GLIMPSES OF
WORLD HISTORY

BEING FURTHER LETTERS TO HIS DAUGHTER
WRITTEN IN PRISON, AND CONTAINING
A RAMBLING ACCOUNT OF HISTORY
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

With 50 maps by
J. F. HORRABIN

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and disorganized, and were looked down upon. Even the better-paid skilled workers considered themselves a class apart from these “Dagos”.

In American politics two parties grew up—the Republican and the Democratic. As in England, and even more so than in England, they represented the same rich classes, and there was little difference of principle between them. So matters stood when the World War came and ultimately sucked America into the whirlpool of strife.

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SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS OF CONFLICT BETWEEN IRELAND AND ENGLAND

March 4, 1933

Let us cross the Atlantic again and go back to the Old World. The first land that a traveller by sea or air sees is that of Ireland; let us therefore make this our first stop. This green and beautiful island dips into the Atlantic Ocean on the far west of Europe. It is a small island, lying away from the main currents of world history; but little as it is, it is full of romance, and for centuries past it has shown ininvincible courage and spirit of sacrifice in the struggle for national freedom. Ireland has put up an amazing record of perseverance in this struggle against a powerful neighbour. The quarrel began over 750 years ago, and it is not settled yet! We have seen British imperialism in action in India, China, and elsewhere. But Ireland has had to bear the brunt of it from the earliest days. Yet she has never willingly submitted to it, and almost every generation has seen a rebellion against England. The bravest of her sons have died fighting for freedom or been executed by the English authorities. Vast numbers of Irishmen have left the home that they loved so passionately and emigrated to foreign countries. Many joined foreign armies that were fighting England, so that thus they might have a chance of pitting their strength against the country which was dominating and oppressing their homeland. The exiles of Ireland spread out in many distant countries, and wherever they went they carried a bit of Ireland in their hearts.

Unhappy individuals and oppressed and struggling countries, all those who are dissatisfied and have little joy in the present, have a way of looking back to the past and searching for consolation in it. They magnify this past and find comfort in thinking of bygone greatness. When the present is full of gloom, the past becomes a haven of refuge giving relief and inspiration. Old grievances also rankle and are not forgotten. This ever looking backward is not a sign of health in a nation. Healthy people and healthy countries act in the present and look to the future. But a person or nation which

is not free cannot be healthy, and so it is natural that he or it should look back and live partly in the past.

So Ireland still lives in the past, and Irish people treasure the memory of the old days when she was free, and remember vividly her many struggles for freedom and her old grievances. They look back, 1400 years ago, to the sixth century after Christ, when Ireland was a centre of learning for western Europe, and drew students from afar. The Roman Empire had fallen and Vandals and Huns had crushed Roman civilization. In those days, it is said, Ireland was one of the places which kept the lamp of culture burning till a fresh revival of culture took place in Europe. Christianity came early to Ireland. Ireland’s patron saint, St. Patrick, is supposed to have brought it. It was from Ireland that it spread to the north of England. In Ireland many monasteries were founded and, like the old ashrans in India and the Buddhist monasteries, these became centres of learning, where teaching often took place in the open air. From these monasteries went out missionaries to northern and western Europe to preach the new religion of Christianity to the heathen. Beautiful manuscripts were written and illuminated by some of the monks in the Irish monasteries. There is kept in Dublin now one such beautiful manuscript book called the Book of Kells, probably written about 1200 years ago.

This period of 200 or 300 years, from the sixth century onwards, is looked upon by many Irishmen as a kind of Golden Age of Ireland when Gaelic culture was at its height. Probably the distance in time lends an enchantment to these old days and makes them seem greater than they actually were. Ireland was split up among many tribes then, and these tribes were continually fighting each other. The weakness of Ireland, as of India, was mutual strife. Then came the Danes and Norsemen and, as in England and France, harried the Irish and took possession of large territories. Early in the eleventh century an Irish king, Brian Boru, who became famous, defeated the Danes and united Ireland for a while, but the country split up again after his death.

You will remember that the Normans under William the Conqueror conquered England in the eleventh century. A hundred years later these Anglo-Normans invaded Ireland, and the part they conquered was called the “Pales”, from which probably has come the common exclamation “beyond the pale”, meaning outside a privileged circle or a social group. This Anglo-Norman invasion in 1169 hit the old Gaelic civilization hard, and it was the beginning of almost continuous war with the Irish tribes. These wars, which lasted for hundreds of years, were barbarous and cruel in the extreme. The English (as the Anglo-Normans might be called now) always looked down upon the Irish as a kind of semi-savage race. There was the difference of race, the English being Anglo-Saxons, the Irish Celts; later came the difference in religion, the English and Scotch becoming Protestants, and the Irish remaining faithful to Roman Catholicism. So these Anglo-Irish wars had all the bitterness of racial and religious wars. The English deliberately
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prevented the two races from mixing. A law was even passed (a statute of Kilkenny) prohibiting intermarriages between the English and Irish.

Rebellion followed rebellion in Ireland, and each was crushed with great cruelty. The Irish naturally hated their foreign rulers and oppressors, and rose in rebellion whenever they had the chance and even without it. "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity" is an old saying, and both for political and religious reasons Ireland often sided with England's enemies, like France and Spain. This enraged the English greatly and gave them a feeling of being stabbed in the back, and they retaliated with all manner of atrocities.

In Queen Elizabeth's time (the sixteenth century) it was decided to break the resistance of the rebellious Irish natives by planting English landlords among them to keep them down. So land was confiscated, and the old Irish landowning classes had to give place to foreigners. Thus Ireland became practically a peasant nation with foreign landlords. And these landlords remained foreign to the Irish people even after the lapse of hundreds of years.

