

Indian Opinion

PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN ENGLISH AND GUJARATI

No. 20—VOL. XIII.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 26TH, 1915.

Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper
PRICE THREEPENCE

THE END OF INDENTURE IN ASSAM

ABOUT fifteen years have now elapsed (says *India*) since Sir Henry Cotton raised such a storm of hostility because he dared to denounce the iniquity of the labour system in Assam. He was thrown over by the Viceroy of the day, but time has afforded the amplest vindication of his action. The wheels of progress always move slowly in India, but they move surely, and at last legislation has given its final sanction to the policy he recommended.

Steps were taken very gradually. Eight years ago the coolie was bound down, not only by penalties under the law, but by physical subjection to his employer, who, on a labourer attempting to run away, was empowered to seize him and bring him back to work. That provision of the law was the first to go, and its repeal heralded the departure of the rest.

The system of indentured labour which had prevailed in Assam for more than half a century was definitely terminated on July 1st, 1914, and the tea coolie is now no longer deprived of his status as a free man. The abolition of indenture was followed by an enactment passed by the Legislative Council of the Governor-General on March 24th last, under which the system of recruitment by contractors has been placed under sentence of death.

This recent legislation has attracted little notice in the Indian Press, but it is a measure of far-reaching importance. What were these contractors? They were men employed by the tea industry who, in order to meet the demand for coolies, were compelled to search far and wide for people who were in such a state of destitution that they were prepared to emigrate on any terms as a last resource. The recruiters they engaged were accustomed to lie in wait for wives who had quarrelled with their husbands, young people who had left their homes in search of adventure, and insolvent peasants escaping from their creditors. They were prepared to incur physical danger, to bribe police underlings, and to run the risk of Government prosecution and punishment. The records of the criminal courts teem with instances of fraud, abduction of married women and young persons, wrongful confinement, intimidation and actual violence. It is not surprising that for such difficult and dangerous work the contractors demanded a high rate of remuneration, that there was a regularly established business of buying and selling labour, and that employers were paying as much as £10 for every labourer recruited under penal contract.

Happily these human harpies are at last extinguished. In their place provision is now made for the creation of a Tea Labour Board, with an official chairman, for the supervision of recruitment, and for securing that it shall be carried on only on proper and sound lines. This is the culmination of a series of steps in legislation which give effect to the proposals which were put forward on behalf of the administration of Assam by the Chief

Commissioner of the Province in 1900 and 1901. *Firm coronat opus.*

There remains, however, one word to add. We pointed out in a recent issue that the Secretary of State had imposed his veto on the Assam Enticement of Coolies Bill. This measure was designed to penalise persons enticing, harbouring or employing labourers engaged on other gardens. A provision to this effect is included among the repealed clauses of the old Labour and Emigration Act. But Lord Crewe has "found himself unable to sanction it as it involves principles which he cannot accept." He "regards as objectionable features in the Bill the curtailment of the freedom of labourers and the extension of the jurisdiction of the Criminal Courts." Very good reasons these would seem to be to any ordinary person, but they excite the wrath of the *Times* which finds in them "a blow to the Indian tea industry." That industry as a matter of fact is now at its highest pinnacle of prosperity, and those who are making fortunes in tea are welcome to our congratulations.

In the opinion of the *Times* the attitude of Lord Crewe is just as much an "interference" with the policy officially adopted in India as was the decision of the House of Lords to overrule the Viceroy in Council in respect of the establishment of an Executive Council for the United Provinces. This is an entertaining view of the situation which is likely to raise a smile on the lips of Lord Hardinge. The Secretary of State's veto is nothing more than the legitimate and very proper exercise of his powers in refusing to bolster up the tea industry in any form or shape by penal legislation, which has too long disfigured the Indian Statute Book.

