

## SUGGESTIONS TOWARDS A VIEW OF IMPERIALISM.

IN the space at my disposal it would be a fruitless task to attempt a complete estimate of Imperialism. My desire rather is to suggest an adequate point of view. Put shortly, the point of view indicated is this. Firstly, the final verdict must rest on moral grounds. And again Imperialism must be judged by what it is and has been, in its widest bearings, not forgetting its relations to other competing forms of Imperialism, and each particular phase must be viewed in the light of the whole.

It is needless to labour the point that a great national policy must be ratified by the conscience of a people. That it must vindicate itself at the bar of the highest morality is plain. The danger is lest moral criteria be applied in an abstract and one-sided way. A totally inadequate formula such as race supremacy or militarism is apt to be chosen as an expression for Imperialism and with the morality of such a notion Imperialism is made to stand or fall. Equally defective is the procedure which singles out an abuse or a virtue and thereupon promptly anathematizes or commends the whole conception. We are familiar with the Jesuit doctrine, 'the end justifies the means,' a vicious doctrine as generally interpreted. Yet, if the converse be granted, it expresses a truth—if it be allowed that the means justifies the end. In construing the end, that is, the minor rights and wrongs, which are relatively the means, should contribute to the formation of an ethical whole in which for the moral sense the distinction of end and means is sublimated

into an interrelation of constituent elements.

Assuming that in politics as well as in narrower fields of conduct the larger, the ultimate object of men's endeavour should not be judged in isolation from the mediate issues involved, it follows that the quality of an ideal such as Imperialism largely depends upon the quality of the varied activities that go to make it up. The enlightenment or depravity of administrative methods, the integrity or corruption of the public services, the good conduct or misconduct of diplomatic relations all serve to give a moral or an immoral stamp to the whole Imperial idea.

Take British rule in Egypt. That rule is an element in existing Imperialism. Our estimate of the latter must be affected by what British rule is doing in Egypt. The very character of that rule again is to a great degree determined by the way in which that rule was introduced. If the diplomacy and warfare by which the control of Egypt passed to Britain is a record of cruelty and deceit, as some hold all diplomacy and war to be, then the Empire so far stands condemned, let the advantages to the Egyptians be what they will. At best they can be but a tardy atonement for original sin. A survey of the facts in extenso would be in place here if there were room for it. We can at least say this, that no one who examines the British record in Egypt during the past twenty-three years can question the solid benefits that have resulted to the people. They amount to a transformation. And the series