

Indian Opinion

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INDO-UNION AGREEMENT

WELL RECEIVED BY ALL PARTIES IN INDIA

THE South African Agreement has been well received. The Indian non-official groups, however, feel that the ratification of the agreement by the Government makes it difficult for them to chalk out a formula on which to discuss the agreement. Both the Congress and Nationalist parties would meet to consider the matter after all the members had studied and digested the documents placed at their disposal. It seems that a considerable section of opinion is in favour of holding a discussion on the agreement to criticise the Government for ratifying the agreement before consulting the legislature and also to point out in what direction the agreement is faulty. They would at the same time accept the agreement as probably the best possible under the circumstances.

SIR SIVASWAMY AIYER

Sir Sivaswamy Aiyer, interviewed by the Associated Press regarding the South African settlement, said :—

'I have just glanced at the communique published by the Government of India and the text of the agreement between the Government of India and the Government of the South African Union. Without careful study and examination of the documents, it is not possible to express a considered opinion. The general impression left on one's mind is that the agreement breathes a gratifying spirit of compromise and conciliatoriness which, if maintained, may be expected to lead to permanent cordial relations between the two countries. Before committing myself further I should like to have definite information upon a few points :

(1) What is exactly intended to be denoted by 'Western standards of life' ?

(2) In the case of Indians domiciled in the Union who desire to conform to western standards of life, but are not provided with means or have not been equipped with the education necessary to enable them to attain such conformity, what does the Union Government propose to do ? Are they to be trained and equipped by the Union Government to do so or is pressure to be exercised upon them and in what shape for the purpose of compelling or inducing them to emigrate ?

(3) Will Indians be allowed to compete with whites in the market for labour, both skilled and unskilled ? Will Indians be admitted into trade unions along with whites ?

(4) In the case of Indians who possess the necessary education and means and desire to conform to western standards of life, will they be subjected to restrictions in regard to occupations and residential areas or will they enjoy the same freedom as whites ?

(5) Is there any chance of the trade licensing laws being so revised that racial considerations shall be allowed directly or indirectly to influence decision ?

(6) Will Indians domiciled in the Union and possessed of the necessary qualifications for conforming to western standards of life be allowed to acquire landed property in towns and elsewhere free of restrictions ?

(7) Is there any likelihood of political and municipal franchises being conferred on the Indians domiciled in the Union in cases where they do not possess any such franchise ?

BISHOP OF MADRAS

The Bishop of Madras, interviewed, said : 'Every one in India must feel thankful that a settlement of the difficult question between India and South Africa has been arrived at. It reflects credit on both countries and every one must be grateful for the statesmanlike way in which the representatives discussed the difficulties and arrived at a conclusion. If the same spirit of co-operation is shown in working out details as has been shown in making the settlement we may believe that the two countries will work happily together for the good of both.'

MR. RANGACHARIAR

Interviewed by the Associated Press on the terms of the South African Agreement, Dewan Bahadur Rangachariar said : 'I have just had time before departing by train to have a hurried look at the terms of the agreement reached and Mr. Bhore's statement. I should like to have more time to give my definite views on the subject, but my present inclination is to accept the agreement more on account of the atmosphere of good-will which has been established as a result of the labours of the Habibullah deputation. The actual results are far from satisfactory. I welcome the proposals for the uplift movement and I do trust they will be genuinely and sincerely carried out. I wish assisted emigration, apparently a paraphrase of the repatriation scheme, had been out of operation till after the uplift movement had been tried. However, it will not do to raise the question in accepting the agreement. I do so on the distinct understanding that the last word has not been said on the subject. The results, while good in themselves, leave much room for improvement.'

MR. A. RANGASWAMY IYENGAR

The following statement was made by Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar, Secretary of the Congress party, who was interviewed soon after the Government of India's statement on the Cape Town Conference agreement, ratified by the Cape and Indian Governments, had been made on the floor of the House by Mr. J. W. Bhore :—

I consider that discussion on the terms of the settlement after ratification by the Government of India, if it takes place at the instance of non-official members, will not only be futile but will be calculated to place its critics at a great disadvantage. If it is supported, it will be treated as a ratification on the part of the country and used for the purpose of propping the present Government. If it is opposed or criticised, it will not only not be heeded but will be complained against as intended to weaken the Government in dealing with the Union Government in this matter. We in the Assembly, however, are not here merely to dot the i's and cross the t's of the Government's decision, much less to conduct full dress ceremonial debates, to sing our

praises of a deputation which no doubt did its best but in the nature of things could not deal with the fundamental issues of equal citizenship within the Empire, nor with the repercussions which the concession of a White policy, under whatever disguise, may have in other parts of the Empire. I recognise the improvement in the conditions of Indian settlers in South Africa that might result from these terms, but I have yet to study the matter further and realise what is the full price we are asked to pay for this alleviation in their lot. I do not want to prejudice this important matter, but I have stated what occurred to me as the first impression in the matter.