Queen Elizabeth's successor, James I of England, went forward another step in this attempt to break the spirit of the Irish. He decided to have a regular plantation of foreign colonists in Ireland, and for this purpose nearly all the land in the six counties of Ulster in the north of Ireland was confiscated by the King. There was land to be had for nothing, and crowds of adventurers came over from England and Scotland. Many of these English and Scottish people got land and settled down as farmers. The city of Dublin was also asked to help in this colonizing process, and it formed a special society for the new "Plantation of Ulster". It was because of this that the city of Derry in the north became known as Londonderry.

So Ulster became a patch of Britain in Ireland, and it is not surprising to find that this was bitterly resented by the Irish. The new Ulsterites, on their part, hated the Irish, and looked down upon them. What an amazingly clever imperialist move this was of England to break up Ireland into two hostile camps! The Ulster problem still remains unsolved after over 300 years.

Soon after this plantation of Ulster there was Civil War in England between Charles I and Parliament. On the side of Parliament were the Puritans and Protestants, and Catholic Ireland naturally sided with the King, Ulster backing Parliament. The Irish were afraid, not without reason, that the Puritans would crush Catholicism, and they rose in a great rebellion in 1641. This rebellion and its crushing were even more ferocious and barbarous than the earlier ones. The Irish Catholics had cruelly massacred Protestants. Cromwell's revenge was terrible. There were many massacres of the Irish, and especially of Catholic priests, and Cromwell is still remembered with bitterness in Ireland.

In spite of all this terrorism and cruelty, a generation later there was again rebellion and civil war, of which two incidents stand out, the sieges of Londonderry and Limerick. Protestant Londonderry in Ulster was besieged by the Catholic Irish in 1688, and it was most gallantly defended, though the defenders had no food left and were starving. English ships at last brought food and relief, after four months of siege and privation. In Limerick in 1690 it was the other way about; the Catholic Irish were besieged by the English. The hero of this siege was Patrick Sarsfield, who defended Limerick magnificently against great odds. Even Irish women fought in this defence, and Gaelic songs about Sarsfield and his gallant band are still sung in the countryside in Ireland. Sarsfield ultimately gave up Limerick, but only after an honourable treaty with the British. One of the clauses of this Treaty of Limerick was that the Irish Catholics would be given full civil and religious liberty.

This Treaty of Limerick was broken by the English, or rather by the English landowning families in Ireland. These Protestant families controlled a subordinate parliament in Dublin and, in spite of the solemn promise made at Limerick, they refused to give civil or religious liberty to the Catholics. Instead of this they passed special laws penalizing Catholics and deliberately ruining the Irish woolen trade. Their tenantry was pitilessly crushed and evicted from their lands. Remember that this was done by a handful of foreign Protestant landlords against the vast majority of the population, which was Catholic, and most of which formed the tenantry. But all power was in the hands of these English landlords, and these landlords lived away from their estates and left their tenantry to the cruel rapacity of their agents and rent-collectors.

The story of Limerick is an old one, but the bitterness and anger that the breaking of a solemn word gave rise to have not yet subsided, and even to-day Limerick stands foremost in an Irish nationalist's mind in the record of English perfidy in Ireland. At that time this breach of a covenant, and religious intolerance and repression, and the cruelty of the landlords, drove large numbers of the Irish to other countries. The pick of Irish youth went abroad and offered their services to any country that was fighting England. Wherever there was fighting against England, these Irishmen were sure to be found.

Jonathan Swift, the author of Gulliver's Travels, lived during this period (he lived from 1667 to 1745), and something of his anger against the English can be gathered from his advice to his Irish countrymen: "Burn everything English except their coal!" More bitter still is the epitaph on his tomb in St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin. This epitaph was very probably written by himself:

Here lies the body of Jonathan Swift for thirty years dean of this cathedral
where savage indignation can no longer gnaw his heart.

Go, traveller, and imitate, if you can, one who played a man's part in defence of Liberty.
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In 1774 the American War of Independence broke out, and British troops had to be sent across the Atlantic. For a change, Ireland had practically no British troops, and there was talk of a French invasion, for France had also declared war against England. So both Irish Catholics and Protestants raised volunteers for defence. For a while they forgot their differences and, cooperating together, discovered their power. England had to face the threat of another rebellion, and fearing that Ireland also might break away, as America was doing, an independent parliament was granted to Ireland. Thus in theory Ireland became independent of England, but continued under the same king. But the Irish Parliament was the same old landlord-ridden, narrow assembly, confined to Protestants, which had in the past sat so heavily on the Catholics. Catholics were still penalized in many ways. The only difference was that a better feeling seemed to prevail between the Protestants and Catholics. The leader of this parliament, Henry Grattan, himself a Protestant, wanted to do away with Catholic disabilities. He succeeded in doing very little.

Meanwhile the French Revolution took place, and this led to great hopes in Ireland. Curiously enough, this was welcomed by both Catholic and Protestant, who were gradually drawing closer to each other. An organization, called the "United Irishmen", was started to bring them together and emancipate the Catholics. The "United Irishmen" were not approved of by the government and were crushed. So the inevitable and periodic rebellion came in 1798. This was not a religious fight between Ulster and the rest of the country, as some of the old rebellions had been; it was a national rising in which to some extent both joined. The rising was crushed by England, and the Irish hero of it, Wolfe Tone, was executed as a traitor.

Thus it was obvious that the granting of an independent parliament to Ireland had made little difference to the Irish people. The English Parliament at the time was itself a narrow, corrupt affair elected by pocket boroughs and the like, and controlled by a small landowning class and a few of the richer merchants. The Irish Parliament had all these evils, and, in addition, was confined to a handful of Protestants in a Catholic country. Even so, the British Government decided to put an end to this Irish Parliament and to join Ireland to Britain. This was strongly opposed in Ireland, but heavy bribery of the members of the Dublin Parliament induced them to vote their own parliament out of existence. The Act of Union was passed in 1800, and thus ended Grattan's short-lived parliament, and instead some Irish members were sent to the British Parliament in London.

