real ideas of its

own. One of the papers, I understand, is called the *Indian Sociologist*. What are the young men of India doing that they allow such an animal as a sociologist to pollute their ancient villages and poison their kindly homes?

When all is said, there is a rational distinction between a people asking for its own ancient life and a people asking for things that have been wholly invented by somebody else. There is a difference between

been pestilence; but I would sooner die of the plague than die of toil and vexation in order to avoid the plague. There would have been religious differences dangerous to public peace; but I think religion more important than peace. Life is very short; a man must live somehow and die somewhere; the amount of bodily comfort a peasant gets under your best Republic is not so much more than mine. If you do not like our sort of spiritual comfort, we never asked you to. Go, and leave us with it."

Suppose an Indian said that, I should call him an Indian Nationalist, or, at least, an authentic Indian, and I think it would be very hard to answer him. But the Indian Nationalists whose works I have read simply say with ever-increasing excitability, "Give me a ballot-box. Provide me with a Ministerial dispatch-box. Hand me over the Lord Chancellor's wig. I have a natural right to be Prime Minister. I have a heaven-born claim to introduce a Budget. My soul is starved if I am excluded from the Editorship of the *Daily Mail*," or words to that effect.

Now this, I think, is not so difficult to answer. The most sympathetic person is tempted to cry plaintively, "But, hang it all, my excellent Oriental (may your shadow never grow less), we invented all these things. If they are so very good as you make out, you owe it to us that you have ever heard of them. If they are indeed natural rights, you would never even have thought of your natural rights but for us. If voting is so very absolute and divine (which I am inclined rather to doubt myself), then certainly we have some of the authority that belongs to the founders of a true religion, the bringers of salvation." When the Hindu takes this very haughty tone and demands a vote on the spot as a sacred necessity of man, I can only express my feelings by supposing the situation reversed. It seems to me very much as if I were to go into Tibet and find the Grand Lama or some great spiritual authority, and were to demand to be treated as a Mahatma or something of that kind. The Grand Lama would very reasonably reply: "Our religion is either true or false; it is either worth having or not worth having. If you know better than we do, you do not want our religion. But if you do want our religion, please remember that it is our religion; we discovered it, we studied it, and we know whether a man is a Mahatma or not. If you want one of our peculiar privileges, you must accept our peculiar discipline and pass our peculiar standards, to get it."

Perhaps you think I am opposing Indian Nationalism. That is just where you make a mistake; I am letting my mind play round the subject. This is especially desirable when we are dealing with the deep conflict between two complete civilisations. Nor do I deny the existence of natural rights. The right of a people to express itself, to be itself in arts and action, seems to me a genuine right. If there is such a thing as India, it has a right to be Indian. But Herbert Spencer is not Indian; "Sociology" is not Indian; all this pedantic clatter about culture and science is not Indian. I often wish it were not English either. But this is our first abstract difficulty, that we cannot feel certain that the Indian Nationalist is national.



A GREAT DISSENTIENT FROM THE BUDGET: LORD ROSEBERY, WHOSE SPEECH AT GLASGOW HAS CAUSED SUCH A SENSATION.

In his great denunciation of the Budget at Glasgow last week, Lord Rosebery stated that he had long ceased to be in communion with the Liberal party. "The Budget," he said, "is introduced as a Liberal measure. It is a new Liberalism, and not the one I have known and practised, under more illustrious auspices than these, as Mr. Gladstone's humble disciple. . . Tyranny is not Liberalism, but Socialism. . . I may think Tariff Reform or Protection an evil, but Socialism is the end of all, the negation of faith, of family, of property, of the Monarchy, and of Empire. . . With real sorrow I find it the parting of the ways, and I must go the road of public economy." Before he delivered his speech, Lord Rosebery resigned his office as President of the Liberal League, of which he was one of the founders seven years ago. Its formation in 1902 marked an interesting stage in the development of Liberalism. There had previously been a division between the schools of thought represented on the one hand by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and on the other by Lord Rosebery, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Haldane, and Sir Edward Grey. The object of the Liberal League was to bring together these conflicting elements, and the common ground on which they were able to meet was the policy laid down in Lord Rosebery's famous speech at Chesterfield. This union, as far as Lord Rosebery is concerned, at any rate, has now been once more broken up.

a conquered people demanding its own institutions and the same people demanding the institutions of the conqueror. Suppose an Indian said: "I heartily wish India had always been free from white men and all their works. Every system has its sins; and we prefer our own. There would have been dynastic wars; but I prefer dying in battle to dying in hospital. There would have been despotism; but I prefer one king whom I hardly ever see to a hundred kings regulating my diet and my children. There would have

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