ASSEMBLY EUROPEANS' VIEW

Col. Crawford, Dr. Macphail and Sir Walter Wilson, of the European group in the Assembly, in a statement on the South African agreement observe: "The conclusions reached by the Round Table Conference on the Indian question in South Africa, as ratified by the Governments of India and the Union, must be regarded as equitable and just. All who recognise the difficulty of the problem and the delicate questions involved must be struck by the statesmanlike view which had led to the solution reached. The South African statesmen, while securing the principle of maintaining Western standards, which they regard as vital for the well-being of the Union, have attained to a truer understanding of India, of its peoples and of the importance of its place in the Empire. As representatives of the European community, we welcome the decision of the Union Government to drop the Areas Reservation Bill and to modify the rules with regard to domicile and the assisted emigration scheme. The proposal that a representative should be appointed by the Government of India to act as their agent in the Union to secure effective and continual co-operation between the two Governments will, we are sure, secure and maintain better relations between the two countries to the lasting benefit not only of India and the Union but of the Empire as a whole.

BRITISH PRESS COMMENT

The *Daily Chronicle*, commenting on the South African agreement, refers to the provision for co-operation with the representative of the Indian Government and says: "If India can send an ideal representative much progress may be hoped, for South Africa has definitely decided not to allow India to colonize her territory. Nobody can go behind her decision but that is no reason why the Indians already there should be kept down in a state of helotry."

INDIAN PRESS COMMENTS

The *Madras Mail* says the agreement bears the evidence of an earnest desire to find a settlement satisfactory to all concerned. It cannot be said that the agreement is beyond criticism. No compromise ever is. But it may fairly be claimed that the attitude of the Government of South Africa towards the Indians resident in the Union has undergone a radical change.

AN ATTEMPT AT HONOURABLE COMPROMISE

The *Hindu* says: It will be generally conceded that the agreement represents a serious attempt to tackle a situation of chronic difficulty which had been productive of the numerous deadlocks of recent years and omitted the relations between the two countries. It is essentially an attempt at an honourable compromise, as Mahatma Gandhi has called it, with both merits and defects of such an arrangement. The real test whether the Government are sincere would be afforded when the new scheme does not fulfil the avowed object of appreciably diminishing the Indian population.

'BEST POSSIBLE SOLUTION'

New India says: The terms of the agreement represent the best practicable solution of the problem for the time being. The paper hopes that the Government of India will carry out the duties it has undertaken in a generous and sympathetic spirit.

'AGREEMENT DISTINCTLY WELCOME'

Swarajya considers the agreement distinctly welcome in one important particular, namely, the undertaking of the Union Government not to proceed with the Areas Reservation Bill. With regard to the insistence on Western standards of life, the paper cannot conceive of a more inquisitorial procedure, and says its inclusion in the agreement makes us extremely nervous about its prospects.

'FIRST STEP TOWARDS HARMONY'

The *Daily Express* welcomes the agreement as the first step towards harmony and concurs with Mahatma Gandhi's sober verdict that the compromise is acceptable in spite of the dangers referred to by him in some provisions.

'TRIUMPH OF IMPERIAL STATESMANSHIP'

The *Times of India* in a long leading article on the South African agreement considers it a triumph of imperial statesmanship since it cannot be doubted that the changed attitude of the Nationalist Government of South Africa is largely due to the results achieved by the last Imperial Conference. It comments appreciatively on the Union Government's determination to help in the uplift of the Indian community. It emphasises that a similar obligation rests on the Government of India and urges that India must send to South Africa a small but devoted band of men and women, including doctors, teachers and nurses, to act as stimulating and uplifting agents.

'BEST HOPES FOR FUTURE OF INDIA'

The *Indian Daily Mail* says that nobody expected the Round Table Conference to solve the Indian question completely but it has accomplished what twelve months back would have been considered almost impossible. The paper welcomes the Union Government's recognition of the Indian community as an integral part of their population and does not doubt that the settlement will eventually lead to the complete fulfilment of the best hopes for the future of Indians in South Africa.

