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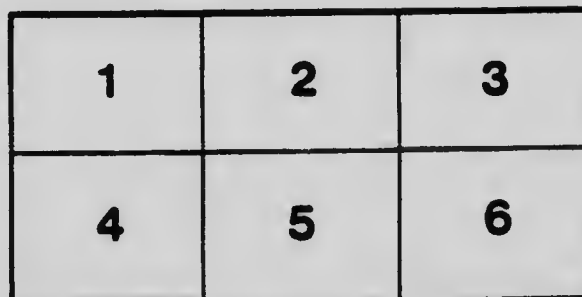
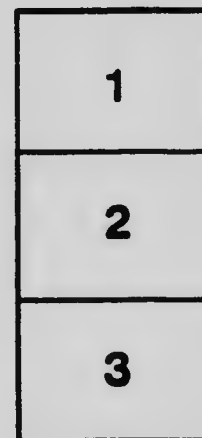
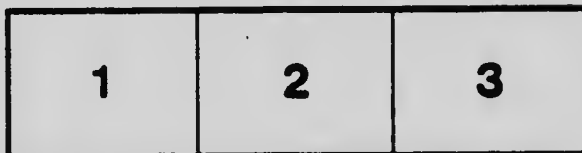
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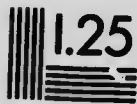
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INDIA AND THE
WAR

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INDIA AND THE WAR

THERE are many people in Great Britain who do not realize the significance of the dispatch of Indian troops to the war, and of the many offers of assistance which have been received from the rulers of the native States in India. India is now asserting its right to be treated as a portion of the Empire, and to take its share in the responsibilities of that Empire. It claims to be treated as a partner and not as a mere dependant.

How many Englishmen have more than the vaguest notions of the relations between India and England? They know nothing of the history of our acquisition of sovereignty in India, they know nothing of our administration of the country, how we have welded together so many discordant elements, how we have worked for happiness and order and how we have endeavoured to develop the country in the interests of its people. We have not, of course, forgotten our own interests, but our interests have coincided with those of the people. Now, as we will show hereafter, India is appreciating this fact and is anxious to join with us against the common enemy.

Even those who have had relations working in India have frequently inaccurate ideas on the subject. They look upon it merely as a hot and unhealthy place which furnishes a livelihood for younger sons who otherwise would be unable to get employment. They look upon it as a grand field for missionary enterprise, and as a useful producer of some of the necessaries of life,

such as wheat, rice, tea, sugar, jute, and other products of the

The estimated population of the Indian Empire was 315,000,000 in 1911, in 1912 it imported £152,000,000 worth of goods and exported £171,000,000. As most of the imports are from Great Britain, many thousands of people in England practically depend upon India for their livelihood.

The peoples of India are of many different races and religions; 69 per cent. are Hindus, 21 per cent. Mohammedans, 3 per cent. Buddhists (nearly all in Burma); the remaining 7 per cent. include nearly 4,000,000 Christians, over 3,000,000 Sikhs, 1,250,000 Jains (a sect of dissenting Hindus), about 100,000 Parses, and over 10,250,000, described as Animists, who believe in magic and strive to propitiate impersonal forces. India has 147 vernacular languages of extraordinary variety. Hindustani, which was the camp language of the Mohammedan invaders, is the *lingua franca* of India; but among the educated classes it has been superseded to a great extent by English.

England's first association with India began at the close of the sixteenth century, when the London East India Company was incorporated by Queen Elizabeth. It was not until the eighteenth century that this country acquired any sovereign rights in India. During that century Lord Clive, Warren Hastings, and other officers of the East India Company gradually extended the dominion of the English people. In 1858 the Crown took over the administration of the country. On November 1 of that year Queen Victoria issued a proclamation to the Princes, Chiefs, and People of India announcing her resolution to assume the government and the territories of India 'heretofore administered in trust

by the Honourable East India Company'. Legislative Councils were then established and the constitution of the government was fixed by Acts of Parliament. Since that time the association of the people in the government of the country has been developed. Not only are the people represented in the several legislatures, but their leading men play an important part in the working of municipal and other public bodies.

Although the governing class is necessarily British and the higher appointments are in the main held by Britons, the bulk of the executive and judicial work is done by Indians. Indians also are to be found in the higher appointments. They are in the Executive Councils of the Viceroy and Governors, in the Boards of Revenue, and on the Benches of the High Courts. The legal profession of India is almost entirely composed of natives of the country. A large proportion of the medical profession is also indigenous, but its native members have been taught in medical schools by English doctors, and by others who have been trained in the European systems of medicine.

