

THE OPPRESSION OF THE POOR

C. F. ANDREWS

THE OPPRESSION OF THE POOR.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE CLAIM FOR INDEPENDENCE

NON-CO-OPERATION

INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

THE DRINK AND OPIUM EVIL

HOW INDIA CAN BE FREE

INDIAN INDEPENDENCE:

THE IMMEDIATE NEED

TO AWAKING INDIA

BY S. E. STOKES

WITH A FOREWORD

BY MAHATMA GANDHI

AND AN APPRECIATION

OF THE AUTHOR

BY C. F. ANDREWS

RE. 1-8.

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OF THE POOR

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APPENDIX I

THE INQUIRY COMMITTEE

Mr. C. F. Andrews examined by the Inquiry Committee on 8th June said:—I arrived at Chandpur on the evening of Saturday, the 21st May. I had some difficulty in landing at Chandpur, the Military Police prevented my friends from coming on board the steamer to welcome me. It was only after making a protest against this that I was able to get permission for one of them to come on board. During the interval a police officer—an English police officer, gave me his own version of the events of the two previous nights. He spoke of rough handling by the Gurkhas of the Tea garden coolies on the previous night while giving his own explanation.

On Sunday morning at about 8 o'clock some five or six injured persons were brought before

me. I examined their injuries. The first one I examined was a little girl about eight or nine years old who was seriously wounded just below the bottom of the right eye. The wound had the appearance of a surface cut and bruise. It was blue in colour with red marks. It seemed to me as though it might have been done,—

(At this stage the President of the Committee interrupted and put the following question to the witness.)

Q.—Did you touch the wound with your fingers at all?

A.—No.

Q.—Having regard to the fact that you did not touch the wound and did not examine the wound in any other way except by looking at it, may I take it that you could not tell, how deep the wound was?

A.—I got a clear impression by my sight and I do not think the wound was a deep one.

Q.—Did you have any medical training?

A.—None whatever.

Q.—If a medical man who examined and dressed the wound says that the wound was a puncture one and it was caused by a pointed weapon would you place much reliance on your own judgment after examination with your eye sight?

A.—Of course, I would trust the medical man's evidence in such a matter.

Q.—You have expressed an opinion in the Press that you saw no bayonet wounds. You do not assert that you looked at all the wounded coolies ?

A.—No, certainly not. I only gave my opinion from the five or six persons whom I saw. The second wounded person I remember was a woman, I think of about middle age, but I am not sure. I remember her wound was a scalp wound on her head and another on one of her arms. I forget which arm. My further recollection is rather vague. There was certainly another woman and one of the remainder was a man past middle age. I cannot remember exactly what the wounds of these were. But I know I regarded them as slight wounds among those persons that were shown to me. I do not remember any one who had a broken bone. My most vivid recollection was the wretched appearance of those poor people—the misery depicted in their faces. That made upon me a very vivid impression which still remains in my mind.

Q.—You say these coolies had a wretched appearance and misery depicted in their faces. Did they look like well fed persons ?

A.—No.

Q.—Could they have got into that condition by travelling long distances in the course of three or four days. I want you to answer this question having special regard to their physical condition as you saw it?

A.—I saw the whole body of the coolies that morning and I would rather speak of the condition of the whole number than of these few individuals. My impression was that it would have been quite impossible for the great majority to have reached the emaciated condition in which they were in a few days. I had the opportunity of seeing a large number in addition to those at Chandpur and my general impression of them also was the same. There was a certain proportion of them who appeared strong and vigorous, but it was a small proportion out of the whole number. I have written my impressions of the first morning at Chandpur for the press, and I can give you a copy of that if you so desire.

Q.—What was the proportion roughly of women and children among the coolies?

A.—My impression is that there was a very large number of children up to the age eight or nine years. There were very few youths whose age might be from twelve to twenty. The large

number of the women impressed me very much, but this may have been due to the fact that they immediately came towards me when they saw me to make prostration. What I mean is this that the women crowded to me everywhere. Some of whom I saw were very nearly naked.

Q.—Can you tell us whether these coolies—men, women and children,—looked as if they could offer any kind of a fight to a number of people who wanted them to vacate a place ?

A.—What I saw on that first morning made it quite clear to me that they could not possibly have offered any serious physical resistance and they certainly had not the heart to do it. I can imagine them making a mad rush for the steamer in order to get away, but I cannot possibly imagine them physically resisting armed soldiers. Some of those I saw seemed hardly to have strength to drag themselves from one place to another.

Q.—Did you see any children in arms who could not walk among the coolies ?

A.—Yes, I have a very clear impression that quite a large proportion of the women had children in their arms. I can give exact evidence on this point because on that first morning at the large encampment when the women came forward they brought their

children with them and placed their babies' heads to touch my feet. I noticed that a very large number had children in arms. Very few indeed were without children. There were very tiny babies 2 or 3 months old.