'A CHANGE IN ANGLE OF VISION'

Commenting on the South African settlement, *Forward* says: The compromise arrived at marks, on the whole, a change in the angle of vision of the Union Government towards the Indian problem.

WELCOME

WE extend a hearty welcome to the Rev. B. L. E. Sigamoney on his return from England. Mr. Sigamoney who is well-known in Natal, nay in South Africa, left these shores four years ago to prosecute his studies on theology. He has had a successful career at this College. He has come back as an Apostle of Christ. We fervently wish that he will have a happy future and that his work will be of such a character as will hold him in the highest esteem. His past career will bear eloquent testimony to the work that he would take up.

WRECKERS

WE had no desire to be drawn in in the controversy that is now proceeding in the columns of our morning contemporary the *Natal Mercury* on the Indo-Union Agreement. For our readers would have observed that in a previous issue we had asked the community to treat the writers of the correspondence with utter contempt. The manner in which our contemporary, supported by some malcontents in our community, has conducted the campaign against the Agreement is a sufficient reason for us to comment on the controversy.

The Indian problem has been in the forefront for some considerable time. It has been a vexed problem. That it was insoluble was a statement more often expressed than not. The South African Indian Congress, however, held the view that the problem would eventually be solved. It fell to Dr. Malan to solve the problem. Our contemporary calls it a triumph achieved by the Government of India Delegation. How it can be termed as a triumph we cannot for a moment conceive. For how could a Settlement have been arrived at were it not for the mutual goodwill that had prevailed during the proceedings of the Round Table Conference. Above all it was the atmosphere of peace, that was sustained by all irrespective of colour or creed from the date of that memorable announcement in Parliament by Dr. Malan last year, that had brought about the Settlement. Now that an Agreement had been reached between the Indian and Union Governments, we find that the opportunity has been seized by our contemporary and some irresponsible persons to wreck the Agreement.

In its leading article of the 15th March the *Natal Mercury* fears that "at the best the fate of the Settlement is by no means absolutely assured." When leaders of public opinion in South Africa have given the Settlement a blessing, we cannot for a moment conceive the grounds upon which the *Natal Mercury* basis its fears. In its attempt—we will not call it deliberate—the paper is being assisted by a few recalcitrants in our community. We do not presume for a moment that our contemporary will succeed in its attempt.

"But if that atmosphere is violently disturbed—as the proceedings of the South African Indian Congress indicate that it may easily be disturbed." This is indeed very amusing. Our contemporary no doubt knows that the Congress carried on an extensive propaganda work, and when Dr. Malan appealed for an atmosphere of peace, it was the Congress that had responded to the appeal to the very letter. And when the Agreement was published the Congress raised not a finger lest the atmosphere of peace may be disturbed. Next we find the Congress in Conference discussing the Settlement with all sincerity. The resolution clearly shews that the Congress recognised the Agreement as an honest attempt to solve the Indian problem. And the Congress has as much right to criticise certain aspects of the Agreement as our contemporary. But we fail to see how the

"atmosphere was violently disturbed" by the Congress. It would be more correct if we accused our contemporary and a few recalcitrants in our community of having disturbed that atmosphere.

Whilst deeply regretting any agitation on either side the *Natal Mercury* has opened its columns and has fathered an agitation against the Agreement.

"The European community of South Africa are not prepared to forfeit their leadership of civilisation in the Union. They will tolerate no conditions which will give to people of other races the power to swamp them politically and racially. They will surrender none of the legal and moral authority which entitled them to safeguard their own and their children's future in this continent." It is indeed regrettable that a journal such as the *Natal Mercury* which enjoys the distinction of having all along espoused the cause of the less fortunate people, should make this damaging statement. Surely no person with any intelligence can entertain the fear that a handful of Indian Settlers in South Africa will ever swamp the Europeans politically and racially. It is absurd. All the Indian asks is his due.

We very much regret the attitude of our contemporary at this moment, and it is indeed sad that in its attempt to wreck the foundation that has been laid for a better understanding between the European and Indian communities, it is being assisted by men whose sole ambition in life is to destroy all that is good. As to whether these wreckers will succeed remains to be seen.

Fort Hare and the Future

(BY O. F. ANDREWS)

To those who have vivid imaginations, enabling them to gain a perspective of the life of the Indian community in South Africa for generations to come, it is not difficult to picture the importance of the proposition that Fort Hare should be the centre of higher Indian Education in the future. This is the Agreement arrived at between the Indian and Union Governments.