Some of the communities, especially the Hindus, Jains, and Parsees, are taking a prominent part in commerce; their merchant princes have acquired a great reputation for energy and charity. The Mohammedan community, for reasons which it is not necessary to detail here, has not been able to take such full advantage of English education as have the Hindus, but there are signs of their advancing upon similar lines. The present Law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council is an Indian Mohammedan, and there are Mohammedans on all the Benches of the High Courts of Justice.

The instincts of a large number of the people, especially in Upper India, are martial. The Mahrattas, the Rajputs,

the Sikhs, and the Mohammedans of Upper India fought us in the past and they were worthy antagonists. Their descendants have fought with us and now assert their right to take their share in the perils that beset us.

Never has there been an occasion when India has been more united than at the present time. The moment that news arrived of the outbreak of war between Great Britain and Germany a wave of enthusiasm seems to have passed over not only the whole of the British Empire in India, but throughout Hindustan. There has not been a single note of discord. Every class and every race have shown their loyalty and their anxiety to take their share of the burdens and duties of citizens of the Empire. Sedition and disaffection have disappeared from the peninsula; it is not only where Britain rules that offers of men, of money and of help of every kind have been made spontaneously and ungrudgingly, but the independent rulers have to a man placed their troops and their wealth at the service of the Empire. The Maharaja of Nepal, an independent State with a population of about 5,000,000, has put the entire resources of his country at the disposal of the King-Emperor. His men furnish to England the Gurkha regiments, which are some of the best infantry in the world. The Raja of Mysore has sent for the use of the troops a sum of 50 lakhs of rupees; that is something between £300,000 and £400,000. The Ruler of the ancient State of Rewa writes to the Viceroy: 'What orders from His Majesty for me and my troops?' The Gaekwar of Baroda, one of the principal Mahratta States in India, offers all his troops and resources. The Rulers of Bharatpur and Akalkot make similar offers. The Raja of Pudukota offers 'all I possess', and expresses his anxiety to serve in any capacity and to raise a regi-

ment of his subjects. The Maharaja of Idar, the Rao of Cutch, the Maharaja of Bhaunagar, the Thakore Sahib of Limbdi, and the Nawab of Palampur have also placed the resources of their States at the disposal of the Government.

These messages are typical of the spirit which is to be found everywhere in India. The offers are not empty ones. It is perfectly clear that all Indians of intelligence and education now realize, if they did not do so before, that their own interests and those of the whole country are bound up with the interests of the British Empire.

It is not only from princes and rulers that help is offered. Newspapers show that all classes of the community are trying to find out what they can do to help the British. Meetings are being held by different communities at which not only are feelings of loyalty expressed, but offers of help are made. Generally the voice of the women of India is unheard, even in the case of political danger; but things are different now. Mr. B. N. Bose a prominent member of the Legislative Council of the Governor-General of India, writes to *The Times* :

‘Sir,—As an Indian who came over to this country only temporarily, as a delegate of the Indian National Congress, I read this morning the message of our beloved Viceroy, of India’s loyalty and India’s co-operation in this great crisis of our life, with tears in my eyes. Our Indian sun stirs our blood to strong emotions.

We feel grateful to Mr. Bonar Law for his suggestion that this message should be published to the world, and may I add that Indian women have not only cheerfully parted with their sons, husbands, and brothers at the call of the King, but I have received

communications from India that many of them who are too humble to make their offer to the Viceroy are willing, if need be, to part with their personal jewelry and ornaments, things which in India constitute the women's insurance fund, as they did in bygone times when religion or honour was in danger.'

The supply of trained soldiers who are keen for war and who are the descendants of many generations of warriors is practically inexhaustible. The Gurkhas, the Sikhs, the Rajputs, the Mahrattas, the Moham-
medan races of Northern India have in past times earned on many a stricken field the reputation of great warriors. The present representatives of those races are in no way inferior to their ancestors. Many of them have been trained in the British Army in India, and have fought side by side with British troops in all the wars which have been waged in India and the East. Afghanistan, China, Egypt have all experienced the valour and fighting capacity of our Indian troops. It is not alone upon our own Indian troops that we can now rely. Some of the Native States in India have large armies of trained soldiers whose swords are at our service.