I saw one woman in the hospital who was near to child-birth and I remember that one or two who came to watch me were near to child-birth also.

Q.—Apart from the men, could you say from their appearance whether these women with babies could offer any resistance to a number of men who wanted to push them out of a place?

A.—I could not possibly imagine these women whom I saw offering any serious resistance whatever.

Q.—From what you know of the character of these women, could you tell us whether they would or would not be frightened at the very sight of the sepoy, or Gurkhas or men in European dress?

A.—I should think they would be terribly frightened.

APPENDIX II

INDICTMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE LEADERS OF THE PEOPLE

The following is Mr. Andrews' statement before a crowded audience at Calcutta :—

I must ask you to bear with me to-day if I do not speak for long as I am very tired ; and I must ask your permission to go away as soon as my address is finished. I have overtaxed my strength. At the very opening I wish to correct certain mistakes, which have unfortunately appeared in the press. First of all, I was reported to have said, that the Bengal Government had refused to "allow" the Assam Labourers to go forward. I could not have said anything so foolish, as I myself sent away 483 with the full permission of the Bengal Government. What I said was that the Bengal Government refused to help. Secondly, on the authority of all the officials at Chandpur, I stated in the press that the Bengal Government

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strictly prohibited concession rates. This was the entire impression of everyone at Chandpur, both official and unofficial alike, and I myself sent away these 483 persons at full rates because I could not get concession rates. I now understand from Sir Henry Wheeler himself, that he did not prohibit concession rates, but only objected to free passages. I am sorry he did not make his meaning more explicit to his own officials, for that one mistake in the official communications has probably been the cause of many lives being lost. Thirdly, I have read a statement in the press, that in the rush forward to get on the steamer some persons were pushed into the river and were drowned. This was not the case. It has been also stated, that bayonets were used by the Gurkhas. As far as I have been able to find out, this did not happen. This picture here also, which is exhibited does not correspond with any facts which I have seen. No Englishman would ever flog a woman. The evils and miseries of the present crisis are dark enough without making them still darker.

On looking back after the event, I blame myself now for not having gone to Chandpur earlier. My only excuse is, that I had been asked by the working men themselves at Kanchrapara to help them in the settlement of

their strike with the Railway Company and I felt that I could not leave that duty half finished. But if I had known all the truth about Chandpur I should certainly have asked permission from the Kanchrapara workmen to leave them earlier. If I had only arrived at Chandpur two days earlier the Gurkhas might not have been called in and the Gurkha outrage might not have occurred and a settlement might have been reached. But these things cannot be foreseen.

When at last I arrived in Chandpur, I found that the rule of the military and police prevailed. The police officer refused to give permission to the friends (who had come to welcome me) to enter on board the steamer. Meanwhile the police officer gave me his own version of the story of what had occurred the night before. At first, I could not understand the long delay. But my companion, Mr. Kalimohan Ghose, came back to tell me what had occurred at the gangway and how the friends who had come to welcome me had been refused. The police officer spoke in an insulting tone to Mr. Kalimohan Ghose in my presence. I demanded that the order against my Chandpur friends should be immediately withdrawn and this was done.

Late that night, when I reached the house, I

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was told the story of what happened with the Gurkhas on the previous night. The next morning after I arrived some of the victims of the Gurkha outrage were brought before me for inspection. I saw one poor little girl with her left eye injured by a blow, which narrowly missed the eye-ball itself. Two women, if I remember rightly, were also there, one with a bad scalp wound. One weak elderly man present was also wounded. I saw no one among the wounded who could have offered the least resistance. It made my blood hot with indignation to see these pitiable derelicts of humanity, a weak sickly child, half-starved women, and an infirm old man, presented before me with wounds on their bodies which the brutal assault of the Gurkha soldiers had caused. I made many further enquiries during my stay in Chandpur. I began to collect evidence for the non-official investigation. All that I subsequently found out corroborated my first impression, that a wicked and inhuman act had been perpetrated, which the people of India are not likely soon to forget. If I were to describe it in the barest outline, it means that human beings in the last stage of misery and exhaustion, who should clearly have been objects of tenderness and compassion, were assaulted while they were

lying on the railway platform late in the night by Gurkha soldiers. They offered no resistance. Yet weak women and children and feeble old men, who were too infirm to move quickly, were hit over the head and on the body with the butt-ends of rifles and other weapons in order to force them to get up from the ground. I met several Englishmen on my journeys to and from Chandpur who had seen with their own eyes the condition of these poor human wrecks. They expressed to me their indignation at the thought, that Gurkhas could have been turned loose upon them in the middle of the night to drive them from one place to another. When I challenged the Commissioner himself, he acknowledged that he had pulled one Gurkha soldier off with his own hands because he found him beating the people roughly with his weapon. The Commissioner also told me that he had ordered the whistle finally to be blown, because he saw the violence that was being used was too great. This, at least, is an acknowledgment of the assault and some sign of repentance. But the Government press communique by its white-washing account and suppression of the truth reflects no credit upon its author or upon the Government whom he represents.