Indentured Labour in Papua

Some time ago (says the *Anti-Slavery Reporter*) some paragraphs appeared in the British Press regarding the improper treatment of indentured natives in British Papua (New Guinea) and the alleged forcible recruiting of labour. We are glad to be able to report that this question has been investigated by the Australian Association for the Protection of Native Races, who are satisfied that the Commonwealth Government is endeavouring rigorously to put down anything akin to slavery in the territories which it has to administer. It appears that in one case a complaint reached the authorities that a magistrate had been forcibly recruiting natives at a place called Kumusi, in the north-east of the territory; inquiry was made, in consequence of which the magistrate was suspended and eventually dismissed. Judge Murray, the Lieutenant-Governor, stated (according to the *Melbourne Age*) that it was shown that the man had been guilty of using compulsion to secure a certain number of natives, but there were probably others who came willingly. There was

only one white man implicated. The *Age* goes on to state that the Lieutenant-Governor and the Commissioner of Native Affairs acted with great firmness and promptitude throughout the investigation. Questions have been asked in the House of Representatives on the subject, and the Minister for External Affairs made a statement as to the result of the inquiry, and assured the House that every care would be taken to make the fullest inquiry at the least suspicion of improper recruiting.

Judge Murray, describing the Government system of obtaining labourers, said that recruiting is purely voluntary, and every care is taken to keep it such. When a Government representative visits a native district, he explains the conditions and asks what men are willing to go. A good number usually respond and then accompany him to a magistrate, where they are further questioned as to their willingness to go on. If they then say they are not willing, they have to be taken back to their own district. If they are willing they are engaged for a year or longer period. It is a system, he said, that needs to be carefully safeguarded, and always has been.

We are very glad to know that public opinion in Australia is sensitive to any charges of the sort referred to, and that the Government are prompt to take measures to prevent any abuses. The practice of Government recruiting, however, needs very careful watching, because there is always a danger of the "official atmosphere" itself operating upon the unwillingness of the labourers to sign labour contracts.

Presentation to Mrs. and Miss V. R. R. Moodley

The Union Theatre in Victoria Street, Durban, kindly lent for the occasion by Messrs. Rawat and Co., the proprietors of the Royal Picture Palace, was the scene of a pleasant gathering of Indian ladies, children and other members of the Indian community, to bid farewell to Mrs. and Miss Moodley, officials of the Indian Women's Association.

Mrs. F. Nayanah, the president, was in the chair, supported by members of the committee. In the course of her speech, the president said that they had met there that evening to do honour to their sister, Mrs. Moodley, and her daughter, Miss Goonarathinum, in recognition of their services to the cause of women and Tamil vernacular education. As one of the founders of the Indian Women's Association, Mrs. Moodley, they were aware, was closely connected with it, and the women in town and the Tamil children, for whose education in their mother tongue she had worked so hard, would miss her genial presence and kind disposition. The Indian public unfortunately had very few women who were prepared to set aside that spirit of conservatism which was characteristic of them, and in losing Mrs. Moodley they were losing one who had been foremost among them in coming to the assistance of her countrywomen. Her broad-mindedness and her readiness to assist those who needed her assistance won for her much popularity from all sections of the community. In giving up her home among them she was actuated by her sense of duty as a wife, for she goes to join her husband at Stargar. The association was thankful to its members, Mrs. L. Joseph, Mrs. Manicka Pather and Mrs. Moonsamy Naidoo, who, as a presentation committee, took up the task as a labour of love of bringing about the function of that evening.

An illuminated address, the work of Messrs. Singleton, was read by Mrs. W. Oliver, and handed to the recipient by the president. With the address were handed a gold ring with rubies and diamonds to Mrs. Moodley, and an ivory sandal-wood work box with a gold brooch to Miss Goonarathinum. Mrs. Moodley was garlanded, while Miss Goonarathinum was the recipient of a

beautiful bouquet of flowers. Among the ladies, Mrs. Moonsamy Naidoo, Mrs. Ellen Paul, and Mrs. L. Joseph spoke, and a number of gentlemen who were present also spoke in appreciative terms of the services of the guests of the evening.

Mrs. Moodley and Miss Goonarathinum suitably replied.

The treasurer of the Association, Miss C. Sigamoney, wrote regretting her inability to be present and joining in the purpose of the function, while Miss Sonja Schlesin, secretary of the Transvaal Indian Women's Association, wired wishing the function every success.

The children from the Tamil School rendered several Tamil songs during the course of the proceedings which terminated with the singing of the National Anthem in Tamil.

The following is the text of the address to Mrs. Moodley:—

"On the eve of the departure of your daughter, Miss Goonarathinum (our Secretary) and yourself for Stargar, we take this opportunity of placing upon record our grateful appreciation of the communal services rendered by you both.

