

The Advertiser

✓ May 4<sup>th</sup> 1915

## INDIA'S UNREST.

### EDUCATION A BIG FACTOR.

Members of the Commonwealth Club, on Monday entertained the Rev. A. G. Fraser, M.A., principal of Trinity College, Kandy, Ceylon, at luncheon in the Adelaide Town Hall. Sir John Downer, K.C. presided over a large attendance. Among those present were the Chief Justice (Sir S. J. Way), the Chief Secretary (Hon. A. W. Styles), and the Attorney-General (Hon. J. H. Vaughan).

Principal Fraser delivered a most interesting address on "Education and Nationalism." It had been said of India, he remarked, that the various parts were so widely different that nothing could be said of one part which was not untrue in reference to another, and that India, with its 183 languages, was a synonym for division, and could never be united. But India to-day was rapidly becoming united. (Applause.) To-day one could see Mahomedan and Hindu on the same platform and at Benares, the most conservative of towns, a club embracing women of all religions had been formed to work for social reform and the enfranchisement of their sex. (Applause.) In India, they were told, there was deep unrest. That was true. But when people said it was wholly political and wholly anti-British, they were grievously mistaken. To comprehend the unrest in India they could not do better than look back to England in the middle ages. At that time Englishmen were advancing very slowly. Their thoughts, religion, and outlook were identically the same as their grandfathers' had been. But suddenly, onto that quiet England had come the great wave of the Renaissance, forcing men into new methods of thought, and the whole country had been shaken. When that had settled, the Reformation, a much bigger revolution, had come. England had witnessed the burning of martyrs and terrible strife. That had been succeeded by the political revolution under the Stuarts, and then had followed the industrial revival and the Chartist riots. But, whereas all those changes had been spread over 400 years in England, a far greater renaissance in thought, reformation in religious life, and change in political aspirations, had been thrust into India suddenly, accompanied by a powerful economic revolution that totally changed the standards of living. How could one wonder that there was unrest under the circumstances. The only wonder was that the agitation had been so small. (Applause.)

### Education Systems.

One of the greatest forces in creating the unrest, in his opinion, had been the method of education. Generally, the fault lay not so much with the Imperial authorities as with the department in India. In 1885 the Government, seeing how bad things were becoming, had appointed a very strong Commission to investigate the whole system of education, and that Commission had reported that there were thousands, and there would be millions, of educated Indians "wandering in the dark and dreary world of unbelief." Everyone was unanimous that the secular education was ruinous. It took away from the natives their old beliefs—the inculcation of Western thought must inevitably do that—and gave them nothing in return. When he arrived in Ceylon from Africa he found that 90 per cent. of the students in the higher classes, though capable of sitting for an examination in English, could neither read the letters written by their parents in their native language, nor write letters in return. There had been 670 students at the school when he arrived, and he had told them that he intended to sack all those that slacked in batches of 70. They had not believed him, and had gone on slacking as genially as ever, until he sacked the first 70. (Laughter.) He had greatly strengthened the teaching staff, both European and native, and had very considerably increased the fees. One of his first innovations had been to make a knowledge of the vernacular

lar compulsory, and some of the highest prizes of the college had been awarded for folklore, the students being encouraged to study the folklore of their villages while on vacation. In that way, fellows, instead of going home to teach their grandmothers to suck eggs, learned wisdom from their grandmothers. (Laughter.) Then the college had encouraged the teaching of physical culture, and had sent its students out to instruct other children. The students were also encouraged to take footballs or other sporting implements with them on their vacations and introduce the games into their villages. By inducing everybody to play together in this way the distinction of caste was gradually being broken down. Students also devoted much attention to the housing problem of Ceylon, and a great deal was done to improve the methods of agriculture, by the cultivation of exemplary plots on scientific lines in the various localities. So great was the appreciation of what the college did that one wealthy Indian, whose son was attending the school, but who introduced his son to undesirable companions during the vacations, even consented to have the list of visitors he might invite during his son's vacations censored by him (the speaker), rather than have his son's prospects at the college prejudiced. (Applause.)

#### India's Loyalty.

One could hardly realise what it meant to India to have her sons shedding their blood in the trenches with the British and French, unless one had some knowledge of the sensitiveness of the people and the strength of the caste feeling. He would give one instance. One of his students, the son of a high official, and a very clever boy, after attending a theatre one evening, called in at a refreshment-room with some friends, and ordered some lemonade. As the waiter was bringing their drinks, three clerks from one of the commercial houses deliberately blocked him with their feet. The student leant over and asked politely, "Would you mind letting our order pass?" "What right have you to order here?" demanded one of the clerks, and he knocked the glasses over. The same student was travelling on the railway a few days later, with a first class ticket, and was seated by himself at a table in the refreshment car. All the other tables were occupied, but there were three vacant seats at his table when two other men came in. Yet those men, on seeing these seats vacant, exclaimed to companions at another table, "Move up, you chaps. We can't sit with a thing like that." In the face of these insults, that boy had been one of the first to volunteer for the Empire when the call came. (Applause.) Compulsory education was being seriously suggested for India at the present moment. For that it would be necessary to train 600,000 teachers, and the question was, "Were those teachers to be so trained that they went out into the villages and increased the unrest, or were they to be trained so that they took with them the panacea for the unrest?" They were told it would be too expensive to train them on the lines adopted at Kandy, but he contended that, to save now, when they had a chance to assure the future of India, would be sacrificing their heritage for a mess of pottage. (Applause.)