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My indictment of the Bengal Government, in the name of humanity, is this, that they have oppressed the poor where pity was needed; they have employed violence, where tenderness was required; they have brought down their Gurkha soldiers where human nature itself was calling aloud for sympathy and compassion; they have forfeited the good name of a humane Government. And what is an added injury, when this brutal outrage has been committed, they have called in their Director of Public Information to justify it to the public through the columns of the daily press.

There is a still more serious indictment to follow. What happened, as far as I can read the sequence of events was this: When the first detachment of the returned labourers from Assam came down to Chandpur, the Magistrate, Mr. Sinha, acted in accordance with the dictates of his heart and conscience and sent them forward. He obtained concessions from the steamship company, and, on his own responsibility, spent nearly two thousand rupees on their transportation. Up to this point, the action of Government through its officers was humane and wise. Only one mistake was made. There should have been a medical examination at Chandpur and the sick should have been detained.

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But after that first act of Mr. Sinha a sudden change began. The Government of Bengal, living in the planters' stronghold at Darjeeling, with planting interests on every side of them, was confronted by the solid phalanx of the planters' opposition. Any action to assist these labourers to leave Chandpur was represented as "taking sides against the planters". Therefore, the orders were sent from Darjeeling that facilities for departure in the way of assisted passages were not to be given by Government officers.

This influence of the tea-planting industry was as evident as possible to me in Darjeeling itself. It appears still to be paramount to-day. What has been its fatal result? Government has declared its policy. It will provide medical comforts for the wretched tea labourers, who are congested in Chandpur. It will provide food, if necessary, to prevent them from starving. But the one thing it will not do is this: it will not give one pice to assist these labourers to leave Chandpur. Thus the Government has flouted the advice of every official on the spot. It has taken the side of vested interests. It has not taken the side of the poor.

My own demand was the most moderate possible. I did not ask Government to under-

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take the whole responsibility. I asked simply for a subscription of Rs. 500. This has been refused. Government points to the fact that it is giving medical aid and offering food. But all this is futile. What is needed is to get these poor miserable human beings back to their homes. They will never return to the plantations. Wild horses could not drive them back there. They cannot remain where they are. To keep them in cholera-stricken Chandpur, healthy and unhealthy, all jumbled up together, is nothing less than criminal. They must go forward, the healthy ones first, and then the others when they have recovered.

Everyone on the spot agrees on this point. The missionary, the official Englishmen, the non-official Englishmen, all agree on this point. But the Government at Darjeeling has refused to lift one little finger to help a single labourer forward. And so the deadlock has become complete. The whole province of Bengal on its Indian side, is shocked by this Governmental act. The Government, whose first duty should have been to protect the poor, to defend the poor from oppression, to stand up for the rights of the poor, refused, after the issue has been made unmistakably clear, to assist these refugees to reach their destinations.

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The indictment of the whole Government of India to-day and not merely of Bengal is simply this. The Government not only of Bengal, but of India, by its actions, has come more and more to side with the vested interests, with the capitalists, with the rich, with the powerful, against the poor and the oppressed. That is the terrible indictment. That is why the poor, in their misery, have flocked to the banner of Mahatma Gandhi, who is himself the poorest of the poor, and who understands his own poor people. That is why they are even beginning to refuse such help as Government itself is still willing to offer.

There was no more fateful sign of these critical days in which we live than that which was told me by an eye-witness at Naihati. These poor Assam-returned labourers were actually starving. The steaming cooked rice was put before them. But when they heard that Government had provided it they refused to touch it. They were frightened lest it might be a plot to bring them back on to the plantations. But when the national workers brought them uncooked rice from the people they were ravenous; they began to eat the hard rice grains uncooked.

This is a new and ominous event in the

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history of British Rule in India. Those who are not in the midst of the revolution which is going on before our eyes, those who are seated amid their office files in Darjeeling will be prudent if they take timely warning.

The Day of Judgment has begun for all. There is now one supreme question which Government will have to face. "Are you on the side of the rich, or are you on the side of the poor? Are you on the side of Mammon or are you on the side of God?"

And I would add one more word before I close. The Day of Judgment has come for the educated leaders of the people of India also. They too will have to face the same issue. "What are these outcastes?" the question will be asked. What are these untouchables? What are these oppressed ryots, crushed down by their landlords, whose misery in the plains has driven them to seek refuge in Fiji and Natal, in Ceylon and in Assam?