"Our Association for the advancement of our women owes its inception and its existence to you, and we cannot but admire your devotion for over eight years in the arduous and discouraging pioneer work involved. We trust that the cause of our women, with the realisation that its advancement is dependent upon the upliftment of its women, will be better known in our community in the future.

"The remembrance of your practical and self-sacrificing work in the cause of Tamil Vernacular Education, for which you and your family have done so much, will live in our hearts for ever.

"Your absence will be a loss indeed to us but we rest assured in the confidence that you will continue to carry on your work in Stargar in the causes which are so dear to you.

"We pray that God may grant you and your daughter length of years, health and strength to serve our Motherland in the vernacular education of our children and the upliftment of our women."

The above was signed by Mrs. Fanny Nayanah, President; Mrs. Angelina James, Vice-President; Miss Cecilia Sigamoney, Treasurer; and a Committee consisting of Mrs. Louis Joseph, Mrs. Manicka Pather, Mrs. Moonsamy Naidoo, Mrs. C. Manikum, Mrs. Rathipal Singh, Miss Agnes Appasamy, Mrs. Ellen Paul, Mrs. Rajpaul Singh, Mrs. Arunsala Pather, Mrs. Diwan, and Mrs. Bryan Gabriel.

French Recognition of Coloured Men

We (*Anti-Slavery Reporter*) referred in these Notes some months ago to the significance of the election of a pure-blooded West African native to a place in the French Senate. The following remarks from a Gold Coast newspaper, commenting on the superiority of the French native soldiers to those under Great Britain, are worthy of attention:—

"Why should French Senegalese soldiers surpass our soldiers in qualities of gallantry and initiative? The cause may be traced to the difference in the method of training and Government of African races by the British and the French people. The French African native subject is trained to love France and to regard her as a mother solicitous of his interests and ready and willing to bestow honour on him, even as she bestows on her white sons, if he prove himself worthy. The British only tolerate their subject races and appear to make it their concern constantly and in season and out of season to make them feel that their lot and portion is that of servants and menials in the good household of the Great White Mother of the British Empire."

From the Editor's Chair

(SERVICES TO INDIA)

"Please remember, I want no statue, no biography; but I do want that you, who have dedicated your lives to the Service of India will continue so until death, and consecrate all that is in you to the country that has given you birth."

ALMOST with his last breath, the late Mr. Gokhale gave this final charge to the members of his Society, but they apply literally to all who were born in India or who have Indian blood in their veins, and especially to those who have derived benefit from Mr. Gokhale's never-to-be-forgotten services to his countrymen in South Africa. When he came to this country, two and a half years ago, at great risk to his health, he was received with acclamation by Indians throughout the Union who professed the utmost gratitude to him for his self-sacrifice on their behalf. Addresses and other presentations were given to him, eloquent speeches paying tribute to the nobility of his character were uttered by Indians throughout the sub-continent, and deep indeed was the gratitude that went out to him eighteen months ago, when the last days of the Passive Resistance Struggle was at its height, and Mr. Gokhale, from his sick bed at Poona, was conducting the campaign in India on behalf of his brethren here. Surely, all that eloquence in his honour, all those tributes, all that praise, all that gratitude, all that appreciation, and all those promises of support have not vanished into thin air at the death of the great Indian leader, and if they have not, it behoves every Indian in South Africa to live his best and do his utmost to preserve the honour of his countrymen here. At the present time, an investigation into the methods of the Immigration Department of the Transvaal is pending, and members of the Indian community have been invited to assist the Government, so far as possible, in discovering the truth or otherwise of the serious allegations that have been made with regard to the administration of Immigration affairs in that Province. If there remains any of the sentiment of gratitude formerly expressed towards the deceased statesman and Servant of India, it is the simple duty of all those who can throw any light upon what has been happening, in Pretoria and elsewhere, to place the information that they possess before the Commissioner without delay, so as to enable him to report to the Government exactly what has transpired, and what steps should be taken. Those who have been guilty of improper dealings will have a unique opportunity of putting themselves right, and they and the witnesses that they will bring, will be amply protected. Should they not do so, they will not only be leaving themselves in the wrong, but they will be doing an immense injury to the Indian community to whom they owe so much, and which they have, by their base conduct, betrayed.)