The suppression of this corrupt Irish Parliament was probably no great loss, except in so far as it might have developed later into something better. But this Act of Union did one real harm, and perhaps it was intended to do this. It succeeded in putting an end to the movement for unity between the North and the South, Protestant and Catholic. Protestant Ulster looked away again from the rest of Ireland, and the two parts grew estranged from each other. Another difference had crept in between the two. Ulster, like England, took to modern industry; the rest of Ireland remained agricultural, and even agriculture did not flourish because of the land system and the continuous emigration. Thus while the north became industrial and medieaval and especially the west, remained industrially backward and medieval.

The Act of Union did not pass off without a rising in protest against it. The leader of this abortive rising was Robert Emmett, a brilliant young man, who, as so many of his countrymen before him, ended his days on the scaffold.

Irish members went to the British House of Commons. But not Catholics. Catholics were not permitted to do so either in England or Ireland. In 1829 these disabilities were removed and Catholics could sit in the British Parliament. The Irish leader, Daniel O'Connell, was successful in getting these disabilities removed, and was therefore called the "Liberator". Another change that took place gradually was the widening of the franchise, which gave the vote to more and more persons. Ireland now being joined on to Britain, the same laws applied to both. Thus the great Reform Bill of 1832 applied to Ireland as well as to Britain. So also the later Franchise Bill, and in this way the type of Irish member in the British House of Commons began to change. From being a representative of the landlords, he became a spokesman of the Catholic peasantry and of Irish nationalism.

In their poverty the landlord-ridden and rack-rented Irish tenant had made the potato their chief article of diet. They practically lived on potatoes and, like the Indian peasantry to-day, they had no reserves; there was nothing to fall back upon. They lived on the verge of existence, and had no powers of resistance left. In 1846 the potato crop failed, and this resulted in a great famine. But despite the famine the landlords turned out their tenantry for non-payment of rent. Large numbers of Irishmen left their homes for America and other countries, and Ireland became almost a depopulated land. Many of her fields were tilled no longer and became pasture-lands.

This process of conversion of agricultural land that was ploughed into pasture-land for sheep was continuous in Ireland for over 100 years and right up to our times. The principal reason for this was the growth of factories in England for the manufacture of woollen textiles. The more machinery was used the greater the production and the more wool was required. It was more profitable for the landlords in Ireland to have pasture-lands for sheep rather than tilled fields with men working in them. Pasture-lands require very few workers, just a handful to look after the sheep. The agricultural workers thus became superfluous and were turned out by the landlords. Thus Ireland, which was in reality thinly populated, always had "superfluous" workers, and the process of depopulation went on. Ireland became just an area to supply raw material to "industrial" England. This old process of converting tillable land into
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Pastures has now been reversed, and again the plough is getting back to its own. Curiously enough, this has resulted from a trade war between Ireland and England, which began in 1832.

The land question, the troubles of the unhappy tenants under absentee landlordism, was the chief question in Ireland for a great part of the nineteenth century. Ultimately the British Government decided to remove these landlords completely by buying up their land compulsorily and then giving it to their tenants. The landlords, of course, did not suffer at all. They got their full price from the government. The tenants got the land, but with the burden of the price attached to it. They were made to pay this price not in a lump sum, but by small annual payments.

After the national rising of 1798 there was no big rebellion in Ireland for over 100 years. The nineteenth century, unlike previous centuries, was free from this periodical occurrence in Ireland. But this was not due to a feeling of contentment. There was the exhaustion of the last rising and of the great famine, and the depopulation. To some extent, in the latter half of the century, people's minds were also turned to the British Parliament in the hope that the Irish members there might be able to do something. But still some Irishmen wanted to keep alive the tradition of a periodical rising. Only so, they thought, could the spirit and soul of Ireland remain fresh and unsullied. The Irish immigrants in America started a society there for Irish independence. These people, "Fenians", they were called, organized petty risings in Ireland. But the masses were not touched and the Fenians were soon crushed.

I must end this letter now because it is long enough. But Ireland's story is not yet over.

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Home Rule and Sinn Fein in Ireland

March 9, 1933

After so many armed insurrections, and because of famine and other calamities, Ireland was a little weary of this method of trying to gain freedom. In the second half of the nineteenth century, as the franchise for the British Parliament widened, many nationalist Irish members were returned to the House of Commons. People began to hope that perhaps these people might be able to do something for Irish freedom; they began to look to parliamentary action instead of the old-time method of armed rebellion.

The rift between Ulster in the north and the rest of Ireland had widened again. The racial and religious differences continued and, in addition to these, economic differences became more marked. Ulster, like England and Scotland, was industrialized, and big factory production was taking place. The rest of the country was agricul-

tural and medieval and depopulated and poor. England's old policy of dividing Ireland into two parts had succeeded only too well; so well, indeed, that England herself could not get over the difficulty when she tried to in later years. Ulster became the greatest obstacle to Irish freedom. In a free Ireland rich Protestant Ulster was afraid of being submerged in a poor Catholic Ireland.

In the British Parliament and in Ireland two names came to be used, the words "Home Rule". Ireland's demand was now called Home Rule. This was much less than, and very different from, the 700-year-old demand for independence. It meant a subordinate Irish Parliament dealing with local affairs, the British Parliament continuing to control the country's economy. Many Irishmen did not agree with this watering down of the old demand for independence. But the country was weary of rebellion and strife and refused to take part in several abortive attempts at insurrection.