*The Register*  
*May 4<sup>th</sup> 1915*

#### AUSTRALIA AND THE WAR.

From "Qui Vive":—"After the war I believe the British Empire will be a very different nation; but, from the replies to Sir John Gordon's comments, it appears that some of us have yet to learn the lessons of patriotism and self-sacrifice. If a cable were sent to Lord Kitchener he would, no doubt, ask us to send as many as we can as quickly as we can. Several years ago I met a young Frenchman in Adelaide. He was representing some merchants in Paris, and he said that if war with France were to break out he would at once return to fight for his country. One of the compensations of the war has been the evidence of the unity of the British Empire and of the intense patriotism pervading it as a whole."

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From "Miniature Hopscotch":—"It is exceedingly interesting and gratifying to observe the reported exhibition of the loyalty and martial enthusiasm of our local cricketers. With eyes shining with pride, we read that, the cricket season being over, and the cricket grounds required by others persons, so that no more cricket can be played, this gallant band have decided to attend to their country's call and to form themselves into a miniature rifle club. Not a mere regiment of infantry, or a rifle battalion, or an ordinary rifle club, but a real live miniature rifle club—the same as the girls have formed! Such a wave of patriotism should not be rewarded with only an ordinary newspaper announcement; and I trust some permanent symbolical monument, or something in that nature, will be erected to commemorate this great event. Suggestions regarding the form of the monument could be invited from the public, but any proposal that it take the form of a cricketer in petticoats should be barred."

From F. G. Hicks:—"The letter from Sir John Gordon in The Register of April 29, and the letter from 'A Law Clerk' in the issue of 30th ult., call for a reply from the articulated law clerks of South Australia. In so far as the remarks of 'A Law Clerk' are or are intended to be personal reflections on Sir John Gordon, they are their own answer. It is regrettable that your correspondent should have debased himself by attacking a gentleman of the standing and character of the learned and respected Judge. His Honor's letter was obviously sincere. In any case there is no excuse for descending to the level of personality. Sir John Gordon's allegation, in so far as it applies to the law students, is that England has sent 51 per cent. of her law students to the front, and that South Australia has sent only four out of 41. 'A Law Clerk' states some undisputed facts, but unfortunately makes some specious observations which, when closely examined, constitute a reflection upon us. He appears to say, and certainly implies an effect:—"We have not sent as great a proportion of law students as has England, but we will, if the need for redoubled efforts arises." The latter part of his argument is certainly correct. The first part constitutes an admission which is in fact precisely what Sir John Gordon attempted to prove. The true position is that His Honor has unfortunately overlooked the great differences in age and other circumstances which differentiate the South Australian from the English law student, and this is the fact that destroys the logicity of his analogy. The recruiting age in South Australia is 21, and any physically fit male above that age can enlist of his own free will. There are 41 law students enrolled at the Adelaide University. Of these no fewer than 27 are under the recruiting age of 21 years: four students have gone to the war: two of the remainder over age are married men, one nearly 40, and the other over 40; and both have families. One student has a physical deficiency unfitting him for military service, and there are two or three who could not go without sacrificing the whole of their life's work and future prospects. As to the duty or otherwise of these men to enlist, I leave your readers to decide; but I am certain that, if they are temperate and impartial, they would not without hesitation advise a young man to relinquish his all at a time when the number of men offering exceeds the official demand. In addition, there are three or four (possibly more) who in all probability would not pass the stringent medical examination. One other student is instructor at the Mitcham camp, and two are now in the Smithfield camp undergoing training in the hope of leaving for the front at the end of the current University year. In reality, then, the relative number of South Australian law students over the age of 21, enlisted or otherwise serving, is quite as creditable as that of England. It must also be remembered that the average recruiting for the whole of Australia is relatively considerably below that of England. 'A Law Clerk's' strictures on the wealthier classes may be correct, but are no answer to Sir John Gordon's letter. A law student should know better than to advance the 'tu quoque' argument. 'Let him who is without sin cast the first stone' may indeed be argued to show that the caster has no right to cast the stone: the real point with which I am concerned is to show that the persons at whom the stones are cast are undeserving of the indignity."