A GRAVE COMPLAINT

WE are reliably informed that, contrary to the understanding at the time of the appointment of the Cape Immigration Commission, and the written assurances from the Secretary for the Interior, whereby an indemnity was given to persons giving truthful evidence before the Commission, the Cape Immigration Officer, who is present at the various sessions held by the Commissioner, authorises the handing over of the statements made by witnesses to the Police for investigation instead of these statements being submitted with the Commissioner's report to the Minister direct. If the information given to us is well based, there is no doubt that a subtle form of intimidation is being used, either against witnesses who have already given evidence, or to prevent others appearing before the Commission who may desire

to do so. We understand that the matter has been, or is being, brought to the notice of the highest authorities, with a view to putting an end to an intolerable situation. Mr. Cousins forgets, if what is reported to us be correct, that the administration of his Department is on trial, and that it is not for him to play the part of detective or policeman. We earnestly trust that this matter will be dealt with as one of urgency, otherwise we can easily see that people will not be prepared to attend at the Immigration Office to give their evidence before the Commission.

"The Great Opportunity"

Amongst the "Papers for War Time," published by the Oxford University Press, No. 4 is entitled "Brothers All: The War and the Race Question," by Edwyn Bevan, M.A. In regard to the question of the participation in the war by India he says, in reply to the assertion that "it would be fatal to the predominance of Europeans if non-Europeans in large numbers lost the sense of the white man's superiority" :-

One surely cannot deny that this reasoning has something in it. It is true that we Christians believe the culture of Europe—permeated, however imperfectly so far, with Christianity—to have in it something of special value for the world. It is true that the position of Europeans as rulers, outside Europe, has in the past been secured largely by their impressing the imagination of the peoples they governed. It is further true that if this prestige, this control by suggestion, were taken away, and no better relation substituted for it, the result might be worse than the present state of things—a lapse of the East into chaos.

'And no better relation substituted for it'—that is the great issue of the present crisis. We have been forced by events into a position where safety is to be found only by going forward. We are being called to new things; the fatal thing is to stand still. While we are rightly glad and proud at the cordial advance of India, while the air is full of congratulation and applause, quiet reflection may recognize that the entry of India upon the scene has its dangers. It is big with possibilities of evil. For one thing, it means inevitably a disturbance of the situation in India. Yes, but it is big too with possibilities of good, because that disturbance of the situation may open the way to something much better. It would be a mistake to suppose that in the loyalty of India at the present moment we had attained everything; we have really attained little, except an immense opportunity. It depends how we use it. We shall be less able after the war than before to take our stand in India on some supposed superiority of the white man, as such. We have given way on that ground. And to any one who would tell us that our sacrifice of the white man's prestige is rash and foolish, we can answer that in any case, even apart from the war, circumstances were forcing us from that ground. As European education spread in India, as India awoke more and more to the modern world, that ground would have become increasingly untenable. Sooner or later, if India remained a member of the British Empire, it would be because India chose the association voluntarily, intelligently, with head held high. By admitting India to co-operation in a European war, we have accelerated the disappearance of the old imaginative awe. But the war has given us an opportunity we could never have forecast of substituting for the old relation a new relation built on the consciousness of great dangers faced and great things done together, feelings of mutual friendship and respect and trust. In the kindled atmosphere of the present moment, when hearts are warm and quickly stirred, things may take a new shape which time will so solidify that the attachment of the British and Indian peoples to each other in the future will be stronger than any bond which conquests of the old style could fashion. It all depends, as has been said, how we use the opportunity.