One of the Irish members in the British House of Commons was Charles Stewart Parnell. Realizing that neither of the British parties, the Conservatives and the Liberals, paid the slightest attention to Ireland, he decided to make it difficult for them to carry on with their polite parliamentary games. Together with some other Irish members he started obstructing parliamentary business by long speeches and other tactics merely meant to cause delay. The English people were very annoyed with these tactics; they said that they were not parliamentary, not gentlemanly. But Parnell was not affected by these criticisms. He had not come to Parliament to play the polite English parliamentary game in accordance with the rules of the Englishman's making. He had come to serve Ireland, and if he could not do so in the normal way, he considered himself fully justified in adopting abnormal methods. In any event, he succeeded in drawing attention to Ireland.

Parnell became the leader of the Irish Home Rule Party in the British House of Commons, and this party became a nuisance to the two old British parties. When these two parties were more or less evenly matched, the Irish Home Rulers could make a difference either way. In this way the Irish question was always kept in the forefront. Gladstone at last agreed to Home Rule for Ireland, and he brought forward a Home Rule Bill in the House of Commons in 1886. This was a very mild measure of self-government, but even so it created a storm. The Conservatives were, of course, wholly opposed to it. Even Gladstone's party, the Liberals, did not like it and the party split into two, one part actually joining the Conservatives, who came to be called "Unionists" because they stood for union with Ireland. The Home Rule Bill fell, and with it fell Gladstone.

Seven years later in, 1893, Gladstone, then eighty-four years of age, again became Prime Minister. He brought forward his second Home Rule Bill, and this was just passed by a narrow majority in the House of Commons. But all Bills have also to pass the House of Lords before they can become law, and the House of Lords was full of Conservatives and reactionaries. It was not elected. It was a
hereditary assembly of big landowners with some bishops added. This House of Lords rejected the Home Rule Bill which the Commons had passed.

So parliamentary efforts also had failed to bring what Ireland wanted. Still the Irish Nationalist Party (or the Home Rule Party) continued to work in Parliament in the hope that they might succeed and, on the whole, they had the confidence of the people of Ireland. But there were also many who lost faith in these methods and in the British Parliament. Many Irishmen became somewhat disgusted with politics, in the narrow sense of the word, and devoted themselves to cultural and economic activities. In the early years of the twentieth century there was a cultural renaissance in Ireland and, in particular, an effort to revive Gaelic, the old language of the country, which still flourished in the western country districts. This Celtic language had a rich literature, but centuries of English domination had driven it away from the towns, and it was gradually disappearing. Irish nationalists felt that Ireland could only retain her soul and her old culture through the medium of their own language, and so they worked hard to dig it out of the western villages and make it a living language. A Gaelic League was founded for the purpose. Everywhere, and especially in all the subject countries, a national movement bases itself on the language of the country. No movement based on a foreign language can reach the masses or take root. In Ireland English was hardly a foreign language. It was almost universally known and spoken; certainly it was better known than Gaelic. And yet Irish nationalists considered it essential to revive Gaelic so that they might not lose touch with their old culture.

There was a feeling in Ireland then that strength came from within, and not from outside. There was disillusion at purely political activities in Parliament, and attempts were therefore made to build up the nation on a firmer basis. The new Ireland of the early years of the twentieth century was different from the old, and the renaissance made itself felt in many directions. In the literary and the cultural, as I have mentioned above, as also in the economic, where efforts were made, with success, to organize the farmers on a co-operative basis.

But behind all this was the craving for freedom, and although the Irish Nationalist Party in the British Parliament seemed to hold the confidence of the Irish people, faith in them was shaking. They began to be looked upon as just politicians fond of making speeches and powerless to do anything. The old Fenians and other believers in independence had, of course, never believed in these parliametarians and their Home Rule. But now the new idea of independence had also to look away from Parliament. Ideas of self-help were in the air; why not apply them to politics? Again ideas of armed rebellion began to play about in people’s minds. But a new turn was given to this desire for action. A young Irishman, Arthur Griffith, began to preach a new policy, which came to be known as Sinn Fein, meaning “we ourselves”.

**Home Rule and Sinn Fein in Ireland**

These words give an idea of the policy behind them. The Sinn Feiners wanted Ireland to rely on itself and not look for succour or charity from England; they wanted to build up the nation’s strength from inside. They supported the Gaelic movement and the cultural revival. In politics they disapproved of the futile parliamentary action that was going on, and expected nothing from it. On the other hand, they did not consider armed rebellion feasible. They preached “direct action”, as opposed to parliamentary action, by means of a kind of non-co-operation with the British Government. Arthur Griffith gave the instance of Hungary, where a policy of passive resistance had succeeded a generation earlier, and pleaded for the adoption of a similar policy to force England’s hands.

During the last thirteen years we have had a great deal to do with various forms of non-co-operation in India, and it is interesting to compare this Irish precedent with ours. As all the world knows, the basis of our movement has been non-violence. In Ireland there was no such foundation or background; yet the strength of the proposed non-co-operation lay in a peaceful passive resistance. The struggle was to be essentially a peaceful one.

Sinn Fein ideas spread slowly among the youth of Ireland. Ireland did not suddenly catch fire because of them. There were many people still who hoped from Parliament, especially as the Liberal Party had come back again in 1906 with a huge majority. In spite of this majority in the House of Commons, the Liberals had to face a permanent Conservative and Unionist majority in the House of Lords, and soon there was conflict between the two. The result of this conflict was the curb the power of the Lords. In money matters their interference could be got over by the Commons by passing the Bill objected to by the Lords in three successive sessions. In this way, by the Parliament Act of 1911, the Liberals took out the teeth of the House of Lords. But still the Lords remained with a great deal of power to hold up and interfere.