It will not be enough to excite the poor in their distress into meaningless strikes. That may add more to their misery. I speak sadly because I have been dealing with strike after strike during the last few months, which have brought very little but misery and starvation to the poor; and at Howrah, at Lilloah, at

Lucknow, at Kancharapara and at Chandpur, I have seen the poor suffer. Even to-day, this Steamship strike at Chandpur and Goalundo which was made against my utmost entreaty, is certain, I am afraid, to bring nothing but further misery and suffering to the Assam labourers themselves. I can only say this with the utmost sadness; for my heart is full of pain. I had collected 400 of these poor labourers together at Chandpur and they had been passed by the Doctor as medically fit; they were waiting in a barge ready to be transported to the steamer in order to be sent back to their homes, when the news was brought to me that the Indian leaders had persuaded the steamship-company employees to strike and thus no steamer could sail. So I had to give the order to take these poor labourers back to the cholera infected shores. They wept piteously. It was the last drop in their cup of bitterness. Therefore, I say most earnestly to you who are popular leaders, if you will bear with me; it will not do merely to excite the poor to strike. It will not do indiscriminately to use these strikes (in which the poor are the chief sufferers) as a weapon to bring Government to its knees. Mahatma Gandhi is the friend of the poor. He himself is the poorest of the poor and he

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knows that in such strikes the poor suffer most of all.

While I say this in all sadness, at the same time I have nothing but admiration for the national volunteers who are daily facing death in its most awful form of cholera there at Chandpur. I have nothing but praise and blessing for their zeal which I have witnessed with my own eyes. It has been one of the most cheering things I have ever seen.

Meanwhile, we have to raise at least half a lakh in this time of economic shortage and industrial depression. I appeal to the hearts of the people of Calcutta. I have come from the midst of the misery at Chandpur and I ask you in the name of the sick and the dying, the poor and the helpless, to respond.

SECOND SPEECH AT CALCUTTA SIR HENRY WHEELER CONDEMNED

I wish to discuss with you first of all Sir Henry Wheeler's report about the Chandpur deadlock. After that I shall give my own personal opinion about the steamship and Railway strikes which have resulted from it.

Sir Henry Wheeler's report is a failure because his visit was far too hurried and his method was far too official for him ever to get a clear perspective of the people's point of view. He could have had the official point of view up at Darjeeling. He did not need to come all the way to Chandpur to get that. The pity was that having made so long a journey, he was then able to make so little use of it. I tried to point out to him (in the very long talk I had with him at Chandpur) that it would have been perfectly easy for doctors and volunteers, for officials and non-officials to work together at Chandpur on behalf of the sufferers, if only the officials had put aside their officialdom and come down to work among the people. But

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this they would not do. Instead of this, they held aloof in their own little corner and hardly ever went near the refugees.

Mr. and Mrs. Goring the Missionaries, very soon won the hearts of the national volunteers, because Mr. Goring acted as stretcher bearer for cholera patients and Mrs. Goring nursed the tiny motherless babies as if they had been her own. The Bishop of Assam very rapidly won the hearts of non-co-operators because he worked all day in the cholera camp. His wife too was loved by all the non-co-operating workers because of her pure goodness. Dr. Pemberton, the Railway hospital doctor, was loved by these young non-co-operators from East Bengal because of his wonderful care for his poor patients. But I am sorry to say they all had a very poor opinion of the Commissioner and of the Government Sanitary Officer. Personally, I think, they were hardly fair in their opinion; but to put down their personal dislikes to a deliberate political obstructionist boycott, as Sir Henry Wheeler does in his report, is surely far-fetched.

The non-co-operators agreed in my presence to try to work with Dr. Batra and they tried their hardest. But they could not pull on together. If Dr. Pemberton had been in charge it would have

been a very different matter. They would have gladly worked with him. It was the same with Mr. De, the Commissioner. If Mr. De, on his arrival, had gone down and done some service to the cholera-stricken people, there would have been no lack of co-operation with him. But when after his arrival, he wanted to bring in the Gurkhas in order to overawe the town, the young men's backs were up at once. And when, at dead of night, he cleared every outsider from the Railway station and then turned on the Gurkhas to beat with the butt-ends of their rifles the helpless women and children,—after that, it was difficult to get anyone even to speak with him. As an Englishman I am ashamed to see that Sir Henry Wheeler defends his action. I said a fortnight ago when I saw exhibited in Mirzapur Park a picture of an Englishman hitting a woman, "This could never happen. An Englishman could never hit a woman." But Sir Henry Wheeler gives a list of sixteen wounded people (nine of whom were women and children) and after seeing with his own eyes their wounds, reports that in the circumstances the force used was not excessive. Would he have spoken like that, if they had been English women and English children?