The Foundation of Indian Economics

(Concluded)

Economic theories based upon the present industrial condition of Europe rest upon a very unstable foundation. If the application of steam power in the last few centuries has made inevitable the passing away of the old industrial order, the advent of electric power has brought in sight changes still more rapid and far-reaching. No one can foresee the ultimate effect of this new revolution upon industrial organizations, but this much is clear—that whereas steam power placed the individual craftsman and the small workshop at a disadvantage, electricity will tend more and more towards the decentralization of industry and to restore the economic balance in all the higher grades of craftsmanship, just as co-operation has helped the small farmer to compete successfully against his rival, the larger capitalist. And when electrical science has succeeded in harnessing the power of the sun for industrial purposes, as may happen to-morrow, the fallacy of the theories of political economists that the temperate zones are those which are meant by Nature to be the centres of the world's manufacturing power will be evident, and the whole of the conditions which have given Great Britain its present economic advantages will be reversed. India will then have to set to work to solve her own economic problems, not upon the lines of modern Western industrial development, but upon entirely new ones. The sun shines in the village even more brightly than in the town, and co-operative sun-power societies might help Indian village industry to combine the great advantages of traditional skilled handicraft with all the mechanical powers of modern science.

The craftsman would again become the master instead of being the slave of the machine.

Against such a combination the supermen of modern industrial life, the captains of industry who control great factories and large bodies of workmen, would compete in vain, except in operations like the making of railways, the digging of canals, or the making of big guns, in which mechanical power has manifestly inherent superiority over the capacity of the individual workman. The ancient workshop of sun-power would have a new meaning, and India might send another religious message to inspire the dull materialism of the West.

It is not, however, necessary or wise to build up the fabric of India's industrial prosperity only upon the future. There are solid materials existing in abundance which, for want of technical knowledge, have been seriously neglected both by Indian and Anglo-Indian economists. The handweaving industry, which still continues to be India's greatest industry after agriculture, and one which is vital to her economic welfare, was not even counted in the official returns until after 1901, when I called public attention to its existence.

My first suggestions on this subject were greeted with derision by the expert advisers of Government. It was mere sentimentalism, I was told, to attempt to bolster up an effete and moribund industry, which must inevitably disappear before the march of Western progress. There has been a considerable change in the official attitude towards this question in the last ten years, but even now the technical side of it is generally entirely misunderstood. Thus, Sir Theodore Morison, in the book I have previously quoted, is at much pains to prove, by European analogies, that hand-weaving in India has very little prospect of surviving, quite ignoring the fact that even in Europe hand industry is steadily recovering lost ground, and he dilates upon the hopeless technical inefficiency of the Indian handloom weaver. Similarly, Professor Jadunath Sirkar, in his book on the economics of British India, quotes with approval a statement in a Government of India report that "Industry conducted in a small way, and by hand-

power, are of little use to-day, and it is not wise to encourage their multiplication. Such industries inevitably succumb as soon as they are brought into competition with the products of factory labour, and each mile of railway extension increases the vigour of such competition."

In another passage he condemns the whole system of handicraft by the sweeping assertion that, "in the case of articles of a purely utilitarian nature, our handicraftsmen are rapidly losing their occupation, as the articles manufactured in factories on modern lines, either in India or abroad, are stronger, more durable, and in every way better than those made by hand by native methods."

It would extend the length of this paper unduly to attempt to dispose of these and similar dangerous fallacies which constantly appear in official documents. They all exhibit an amazing misapprehension of the technical side of Indian industrial problems. It is utterly untrue that Indian handweavers, as a class, are lacking in intelligence and technical skill. The most primitive type of village loom does certainly need technical improvement, and the lowest class of village weaver is certainly lacking in intelligence. But this lowest stratum of the industrial population no more represents the average intellectual capacity of the Indian handweaver than the lowest grade of mill-hand in Lancashire represents the average capacity of the European mechanic. The average Indian hand-loom is by no means technically inefficient, although various devices for increasing the speed of production invented in Europe are not used. The type of loom used for those fabrics for which India has always been famous shows extraordinary mechanical ingenuity and technical perfection, and in the higher classes of weaving the Indian craftsman has produced work the technical secrets of which have not yet been unravelled by Western experts. The deeper reasons for the decay of Indian handicraft are not to be found in lack of technical knowledge and inefficient apparatus, and it is a ludicrous travesty of facts to assert that hand made productions are always inferior in strength and durability to those made by machine. The advantage lies entirely with handicraft, and will always do so.