Having provided for the inevitable resistance of the Lords, the Liberals brought forward the third Home Rule Bill, and this was passed by the Commons in 1913. As expected, the Lords threw it out, and then the Commons went through the laborious process of passing it in three sessions. It became law in 1914, and it applied to the whole of Ireland, including Ulster.

Ireland seemed to have got Home Rule at last, but—there were many buts! While Parliament had debated Home Rule in 1912 and 1913 strange things were happening in the north of Ireland. The leaders of Ulster had proclaimed that they would not accept it and would resist it even if it became law. They talked of rebellion, and prepared for it. It was even stated that they would not hesitate to ask the help of a foreign Power, meaning Germany, to fight Home Rule! This was open and unabated treason. More interesting still, the leaders of the Conservative Party in England blessed this rebellious movement, and many helped it. Money from the rich Conservative classes poured into Ulster. It was
obvious that the so-called "upper classes" or governing class were generally with Ulster, and so were many of the army officers who came from these classes. Arms were smuggled in and volunteers were openly drilled. A provisional government was even formed in Ulster to take charge when the time came. It is interesting to note that one of the leading "rebels" in Ulster was a prominent Conservative member of Parliament, F. E. Smith, who, later, as Lord Birkenhead, was Secretary of State for India and held other high offices.

Rebellions are common enough occurrences in history, and Ireland especially has had her full share of them. Still, these preparations for an Ulster rebellion have a special interest for us, as the party at the back of it was the very party which prided itself on its constitutional and conservative character. It was the party which always talked of "law and order" and was in favour of heavy punishment for those who offended against this law and order. Yet prominent members of this party talked open treason and prepared for armed rebellion, and the rank and file helped with money! It is also interesting to note that this projected rebellion was against the authority of Parliament, which was considering, and which later passed, the Home Rule Bill. Thus the very foundations of democracy were attacked by it, and the very essence of the English people that they believed in the reign of law and in constitutional activity was set at nought.

The Ulster "rebellion" of 1912-14 tore the veil from these pretensions and high-sounding phrases and disclosed the real nature of government and modern democracy. So long as "law and order" meant that the privileges and interests of the governing class were preserved, law and order were desirable; so long as democracy did not encroach on these privileges and interests, it could be tolerated. But if there were any attack on these privileges, then this class would fight. Thus "law and order" was just a fine phrase meaning to them their own interests. This made it clear that the British Government was in effect a class government, and not even a majority in Parliament against it would disallow it easily. If such a majority tried to pass a socialistic law which lessened their privileges, they would rebel against it in spite of democratic principles. It is well to keep this in mind, as it applies to all countries, and we are apt to forget this reality in a fog of pious phrases and resounding words. There is no essential difference in this respect between a South American republic, where revolutions occur frequently, and England, where there is a stable government. The stability consists in the governing classes having dug themselves in and no other class being strong enough so far to remove them. In 1911 one of their defences, the House of Lords, was weakened, and they took fright and Ulster became the pretext for rebellion.

In India the charmed words "law and order" are, of course, with us every day and many times a day. It is well, therefore, to remember exactly what they mean. We might also remember that one of our mentors, a Secretary of State for India, was a leader of the Ulster rebellion.

So Ulster prepared for rebellion with arms and volunteers, and the government calmly looked on. There were no ordinances promulgated against these preparations! After a while the rest of Ireland started copying Ulster and organizing "National Volunteers", but in order to fight for Home Rule and, if necessary, against Ulster. So rival armies grew up in Ireland. It is curious to find that the British authorities, who had winked at the arming of the volunteers for the Ulster rebellion, were much more wide awake in suppressing the "National Volunteers", although these were not against the Home Rule Bill.

A clash between these two sets of volunteers in Ireland seemed inevitable, and that meant civil war. Just then a greater war, the World War, broke out in August 1914, and everything else sank into insignificance before it. The Home Rule Act indeed became law, but at the same time it was provided that it must not come into operation before the end of the war! So Home Rule was as far off as ever, and much was to happen in Ireland before the end of the war came.

I am bringing up my account of various countries to the outbreak of the World War. We have arrived at this stage in Ireland, and so we must stop for the present. But one thing I must tell you before I finish this letter. The leaders of the Ulster rebellion, instead of being punished for their activities, were rewarded soon after by being made Cabinet Ministers and holders of high offices under the British Government.

BRITAIN SEIZES AND HOLDS ON TO EGYPT

March 11, 1933

From America we took a long hop across the Atlantic to Ireland. Let us hop again now to a third continent, Africa, and to another victim of British imperialism, Egypt. In some of my letters to you, references were made to Egypt's early history. They were brief and scrappy because of my own ignorance. Even if I knew more about the subject than I do, I could not go back at this stage to the early days again. We have at last almost finished our account of the nineteenth century, and are on the threshold of the twentieth, and there we must remain. We cannot be going backwards and forwards all the time! Besides, if I attempted to tell the story of each country's past, would these letters ever end?

Still, I would not have you imagine that Egypt's story is more or less of a blank. For Egypt is the Ancient among nations, and carries us back farther than any other country, and counts its periods not in paltry centuries, but in thousands of years.
and awe-inspiring remains still remind us of this remote past. Egypt was the earliest and greatest field for archaeological research, and as stone monuments and other relics were dug out from under the sand, they told a fascinating tale of the days long, long ago, when they were young. This process of digging and discovery continues still, and adds fresh pages to Egypt's ancient history. We cannot yet say when it begins and how it begins. Already, nearly 7000 years ago, civilized people lived in the valley of the Nile with a long record of cultural progress behind them. They wrote in their picture-language, the hieroglyphics; they made beautiful pottery and vases, and vessels of gold and copper and ivory and carved alabaster.