Distinctions of race and creed have disappeared at the first suggestion of danger to the Empire. Hindus, Mohammedans, Parsees, and Buddhists are all uniting. The same news comes from every part of India. In Bengal volunteer forces are receiving large accessions to their numbers. Calcutta lawyers, most of whom are Bengalis, a race upon whom we have not so far depended for an army, have undertaken to raise a company of volunteers. The Calcutta *Bengali*, the well-known Indian newspaper, says this :

'Of the attitude of the people . . . we desire to say that behind the serried ranks of one of the finest

armies in the world, there are the multitudinous peoples of India, ready to co-operate with the Government in the defence of the Empire, which, for them, means, in its ultimate evolution, the complete recognition of their rights as Citizens of the finest State in the world. We may have our differences with the Government—and what people have not?—but in the presence of a common enemy, be it Germany or any other Power, we sink our differences, we forget our little quarrels and close our ranks and offer all that we possess in defence of the great Empire to which we are all so proud to belong, and with which the future prosperity and advancement of our people are bound up. India has always been loyal in the hour of danger.'

Similar articles are to be found in many other Indian papers written by Indians for Indians.

India has already dispatched to the seat of war two splendid divisions of infantry and one cavalry brigade, while three more cavalry brigades will follow immediately. This means 70,000 fighting men sent as a first instalment from India to the help of Great Britain. Some of the Indian Chiefs have been selected to accompany this Expeditionary Force. They are the veteran Maharajah Sir Pertab Singh, who has often fought with our troops before, and is a Major-General in the British Army; the Maharajah of Bikanir, who is every inch a soldier; the Maharajah of Patiala, who is the head of the Sikhs; and the Maharajahs of Kishengarh and Jodhpur, the Raja of Ratlam, and the Mohammedan Nawabs of Jaoram, Sachin, and Bhopal, the latter being the ruler of one of the principal Mohammedan States in India.

The message which the King-Emperor has sent to the Princes and Peoples of his Indian Empire was in

terms which will be appreciated by every Englishman. It was as follows :

‘ Among the many incidents that have marked the unanimous uprising of the populations of My Empire in defence of its unity and integrity, nothing has moved me more than the passionate devotion to My Throne expressed both by My Indian subjects, and by the Feudatory Princes and the Ruling Chiefs of India, and their prodigal offers of their lives and their resources in the cause of the Realm. Their unvoiced demand to be foremost in the conflict has touched My heart, and has inspired to the highest issues the love and devotion which, as I well know, have ever linked My Indian subjects and Myself. I recall to mind India’s gracious message to the British nation of good will and fellowship which greeted My return in February, 1912, after the solemn ceremony of My Coronation Durbar at Delhi, and I find in this hour of trial a full harvest and a noble fulfilment of the assurance given by you that the destinies of Great Britain and India are indissolubly linked.’

Why is it that India is doing so much to help the British Empire in this time of need ? Is it from any particular affection for the English people ? Probably not. One cannot expect affection, although one may hope for mutual respect, between rulers and ruled when they are of entirely different races and creeds. It is because the peoples of India now recognize that their interests are bound up with the interests of the British Empire. Were the Empire to come to an end, India would become the prey of some other foreign nation whose rule would be very different from that exercised by us. Whatever our faults may be, we have done our best to give peace, prosperity, and justice to India.

India has never been a separate nation, the only

bond of union between the many races that inhabit Hindustan is that created by the existence of a foreign government. Until the present time there has been no unanimity on any occasion, but now a common danger has produced common action. We feel that we can depend upon India for help whenever we justly require it. India will not lose by the help given to us in our time of need. Bonds of friendship between Great Britain and its dependency will be strengthened, and Britons will realize more and more their duties to the inhabitants of their Indian Empire.

There has always been a feeling of good fellowship between British and Indian troops and also between Indian troops and their British officers. It is quite certain that in the present war there will be a repetition and increase of this good feeling. This war will probably lead to a better understanding between the people of Great Britain and the peoples of India. Some of the mendacious news in the German Press consisted of statements that India was in rebellion against the British Crown. So far from there being any truth in the statement such disaffection or sedition as recently existed amongst members of some of the classes of India now appears to have been sporadic. It has disappeared entirely. There is now no internal trouble which can embarrass the Government, and the financial and economic situation is exceptionally strong.

It is a proud day for us when we feel that the honest, straightforward work in the path of duty which our ancestors carried on in India is now bearing its fruit. It is the old story, nothing pays in the end so well as honesty and straight dealing.

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