Similar misconceptions of Indian conditions and of the trend of technical progress in Europe are still held by official authorities with regard to the building industry, which, after weaving, must be reckoned the most important of India's industrial assets. My efforts to enlighten public opinion on this subject two years ago met with the same reception as my former endeavours to make the economic condition of the hand-weaving industry better understood. It was only after an expert investigation, undertaken at my suggestion by the Government of India, that the existence of the Indian master-builder has at last been recognized officially. It still remains to be acknowledged that Public Works methods are ruinous to Indian handicraft, and that the technical conditions which obtain in the native Indian building industry are precisely those which are now being revived in Europe by our best architects, because they are indispensable conditions for the realization of good art and craft in architecture.

The native dye industry is another lamentable example of the neglect of India's resources which follows from the misapplication of Western scientific theories. For years past India has been pouring crores of rupees into the pockets of German dye manufacturers, and only when the native indigo and madder—the finest dye materials in the world—are on the verge of extinction, have the official economists become alive to the vast loss to our Imperial resource which this neglect has entailed. If Western science had been rightly employed at the right time, India now might have been supplying the world with her natural dyes, uncontestedly superior to the best synthetic products.

These are all questions very vital for Indian industry, but I cannot now repeat all I have said on this subject. I must confine myself to the general proposition that

the intelligence of the craftsman is always closely related to that of the grade of society for which he works, and consequently his technical skill and capacity for self-improvement must always depend upon the higher or lower level of culture maintained by the community he serves. Now, the bed-rock of Indian civilization, the foundation of all its culture, and the mainspring of its economic vitality, was the village community. In any endeavour to restore the vitality of Indian village life, and of the handicrafts which are inseparable from a prosperous village life, European and Indian economists are on safe and solid ground. But when their theories and their policy are established upon the data derived from a few centuries of European experience, they are leading India in a direction the dangers of which are obvious and the advantages more than doubtful. They are digging up the foundations of Indian civilization before Europe can truly boast that she has wholly emerged from the shadow of barbarism, or solved for herself the greater problems of social life.

If economists would add to their technical knowledge, and search more carefully, they would find the real causes of India's industrial decadence and the stagnation of her creative powers in the break-up of the constitution of the village communities which began in Mogul times, and has been continued under British rule. The exercise of the powers of self-help and self-government which this constitution conferred upon the people of India was the intellectual and moral stimulus for which no schemes of technical education imposed upon them from above can ever be equivalent. Of all the plans for developing technical education initiated by Government of late years, the most effective is that which is now preparing the way for the restoration of self-governing powers in Indian villages—the co-operative credit societies. Sir Theodore Morison has gathered from the official reports highly interesting illustrations of the stimulus which these societies are giving to the self-culture of the people. In one instance a man of middle age learned to read and write solely to keep the accounts of the bank of which he was president, and though his first efforts were painfully hard to decipher, he persevered to such good purpose that his books are now the best kept in the Punjab. In another village the president and officers of the bank had acquired such influence that they had reconstituted in themselves the ancient authority of the village Panchayat for settling local disputes, with the result that litigation, which had been the curse of the place, had much decreased.

If similar facilities for self-help and self-culture were systematically extended to the industrial communities of India, especially the weavers and the builders, they would quickly solve for themselves the economic problems which exercise the minds of Anglo-Indian and Indian theorists, and relieve Government departments of the responsibility of providing them with technical education.

I only hope that in the School of Oriental Studies which is to be established in London students of Indian economics will have better information of Indian industrial conditions in their historical, technical, and economic aspects, than that which has hitherto been provided in official reports and returns. The mental bias of departmental experts and their lack of artistic knowledge has led them to collect economic data which fit their Western theories, and to ignore those which do not; to count the thousands of mill-hands, but not the millions of handicraftsmen; to represent the Indian master-builder as extinct or incapable, because he does not work in Anglo-Indian cities, and to preach that the Western way is always the way of progress.

It is essential for all who are concerned in the building of the new India to understand more clearly that however great and real may be the progress of Western science, they will fail to apply it successfully in India without a full appreciation of what India means, and of India's share in the civilization of the world.