Even before Alexander of Macedon conquered Egypt in the fourth century B.C., thirty-one Egyptian dynasties are said to have ruled there. From out of this vast period of 4000 or 5000 years some wonderful figures of men and women stand out, and seem almost alive even to-day—men and women of action, great builders, great dreamers and thinkers, warriors, despots and tyrants, proud and vain rulers, beautiful women. The long succession of Pharaohs passes before us, millennium after millennium. Women have full freedom and are among the rulers. It was a priest-ridden country, and the Egyptian people were always wrapped up in the future and in the other world. The great Pyramids, which were built with forced labour and with great cruelty to the workers, were a kind of provision for this future for the Pharaohs. Mummies again were a way of preserving one's body for the future. All this seems rather dark and stern and joyless. And then we come across wigs for men, for they used to shave their heads, and children's toys! There are dolls and balls and little animals with movable limbs, and these toys suddenly make us remember the human side of the old Egyptians, and they seem to come nearer to us through the ages.

In the sixth century B.C., about the time of the Buddha, the Persians conquered Egypt and made it a province of their vast empire, which stretched from the Nile to the Indus. These were the Achæmenid kings, whose capital was Persepolis, and who tried and failed to subdue Greece, and who were finally defeated by Alexander the Great. Alexander was welcomed in Egypt almost as a deliverer from the harsh rule of the Persians. He left his monument there in the city of Alexandria, which became a famous centre of learning and Greek culture.

You will remember that after Alexander's death his empire was split up amongst his generals and Egypt fell to the lot of Ptolemy. The Ptolemies soon acclimatized themselves and, unlike the Persians, accepted Egyptian customs. They behaved like the Egyptians, and were accepted almost as if they continued the old line of the Pharaohs. Cleopatra was the last of these Ptolemies, and with her death Egypt became a province of the Roman Empire a few years before the Christian Era is supposed to have begun.

Long before Rome adopted Christianity, Egypt took to it, and the Egyptian Christians were persecuted by the Romans and had to hide in the desert. Secret monasteries grew up in the desert, and the Christian world of those days was full of wonderful and mysterious stories of the miracles performed by these hermits. Later, when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, after Constantine had adopted it, these Egyptian Christians tried to revenge themselves by cruel persecutions of the non-Christians, or pagans as they were called—those who confessed the old Egyptian religion. Alexandria now became a famous Christian centre of learning, but Christianity in Egypt, now that it was the State religion, became a thing of sects and parties continually quarrelling with each other and fighting for mastery. These bloody feuds became such a nuisance that the people generally were thoroughly tired of all the Christian sects, and when, in the seventh century, the Arabs came with a new religion, they were welcomed. This was one of the reasons why the Arab conquest of Egypt and North Africa was an easy one. Again the Christians became a persecuted sect and were cruelly repressed.

So Egypt became a province of the Caliph's empire. The Arabic
language and Arabic culture spread rapidly, so much so that the old Egyptian language was superseded. Two hundred years later, in the ninth century, as the Baghdad Caliphate weakened, Egypt became semi-independent under Turkish governors. Three hundred years later Saladin, the Moslem hero of the Crusades, made himself Sultan of Egypt. Soon after Saladin, one of his successors brought a large number of Turkish slaves from the regions of the Caucasus and made them his soldiers. These white slaves were called Mamelukes, which means slaves. They had been carefully chosen for the army, and were a fine body of men. Within a few years these Mamelukes revolted and made one of their own number Sultan of Egypt. Thus began the rule of the Mamelukes in Egypt, which lasted for two and a half centuries and, in a semi-independent way, for almost 300 years more. Thus this body of foreign slaves dominated Egypt for over 500 years—a remarkable and unique instance in history.

It was not as if the original Mamelukes formed a hereditary caste or class in Egypt. They were continually adding to their numbers by choosing the best of the free slaves belonging to the white races of the Caucasus. These Caucasian races are Aryans, and so the Mamelukes were Aryans. These alien people did not thrive on Egyptian soil, and their families died out after a few generations. But as fresh Mamelukes were being brought, the numbers, and especially the strength and vitality, of this class were kept up. Thus these people did not form a hereditary class, but none the less they formed an aristocracy and a governing class which lasted for a long time.

Early in the sixteenth century the Turkish Ottoman Sultan of Constantinople conquered Egypt, and he hanged the Mameluke Sultan. Egypt became a province of the Ottoman Empire, but still the Mamelukes remained the governing aristocracy. Later, when the Turks became weak in Europe, the Mamelukes did much as they liked in Egypt, although in theory Egypt continued to be part of the Ottoman Empire. When Napoleon came to Egypt at the end of the eighteenth century he met and defeated these Mamelukes. You may remember the story I told you of the Mameluke knight who rode up to the French army, and after the fashion of the Middle Ages and the days of chivalry, challenged its leader to single combat.

So we reach the nineteenth century. For the first half of this century Egypt was dominated by Mehemet Ali, an Albanian Turk, who had become governor of the country, or "Khedive," as these Turkish governors were called. Mehemet Ali is known as the founder of modern Egypt. He first thing he did was to break the power of the Mamelukes by having them treacherously massacred. He also defeated an English army in Egypt and made himself master of the country, just acknowledging the suzerainty of the Turkish Sultan for form's sake. He built up a new Egyptian army drawn from the peasantry (and not the Mamelukes); he built new canals; he encouraged cotton-growing, which was to become Egypt's principal industry. He even threatened to take possession of Constantinople itself by driving out his nominal master, but refrained from doing so, and merely added Syria to Egypt.