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I have taken these points in Sir Henry Wheeler's report to show how hopelessly he has missed the people's mind. And a Home Member of the Bengal Council who cannot understand the mind of the Bengalee people, whom he governs, is of no use in Bengal to-day.

We are not living in ordinary days. We want those who will give up being officials and be men. In former days, if cholera was raging the first thing that happened was that the English official of the Civil Service was there on the spot night and day, doing doctor's work, doing nurse's work, doing anything to show sympathy and love for the poor. But in this instance the high tradition of the Civil Service of the past appears to have been lost sight of. What could have been more callous than at 11 o'clock at night, to have sent in the Gurkhas? And, after dealing blows right and left on women with babies in their arms, in what place were these poor people, many of whom were sick and ill, to be located? On a bare, open, shelterless football ground, on a cloudy night at the beginning of the monsoon, when rain was threatening.

Sir Henry Wheeler's report mentions that sheds were to be erected. He fails to mention the salient fact that none had been put up; that the football ground was bare of any shelter

and was quite certain to be waterlogged in any heavy rain. It was here that people, sickening with cholera, were to be stationed. Surely this is not the high tradition of the Indian Civil Service!

I have said that Sir Henry Wheeler does not understand the mind of East Bengal. Indeed he does not, if he thinks such actions as happened on that night were worthy of his official approval. How utterly different was the action of the people themselves! The townspeople of Chandpur came out and found these poor refugees on that piece of open waste ground where the Gurkha soldiers had driven them and they took them immediately into their own quarters. I have seen these refugees living in the very centre of the town. I have seen them drinking out of the town's tanks and being fed day by day by the townspeople. I have seen their little children playing with the little children of Chandpur. From a medical standpoint, the risk was great indeed, but from the humanitarian standpoint, what love and sacrifice it shows! And I have seen these non-co-operating students, about whom Sir Henry Wheeler speaks as though they would not be won to co-operate for humanity's sake; I have seen them, day after day, co-operating with English

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men and English women whom they love. I have seen them ready to worship an English lady for her goodness to the cholera-stricken Indian children in the hospital.

My time is almost taken up, but I wish to say something about the strikes which are like a great burden on my heart. I have felt for these poor refugees from Assam night and day till they have become a part of my own life and it pained me to the quick when they stretched out their hands and asked me to be taken to their homes and I knew that the one and only cause preventing them was the steamship strike which blocked their way.

I have no question in my own mind that the original motive underlying that strike had something in it that was noble. The wave of indignation which ran through East Bengal was felt most strongly by the working classes. But the leadership at such a time was weak and faltering, and in consequence the poor have terribly suffered. It is not true that no harm was done to the poor by the long delay, day after day, at Chandpur. Not only were there many unnecessary deaths, but there was also demoralisation. To be in a shed, night and day, and be fed and to have nothing else to do, is demoralising; and those who were

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nearest to them and served and loved them best, saw with their own eyes the harm that was being done. I could not for one moment agree to the strike when it was begun. I protested against it with all my might before it was begun. I have been protesting ever since.

The men ought to go back and not carry the strike further ; for it is already causing terrible hardship and suffering to the poor. And it was begun unwisely. For more than thirty years I have been intimately connected with labour problems both in England and in India. Labour leaders in England to-day are among my friends. I have lived through the agony of many strikes and I have suffered with the poor. And my experience is this, that the poor suffer most terribly in strikes beyond any conception of the rich. My experience is that the strike is a weapon never to be used lightly ; that a political strike is almost certain to confuse the issues ; that if begun in a wrong way it will end in misery and want to the poor people. It can only be employed with wisdom and foresight that has been won by generations of education and experience ; and that is not yet present here, in this country. I know full well the enthusiasm of the days in which we live and the power of the popular

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movement which has now been created. I have lived in the midst of it and have not kept aloof. All my life I have lived with the young and the enthusiasm of the young is my greatest inspiration. But just because my heart is wholly with the young, and with the present popular movement in East Bengal, which youth has inspired, I can urge with all the more force and conviction the need of infinite care, lest we, whose one object is to help the poor, fail in our endeavour, and only injure the poor instead.

This 'strike' weapon is a new weapon and a double edged weapon, as I know full well from my own long experience. Let us not think that by its reckless use we can obtain short cuts to success. That road of short cuts can only in the end lead to violence and even bloodshed. Let us rather keep strictly to the path of 'Ahimsa' which Mahatma Gandhi has marked out.

APPENDIX III

AN INTERVIEW ON THE GURKHA OUTRAGE

Early this morning I interviewed Mr. C. F. Andrews who has come down to Allahabad to seek relief for the returned Assam coolies.

My first question was this:—"Have you seen Reuter's message from England in which a question has been asked in Parliament whether you yourself ought not to be deported to England and prosecuted for sedition on account of your recent speeches in Calcutta?"