Indians in Trinidad

Mr. Herbert G. De Lisser, writing in the *Daily Gleaner* (Jamaica), says:—

Trinidad is the most mixed of all the West Indian islands. The Spaniards had it first, and Spanish families lived there. French colonists flocked to the island and settled, and in time it had more French than Spanish inhabitants. The English came into possession, and English people emigrated there. In the meantime Africans had been brought over, and after emancipation East Indians began to be imported as indentured labourers. Then came the Portuguese, not in very large numbers, it is true, but enough to constitute a distinct class in the community. The result is that there are people of French, English, Spanish, Portuguese, East Indian and African descent in the colony, and, of course a large percentage of coloured people. Many languages are spoken in Trinidad. The peasants speak a patois French and a patois English and they seem to use French more commonly than English. The coolies converse in their own dialect. In Port-of-Spain, English is the language mainly spoken, and in time it may prevail over all the others; but the numerically strongest homogeneous element of the population is undoubtedly the East Indian. There are over one hundred thousand of these people in Trinidad, of whom at least one-half were born in the island.

Are these fifty thousand island-born coolies Trinidadians? Not only were they born in the colony, but they have no intention of returning to India. Some who have been taken thither by their parents have loudly clamoured to be sent back to the land of their birth; they found that there was no place for them in India, that the life there was entirely different from that to which they had been accustomed, that they were strangers in a strange land. And yet these Indians do not mix much with the other natives. A few intermarry, a few become Christians; but the vast majority remain in social and domestic life a separate community. A handful of them would disappear in the course of years; fifty or a hundred thousand of them, having a common religion and a distinct racial consciousness, will do nothing of the kind.

If emigration from India continued, the East Indian would become in time the chief element of the population. He is now in Trinidad as an agricultural labourer chiefly, but he is beginning to occupy other positions also. There are East Indian clerks in the stores, there are East Indian clerks in the public offices; there are East Indian lawyers, and one of the nominated members of the Legislative Council is an East Indian. As you drive along a country road in Trinidad, you will see the coolies patiently attending to the cocoa trees, you will see the lithe coolie woman, her wrists and ankles and neck heavily weighted with silver ornaments, looking after her children; it will come to you that you have not noticed many of these people in Port-of-Spain. But you will also be passed by East Indians in buggies, perhaps in motor-cars, and upon enquiry you will learn that many East Indians are very prosperous men, men with money; that a considerable number of them own land, and that the leading personalities of this community take care to see that the labourer of their race is not cheated or oppressed, even though the Immigration Department is quite alive to its duties in this respect. Black men also own land and work as labourers, but they do not take as patiently to toiling for other people as the coolies do, or are obliged to do. The man of African descent increases, but the coolie is also prolific, and in a country like Trinidad his children have a good chance of struggling successfully against the maladies which everywhere cause so much infantile mortality. There is still a large area of undeveloped soil in Trinidad, and if more East Indians were brought over to till it, their children would remain in the country. Then, after a time, the Indian would become so strong, in

influence, in property, as well as in numbers, that Trinidad, say a hundred years hence, might be more identified with them than with any other race of people. But the future of coolie immigration is doubtful. In the meantime the East Indian is the worker, patiently putting by penny after penny and establishing himself firmly in his West Indian home.

Of the negro peasant of Trinidad nobody speaks very highly. The black man from Barbadoes sneers at him, says he will not work; the planters condemn him, asserting that he is not reliable as an agricultural help. He prefers the towns and town employment; he is an artisan, a wharf labourer; in the country he works when he likes or when he must. Yet I have also heard, on good authority, that the great cocoa industry of Trinidad owes its origin to the negro peasant-proprietor. He was the first to plant cocoa for sale; the demand grew, and the planters seeing that sugar was rapidly losing its favourable position, turned their attention to this more profitable culture. So Trinidad owes him something, though I can well believe that he has no love for day labour on a Trinidad plantation, and am persuaded that Trinidad would be in a very backward condition were there no coolies to till the fields.

As it is, the island is very much under-populated. Take away the East Indian and the large properties must languish. Land would be plentiful, squatters would abound, and where men can live upon little with almost no exertion, they will not bestir themselves to painful toil.

News in Brief

Mr. Clarence, the Commissioner who is now investigating the alleged irregularities in the Immigration Department, commenced taking evidence in Johannesburg last Monday.

The Durban United Indian Sports Association held successful sports at Lord's Ground, on Monday last, in aid of the Indian Soldiers' Widows and Orphans Fund. Football matches were played at 10 a.m. and 11-30 a.m. whilst athletics and cycling commenced at 1-30 p.m.