Mehemet Ali died in 1849 at the age of eighty. His successors were easier and extravagant and incompetent folk. But even if they had been better than they were, it would have been difficult for them to stand up against the rapacity of international financiers and the greed of European imperialisms. Money was lent by foreigners, especially English and French financiers, to the Khedives at exorbitant rates, mostly for their personal use, and then warships came to collect the interest when this was not paid in time! It is an extraordinary story of international intrigue, of how financiers and governments work hand in glove with each other in order to despoil and dominate another country. In spite of the incompetence of several Khedives, Egypt made considerable progress. Indeed, the leading English newspaper, The Times, said in January 1876, "Egypt is a marvellous instance of progress. She has advanced as much in seventy years as other countries in five hundred." But in spite of all this, the foreign financiers insisted on their pound of flesh and, making it appear that the country was heading for bankruptcy, called for foreign intervention. The foreign governments, especially the English and French, were only too eager to intervene. They wanted an excuse; for Egypt was too tempting a morass to be left to itself, and also Egypt was on the route to India.

Meanwhile the Suez Canal, built with forced labour and great inhumanity, had been opened for traffic in 1869. (It may interest you to know that there appears to have been such a canal between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean in the time of the old Egyptian dynasties about 1400 B.C.) The opening of this canal immediately brought all the traffic between Europe and Asia and Australia to the Suez, and the importance of Egypt grew still more. For England, with her vital interests in India and the East, the control of the Canal and of Egypt became of paramount importance. The English Prime Minister in 1875, Disraeli, brought off a clever coup by buying up at a very low price all the Suez Canal shares of the insolvent Khedive. This was not only a good investment in itself, but it gave a great deal of the control of the Canal to the British Government. The rest of Egypt's shares in the Canal went to French financiers, so Egypt had practically no financial control left over the Canal. From these shares the British and the French have drawn enormous dividends, and have at the same time controlled this Canal and had this vital grip on Egypt. In 1932 the dividend of the British Government alone amounted to £3,500,000 on its original investment of £4,000,000.

It was inevitable that the British Government should try to gain further control of the country, and so in 1879 they started interfering continuously in Egyptian internal affairs, and put their own financiers in control. This was naturally resented by many Egyptians, and a nationalist party grew up bent on ridding Egypt of foreign interference. The leader of this was a young soldier,
Arabi Pasha, who came from poor working-class parents and had joined the Egyptian army as a private. His influence grew, and he became Minister of War and, as such, he refused to carry out the directions of the English and French controllers. England's answer to this refusal to submit to foreign dictation was war, and in 1882 the British fleet bombarded and burnt the city of Alexandria. Having thus proclaimed the superiority of western civilization, and having also defeated the Egyptian forces on land, the British now took full control of Egypt.

In this way began the British occupation of Egypt. It was, in international law, an extraordinary position. Egypt was a province or a part of the Turkish dominions. England was supposed to be on friendly terms with Turkey, and yet she calmly occupied a part of these dominions. She put an agent of hers there. He was the boss over everybody, a kind of Great Moghal, like the Viceroys of India, and even the Khedive and his ministers were powerless before this British agent. The British agent was a Major Baring, who ruled Egypt for twenty-five years and became Lord Cromer. Cromer ruled Egypt like a despot. His first concern was the payment of dividends to the foreign financiers and bond-holders. This was done regularly, and great praise was forthcoming for Egypt's sound finances. As in India, a measure of administrative efficiency was also brought about. But at the end of the twenty-five years the old Egyptian debt remained what it had been at the beginning. Practically nothing was done for education, and Cromer even stopped the starting of a national university. His outlook can be judged from a sentence in a letter of his written in 1892, to Lord Salisbury, who was the Prime Minister in England: "I believe it is going to be very Egyptian." For an Egyptian to behave as an Egyptian should, was an offence in the eyes of Lord Cromer, just as for an Indian to behave as an Indian should is frowned upon and punished by the British.

The French did not like this British control of Egypt; they had got no share of the loot. Nor did the other European Powers like it and, needless to say, the Egyptians did not like it at all. The British Government told everybody not to worry, as they were only in Egypt for a short while and would soon leave it. Again and again it was formally and officially declared by the British Government that they would evacuate Egypt. This solemn declaration was made about fifty times or more; it is difficult to keep count of it. And yet the British stuck on, and are still there!

In 1904 the British came to an agreement with the French over many matters in dispute. They agreed to let the French have a free hand in Morocco, and in exchange for this the French agreed to recognize the British occupation of Egypt. It was a fair give and take, only Turkey, which was still supposed to be the suzerain Power, was not consulted, and of course there was no question of asking the Egyptian people!

Another feature of Egypt during this period was that the Egyptian courts had no power or jurisdiction over foreigners. These courts were not supposed to be good enough, and the foreigners were entitled to be tried by their own courts. So, what are called "extra-territorial" tribunals grew up, with foreign judges and with foreign interests at heart. One of these very foreign judges of the tribunal has written about them: "Leur justice a merveilleusement servi la coalition étrangère qui expliquait le pacte."

I believe that the foreign residents of Egypt also escaped most of the taxation. A happy position—not to be taxed, not to be subject to the laws or courts of the country you are living in, and, at the same time, to have every facility to exploit that country!

So Britain ruled and exploited Egypt, and her agents and representatives lived with all the pomp and pageantry of antecratic monarchs in their Residencies. Naturally nationalism grew and reform movements took shape. The greatest Egyptian reformer of the nineteenth century was Jamaluddin Afghani, a religious leader who sought to modernize Islam by reconciling it with modern conditions. He preached that all progress could be reconciled with Islam. His attempt to modernize Islam was similar in essence to attempts made in India to modernize Hinduism. These attempts are based on going back to certain basic teachings, and to finding new meanings and interpretations for old customs and dogmas. According to this, modern knowledge becomes a kind of addition to, or commentary upon, the old religious knowledge. This method is, of course, very different from the scientific method, which goes forward boldly without any such previous commitments. However, Jamaluddin's influence was very great not only in Egypt, but in the other Arab countries.