"Yes." Mr. Andrews replied. "We must expect these things at the present time. There is a strong element in England to-day which still desires to keep India down by force and to repress all freedom of speech. But I do not think either Mr. Montagu, or the present Viceroy, is likely to give way to the pressure of such people."

"Have you anything to say about the perso-

nal attack on your character as a gentleman, Mr. Andrews?" I asked.

"My character has been attacked times without number." Mr. Andrews said, laughing, "and I have tried to make it a rule of my life not to reply to such attacks unless it is a direct question of fact that is at issue. In this case, I imagine that the contents of a leading article, in the "Englishman," have been telegraphed to England. In that leading article, my action at a Calcutta meeting with reference to a certain picture was misrepresented. As a matter of fact, I took the strongest possible method of condemning that picture, and every one of my audience know that I condemned it wholeheartedly."

"How do you answer the charge of 'Sedition' which is brought against you?" was my next query.

The answer was impressive.

Mr. Andrews said: "The charge is an absurd one. What the Government needs most of all, at the present juncture, is to be told the honest truth by those who are in touch with the people. My life has been lived among the people and during the last three months, I have been with them at very close quarters indeed; for my work has kept me in daily contact with the masses

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trying to settle strikes on honourable terms. It has been no easy time and on more than one occasion I have been in a position of great danger while trying to prevent serious mob-violence. If the Government of India cannot be told the truth about my experience among the masses without my being prosecuted for sedition, then we are in a very bad case indeed. But I know it is not so. Indeed I have said first of all quite openly to the Government authorities, whatever I have afterwards spoken in public. I have never concealed anything from them."

Then I asked: What is your opinion about these strikes?

"I am afraid that they have done an immense amount of harm," said Mr. Andrews, "especially to the poor people. I have seen poor people literally starving before my eyes on account of these strikes. For that very reason I have been working day and night towards obtaining an honourable settlement. I have been a poor man and a labour man all my life and a friend of the labouring classes. Therefore I know that strikes are sometimes necessary. But I feel that to-day in India the strike weapon ought only to be most carefully and wisely used, under skilled and capable leadership. Furthermore,

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as you know the very centre of my religious faith as a Christian,—the one thing that has drawn me with all my heart to Mahatma Gandhi,—is his teaching and practice, to the uttermost, of *Ahimsa* or non-violence. This I hold to be essentially the teaching of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. I cannot, then, have anything to do with any strikes, which in my opinion, are absolutely certain to lead to mob-violence; except to go down among the strikers as a peace-maker, and do my utmost to come to honourable terms with the employers on their behalf. I am quite prepared to be misunderstood by both parties, but this—that I have told you about *Ahimsa*—is my intense religious faith, and I should be untrue to my deepest religious convictions if I did not act it out in my own life.”

“Do you think, Mr. Andrews,” I asked, “that the Non-Co-operation Movement as represented by Mahatma Gandhi, blocks the way to co-operation between the East and West?”

“No, certainly not!” was the emphatic and decisive answer. “It rather opens the way towards true co-operation. The great obstacle to honourable friendship is insincerity. Subjection inevitably leads to insincerity. Mahatma Gandhi’s movement (as it appears to me) is-

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a religious one. It aims at perfect frankness of spirit and the purification of all insincerity from the heart of those who engage in it. I do not mean for a moment that my friends, who do not follow Mahatma Gandhi are insincere. Indeed I always go and stay with them and accept their hospitality as a protest against any idea of this kind. But it is true to-day that very many Indians indeed have been able for the first time to speak out truly their minds since they joined Mahatma Gandhi's movement. I have myself felt strengthened in sincerity and outspokenness, through my sympathy with it. "I feel," Mr. Andrews confessed gladly, "that this has made me a better interpreter between East and West, and not a worse one. In the same way, I am quite certain that Englishmen generally when by means of this movement utter frankness between the two races is established, will respect Indians and understand Indians far better than they do.

"Anything more?" asked Mr. Andrews, I asked: What is your message to Young India?

"My message?" he said,—and then gave it. "I have only one message to-day, which is in the form of a prayer. It comes from Gitanjali and runs as follows:—

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“Strike my lord, strike at the root of penury
in my heart.

Give me the strength never to disown the
poor.

Or to bow my knee before insolent might.”

APPENDIX IV

MILK FOR THE POOR—THE PROBLEM OF COW PROTECTION

This paper will be brief, and I shall try to make it practical. I have been very deeply troubled in my own mind at the ill nurtured condition of the children of the poor in India. My object in writing is to help the poor people of India who are suffering from lack of milk, which is the most nourishing of all foods. Though I am not a Hindu, I believe I can understand the sentiment in every Hindu mind, which prevents the taking of the life of any animal without a pang of suffering, and which finds its fullest strength in the protection of milch kine.