It has been suggested that the name of the newly-conquered German South-West Africa should be Bothasia. The *Natal Mercury*, however, is sure that the future British and Dutch settlers in the South-West would not care to be styled "Both-Asiatics." Of course not!

The indentured Indians of Ottawa have decided to perpetuate the memory of the late Mr. Gokhale. An appeal is being made to the public for subscriptions, the amount collected to be used for the purchase of a piece of ground at Ottawa, the erection of suitable buildings thereon for the purpose of establishing a Rest House for Indians, the same to be used as a School, and the employment of a Resident Teacher. Messrs. Mahabeer, Dandial Singh, and Moonsamy Pandaram are the organisers. Mr. West, Phoenix, has consented to take charge of the funds and check the accounts.

A Port Elizabeth correspondent informs us that Indians at Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage held a meeting on the 2nd instant to decide how to spend the funds that had been collected to perpetuate the memory of the late Mr. Gokhale. Mr. R. G. Trikandas was appointed Chairman of the gathering. After some discussion it was decided to build a room at the Nadiad Hindu orphanage. A draft for £43 2s. 6d. was sent to Mr. Gandhi at Poona, as desired by the meeting, and Mr. Gandhi was requested to arrange about the memorial. The organisers thank the various sections of the community who have so liberally assisted.

"We are glad to learn, from independent testimony, that the Indian troops who did such brilliant work at Neuve Chapelle are standing the rigours of a spring campaign with an almost complete immunity from ordinary sickness," says the *Pall Mall*. "They are as happy in their work as our own irrepressible Tommies, and those who are wounded are mightily pleased with the care and attention they receive at the base hospitals. Nurses say it is a pleasure to do anything for a wounded Indian: he is so grateful."

The removal of a local butcher from Boksburg North to the Rietfontein Lazaretto suffering from anthrax, has inspired someone to write to the *East Rand Express* urging the Medical Officer of Health to look into the condition of the butchers' shops of that town:—

"Quite a few of them are honestly attempting to keep their establishments in a sanitary state, but the majority of them fall lamentably short of the mark. One has only to gaze on the filthy vehicles and coverings that are used in conveying meat from the slaughter-poles to town, to say nothing of the grimy, unwashed natives that are employed off-loading. Another vile practice that is indulged in by some of the butchers and their employees is that of chewing tobacco and expectorating all over the place. This abominable habit should be stopped at all cost."

And this is the place which rose up in indignation against the "filthy Asiatic" getting a footing!

Mahatma Munshiram in welcoming Mr. Gandhi to the Gurukul at Hardwar, said that he was glad to hear that he would live in India and would not go abroad like others to serve India from outside. He hoped that Mr. Gandhi would be the beacon light of India. Now he had come and with his help they would all be able to cross the ocean of difficulties lying before them. He said Mr. Gandhi's life was a great ideal but that of Mrs. Gandhi's was a greater ideal; he had taught a great lesson and, so long as other women were not of equal help to men, the progress of the country could not be satisfactory.

Sir George Reid, the High Commissioner for the Commonwealth of Australia, was interviewed on his return from a visit to the Australian contingent in Egypt. "What I am proudest about in the British Empire is this," he is reported to have said:

"You see two opposite forces at play in the British Empire to-day—one, local self-government of the freest type, and the other an autocratic and paternal sway. One of the wonders of the present situation is that the peoples under both forms of Government have been splendidly loyal. You cannot pick out the Dominions for loyalty and exclude the people of India. The three hundred millions of people in the Indian Empire have realised at last that there is a future ahead of them in self-government and political status, even to the proud position which the people of the Dominions occupy to-day. A British Empire under German ideals would be impossible. Germany might conquer the British Empire by brute force, but she would come into a barren, a costly, and a bloody heritage."

Answers to Correspondents

In reply to Mr. M. H. Begg, we have dealt with the matter referred to and will do so again as the necessity requires.

INDIAN MARRIAGES: There is no fee for the registration of marriages before a Magistrate, but a shilling stamp must be affixed to each declaration (husband's and wife's). This is a requirement of the Stamp Act. So every marriage now costs two shillings. Formerly there was nothing to pay.

Printed and Published by Albert H. West and Meganiah M. Gandhi at the International Printing Press, Phoenix, Natal.