With the growth of foreign trade a new middle class arose in Egypt, and this class became the backbone of the new nationalism. Out of this class came Saad Zaghlul Pasha, the greatest of modern Egyptian leaders. Egypt is predominantly a Muslim country, but there were still a considerable number of Copts who are Christians. These Copts are the purest of the old Egyptians. The new middle class contained both Muslims and Copts, and fortunately there was no antagonism between them. The British tried to create conflict between them, but they met with little success. The British also tried to divide the nationalist party. Occasionally they succeeded, as in India, in getting a few of the moderates to co-operate with them. But of this I shall tell you more in some subsequent letter.

This was the position of Egypt when the World War began in August 1914. Three months later Turkey joined Germany against England and France and their allies. Thereupon England actually decided on annexing Egypt, but some difficulties arose, and instead a British protectorate over Egypt was proclaimed.

So much for Egypt. The rest of Africa also fell a victim to European imperialism in the second half of the nineteenth century. There was a tremendous rush, and the huge continent was divided up among the European Powers. Like vultures they fell upon it, sometimes falling out with each other. Few met with any checks, but Italy was defeated in Abyssinia in 1896. Africa was
predominantly under British or French control, and some parts were under Belgian, Italian, and Portuguese control. The Germans were there also till their defeat in the war. Only two independent States remained, Abyssinia in the East and little Liberia on the west coast. Morocco was under French and Spanish influence.

The story of how these vast territories were taken possession of is long and gruesome. It is by no means over yet. Worse still were the methods adopted to exploit the continent, and especially to extract rubber. Many years ago a shock of horror passed through the so-called civilized world at the tales of atrocities committed in the Belgian Congo. The Black Man’s Burden has been a terrible one.

Africa, known as the Dark Continent, was an almost unknown land, so far as its interior was concerned, till the latter half of the nineteenth century. Many an adventurous and exciting journey across it had to be undertaken before this land of mystery could be put properly on the map. The greatest of its explorers was David Livingstone, a Scottish missionary. For years the continent swallowed him up and the outside world had no news of him. Connected with his name is that of Henry Stanley, a newspaper man and explorer, who went to look for him and found him at last in the heart of the continent.

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TURKEY BECOMES THE “SICK MAN OF EUROPE”

March 14, 1933

From Egypt, across the Mediterranean, to Turkey is a small and natural step. The nineteenth century was to see the progressive crumbling away of the empire of the Ottoman Turks in Europe. The gradual decline had started in the previous century. Perhaps you remember my telling you of the Turkish sieges of Vienna, and of how, for a while, Europe trembled before the sword of the Turks. Pious Christians in the West considered the Turk as the “Scourge of God” sent to punish Christendom for its sins. But the final repulse of the Turks from the gates of Vienna turned the tide, and thenceforward they were on the offensive in Europe. The many nationalities they had subdued in south-eastern Europe were so many thorns in their side. No attempt was made to assimilate them, and probably this was not possible even if the attempt had been made, and the spirit of nationalism was coming into conflict with the heavy rule of the Turk. In the north-east corner Russia was growing bigger and bigger, and always pressing hard on the Turkish dominions. She became the traditional and persistent enemy of the Turks, and for nearly 200 years waged inter-

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mitten war against them till both Tsar and Sultan went down almost together and took their empires with them.

The Ottoman Empire lasted long enough as empires go. After existing for a long period in Asia Minor, it was established in Europe in 1361. Although Constantinople itself did not fall to the Turks till 1453, all the territory round it went to their rule a long time before this date. The great city was saved for a while by the invasion of Timur in western Asia and his crushing defeat of the Turkish Sultan in 1402 at Angora. But the Turks soon recovered from this. From 1361 to the end of the Ottoman Empire in our time is over five and a half centuries, and that is a long time.

And yet the Turk did not fit in at all with the new conditions that were developing in Europe after the end of the Middle Ages. Trade and commerce were growing, production was being organized on a bigger scale in the manufacturing cities of Europe. The Turk felt no attraction for this kind of thing. He was a fine soldier, a hard fighter and disciplinarian, easy-going in his intervals of leisure, but fierce and cruel when roused. Although he settled down in cities and beautified them with fine buildings, he carried something of his old nomadic way about him and fashioned his life accordingly. This way was perhaps the most suitable in the homelands of the Turks, but it did not fit in with the new surroundings in Europe or Asia Minor. The Turks refused to adapt themselves to the new surroundings, and so there was a continuous conflict between the two different systems.

The Ottoman Empire connected three continents—Europe, Asia, Africa; it covered all the ancient trade routes between East and West. If the Turks had been so inclined and had possessed the necessary capacity for it, they could have taken advantage of this favourable position and become a great commercial nation. But they had no such inclination or capacity, and they went out of their way to discourage this trade, probably because they did not like to see others profiting by it. It was partly owing to the stopping of the old trade routes that the seafaring and commercial peoples of Europe felt compelled to search for other routes to the East, and this led to the discoveries of new routes by Columbus in the west and Diaz and Vasco da Gama in the east. But the Turks remained indifferent to all this and controlled their empire by sheer discipline and military efficiency. The result was that commercial and wealth-producing activities gradually faded away in the European parts of the Ottoman Empire. Partly to the disadvantage was brought about by the racial and religious conflict. The Turks and the Christian peoples of the Balkans had inherited the old religious feud from the time of the Crusades and before. The growth of the new nationalism added fuel to this fire, and there was continuous trouble. To give you an instance of how the European parts of the Ottoman dominions deteriorated : Athens, the famous city of old, was but a village of about 2000 inhabitants when Greece became free in 1829. (Now, 100 years later, Athens has a population of over 500,000.)