I deeply respect that sentiment. It is easy to see what it has meant to India all through her past history. For we know, how this very reverence for the milch kine has preserved for Indian use the almost only food, rich in protein,

which the people of India, who are vegetarians, possess,—namely milk. Without such protein, the great intellectual development of India in the past would probably never have taken place; for the brain of man must have its nervous powers sustained by its own proper food. And we have recently been learning from science what a supremely health giving and sustaining food milk is, and how it helps to build up the wonderful structure of the human brain and to sustain the nervous system which the brain controls.

The problem of food to-day in India is this: During the past hundred years (as far as we are able to judge from the scanty data which exist) the population of India has increased from about 150,000,000 to 320,000,000 people. This means that the soil of India is obliged now to support more than double its previous population. The greater number of the people in India are vegetarians, either by choice, or from necessity. It follows that the grain supply for such a vast multitude has had to be more than doubled side by side with the increase of population, during the last hundred years.

Unfortunately, this has meant the continual decrease in grazing land of the country. More and more land has been used for grain, and

less and less land has been used for grass. This has been a terribly short-sighted policy. For it has meant that the people, out of dire necessity, have had less and less grass to give to their cattle. I am not blaming the people for what has happened. It has been a matter of over-population. But what I would point out is that such a policy as this, which impoverishes the cows, must be, in the long run, fatal in a country like India. For it has necessitated the withdrawal of milk from the diet of the people. In Bengal where I live, it is practically impossible now for the very poor to get milk at all. I believe that this absence of milk accounts for the increasing weakness of vitality, and also for the painfully early age at which people in India die. The infantile mortality in India today is greater than that of any other country in the world. Here then is our main problem.

We now come to remedies. There is no doubt, I am afraid, that the milk giving capacity of cows in India has become very inadequate. Some have proposed to remedy this by a destruction of inferior cattle and a concentration on those which give a large supply of milk. No doubt, the breeding of milch kine is a very important subject, and everything humane and reasonable should be done to

improve the breed. But the slaughter of cattle is against Indian sentiment, and such a short cut to success in cattle breeding is clearly inhumane, when the subject is regarded from the religious standpoint. I am certain myself that this humane sentiment in India, which has extended its protection to animals as well as men and women, is a true one. The higher humanity in every country of the world will have to accept this sentiment in some form or other, if the moral ideal of mankind is to reach its goal.

The slaughter of inferior cattle is no remedy. What then can be done? We have seen a wonderful change come over Hindu-Mussalman sentiment, for which every true lover of India must be devoutly thankful. The last festival of the Bakrid represents a turning point in Indian History. Muhammadans have shown their love for the motherland by respecting a sentiment, which, in no way conflicting with their own religion, is clearly a part as it were, of the very soil of India. By so respecting ancient Indian sentiment and by refusing to sacrifice cows, Muhammadans have shown themselves to be true sons of the soil of India. They have helped greatly to solve the problem of cow protection.

The time has now come for the Christian

community, to which I myself belong, to follow suit. It is the highest command of our Christian religion to respect the feelings of others, as we respect our own. This has been called the golden rule of life. It is as clear as possible, therefore, that we, who are Christians, ought not to outrage, if we can possibly help it, the religious sentiments of the vast majority of Indians, into whose country we have come as guests. The simplest remedy as far as the Christian community is concerned, would be, that a strict order should be given, with regard to British soldiers, that no slaughter of cows for the soldiers' food should be allowed. This slaughter of cows, on a large scale for the British soldiers has been a continual offence to the popular Indian mind. It has been no less offensive than the sacrifice of cows at the time of the Bakrid. It should be removed at once.

But these two questions of sentiment, though of very great importance for cow protection cannot solve the main issue. That main issue as I have shown, is a shortage of fodder, due to the rapid increase of population. How can this be remedied?

We must first go to the encroachment made by the Government itself on the grazing lands

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of the people. These are two in number, (i) the forests, (ii) the railways.

(i) There is no need to argue out the case that the forests of India in the past provided a supply of green fodder for the cattle. But the grazing rights of these forests (specially in the Hills) have been restricted more and more and the cattle have suffered. The process of forest reserves has gone too far,

A burning indignation exists among the poor people whose rights have been often ruthlessly taken away without any compensation. I have seen this indignation, when I have lived among the Hill people in the Simla Hills and I have sympathised with it.

(ii) Again, in laying out the railways of India, a very large amount of land has been usurped by the state. After coming from Europe, it is amazing to see what extensive areas are left on either side of the railway line, fenced in by the Railway Companies. This land might be given back to the people, to be used as grazing land by the people. Where the railway itself belongs to the state, this process of restoring these superfluous railway lands to the people would not be difficult. Therefore, a beginning of such recovery should be made along the State Railway lines. It may be that

other areas, also, which have passed away from the people, might be recovered at the same time.

This brings me to the question of the land, which is still Government land. If the Government were a popular Government, it would at once make a survey, and find out what could be done with waste lands all over India, wherever they are still unused, in spite of the pressure of cultivation. Such a survey is badly needed. It is quite possible that large grazing grounds even now exist, which are still neglected. In England and Scotland, during the war, very large areas were discovered, on which food crops could be grown. Now a crisis has come in India, and every vacant area should be used for feeding the cattle which give us milk. Again, India is, on the one hand, a country with very long months of dry weather, during which the cattle suffer terribly for want of green fodder. On the other hand (as we all know) during the monsoon months, green fodder is almost too plentiful. Much of it is wasted. We have to find out how this green fodder can be preserved. There is no doubt that here Science has a very great part to play in the solution of our Indian problem. It has been found quite feasible in America to store green fodder, and

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to keep it from rotting, without too great expense. I believe one of the processes is called 'Ensilage.' The best minds of India that have made agricultural science their own subject, ought to be engaged on this question of the storage of green fodder for the cattle. If it can be solved, India can give her milch kine abundant fodder all the year round.

We come now to the problem, 'What can the people themselves accomplish, in order to increase the green fodder of India?' Lord Tenterden has suggested legislation, by which five acres, in every hundred, should be preserved by law for grazing. I doubt, myself, whether this law could be universally applied. But very much indeed could be done by placing back into the hands of the village community their ancient powers of reserving land for grazing (at the discretion of the village panchayat) in order to give fodder to all the cattle of the village farmers. Furthermore, instruction might be given with regard to the short-sightedness of the policy of continually taking grain crops from the soil, without allowing any fallow seasons during which grass might be grown—

But all these are strictly scientific subjects, which are beyond my own province to discuss.

May I make one suggestion? It is this that

we do not go on begging and petitioning for a Government Commission. Much rather let us have a commission of our own. Let us invite, if necessary, two or three friends to come over from England or America, as an act of love and service, not for a mere money payment. We need to gather experience from all sides. At the same time we must not rely on others, but on ourselves. Let the very best of our own Indian agricultural experts offer their services to the nation. Let them concentrate on this one problem of fodder,—how to increase the grass supply which is the very life of the cattle of India.

Thus regarded, the whole question becomes very simple. If the fodder given to the cows is increased then the milk supply will be increased. Then, also, the cows themselves will not remain in their present half-starved condition. And if the milk supply of India is abundant, then the people will themselves receive their own proper, life-giving, nourishment. The higher intellectual life of the Indian people, on which so much depends, will not be starved. The death-rate among little children will not be so excessive. An intolerable burden of mental and physical poverty will be removed.

I wish to make a confession. For many years

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past I have taken a deep interest in the question of cow protection, but I have shrunk from coming forward publicly. The reason for this was that I had previously looked upon cow protection as a purely Hindu problem, with which Hindus ought themselves to deal. But I have become convinced that I was wrong. I am convinced, now, that this whole problem in India is a directly humanitarian issue. Furthermore, I am convinced that there is no solution of this question until Muhammadans and Christians and Parsis join with their brothers, the Hindus, in the work of cow protection. It ought not to be undertaken any longer by one community alone but by all communities. As soon as I understood this clearly, it was my duty to act upon it. It is for this reason that I have come to Brindaban, all the way from Calcutta, in order to fulfil this obligation and take up actively the cause of cow protection.

One last word. I have had for many years past a very deep affection for Brindaban itself. The beauty of the place, together with the quiet, peaceful, religious lives of those that live in its forests, very powerfully moved me, whenever I visited the spot. My sole purpose, on my first visit, was to get the killing, for what is called 'sport,' of timid animals, in the forests.

surrounding Brindaban, altogether stopped. I am sorry to say that this purpose has not yet been accomplished. But I am not going to give way to despair on that account. I still firmly believe that, now, when the whole country is awake, such a humane proposal as the prohibition of killing animals for sport in Brindaban will not be disregarded. The will of the people in this matter,—the peace-loving, devout, religious people,—cannot be lightly despised, or arrogantly set at naught. It is in their name that I am going forward.

During this present visit, while I have been visiting this most beautiful spot once more, not only on behalf of the Cow Protection Society of Calcutta but also on behalf of all the animal life at Brindaban to prevent their slaughter, the thought has struck me forcibly,—‘What ideal grazing ground these banks of the Jumna, with their shady groves, would make for the cattle!’

Cannot the sacred area of Brindaban, therefore, be not only preserved against animal slaughter, but also saved as far as possible for cattle pasturage? In this way, if those who dearly love Brindaban would take action, the ancient ideal of Brindaban would itself be kept fresh in the minds and hearts of the countless

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devoted and religious people of India, and the poetry and the beauty of Brindaban would not be lost to mankind.