There is one thing and one thing alone that can bring about a true equality of races. It is Education. What is the use of merely talking about racial equality, if races are not equal in moral and intellectual ability? What is the use of the vote, if there is no intellectual capacity behind it?

The attempt to pass the Asiatic Bill last year has had one effect, which in the long run will be of quite inestimable value. It opened all our eyes to the perilous state into which our Education, as a community had fallen. It is demonstrably true, that if things had been allowed to go on in Natal, as they were doing, educationally, for another ten years, no power on earth could set them right.

Not a moment too soon, the Rt. Hon. V. Srinivasa Sastri has given us our motto—"Education is our Salvation." Nothing could be truer and clearer than that.

It was with these thoughts in view, that I came to Fort Hare from Bloemfontein and have had the great privilege of staying there at the house of the kindly Principal of the College, Mr. Alexander Kerr, for nearly

a week. It has been an experience whose immense value I could not have anticipated beforehand, and it has taught me very many things.

First of all, I have been convinced that all the things that have been told me by Indian Students in praise of the Institution are literally true. There is an atmosphere and an outlook that at once gives satisfaction and hope. Indeed the ideal spot for building a new University could not have been better chosen. Lovedale—that wonderful practical school, where the Bantus of South Africa have proved themselves to be able craftsmen, both with hand and brain-work—is close by Fort Hare. Lovedale is nearly a century old; and the whole neighbourhood is rendered sacred by the pious lives which have been spent there in the service of God and man. The situation is one of the most beautiful, in its outward nature also, that can possibly be imagined. The air is sweet and pure and bracing. The surrounding hills are supremely lovely, especially at sunset. The peace and quiet of the place enter into the soul. It is altogether different from the life of the town.

Furthermore, there is freedom. No colour bar has any place at all. There is an absolute liberation from all sense of the inhumanity of racial prejudice. Here at least there is perfect equality reigning throughout. To live here, is to be free.

The College is young, but it has obviously a great future. It is growing in a very healthy manner. The Staff is devoted to its work. The institution is full of idealism. It has all the new generations of South Africa before it. The sons of Chiefs come side by side with the sons of poor men. Men and women study together. The moral tone is high and ennobling. Nothing could exceed the fatherly care and love, which the different wardens of Hostels give to those under their care as Students. There is a Common Dining Hall with admirable cooking arrangements. The food is wholesome, simple and thoroughly well cooked. The health of the College is excellent.

When the name of Fort Hare was mentioned in the Indian Agreement, there was at first some wonder and even anxiety about it among Indians themselves. For nothing had been said to the Indian community nor to the Fort Hare authorities beforehand by the Minister. But during these very valuable days, while I have been present here, all that anxiety has passed away. There will certainly be a readiness on the part of all the authorities to receive the Indian Students with open-hearted goodwill and kindness, and this will be warmly reciprocated.

The College is founded on a Christian basis. But a conscience clause will amply provide that nothing shall be done to compel anyone to attend religious services against his will. At the same time, the truly Christian standard of living, which has been established, will keep Fort Hare College from the taint of racialism which has infected Capetown, Johannesburg and Durban.

On the whole, I have been immensely pleased and gratified by my visit. It has more than fulfilled my expectations for it would appear, to me now quite certain, that a warm welcome will be given to Indian Students, and a very hopeful prospect indeed will be opened up before them in their new University life at Fort Hare.

The terms for Board and Tuition are remarkably low. "Plain living and high thinking" form the fundamental standard of the College. A wholesome friendship and comradeship with the leading educated Bantus is certain to develop. The future is clearly with such an institution rather than with modern artificial and temporary educational developments in the larger towns of the Union. Oxford and Cambridge, Santiaiketan and Sabarmati, have all been founded in the heart of the quiet country, close to nature. They will survive long after the great modern towns of this mechanical age have passed away.

Arrival of Rev. B. L. E. Sigamoney

Enthusiastic Receptions

On Sunday the 27th March, alongside the Durban Wharf there gathered quite a good number of Indians to accord a welcome to the Rev. B. L. E. Sigamoney who arrived by the R.M.S. Armadale Castle. It was raining by torrents but this was no hindrance to those who were at the wharf. It bore testimony to the esteem in which Mr. Sigamoney was held by all. It was past nine in the morning when the Armadale Castle drew alongside the wharf. Immediately after, almost everyone present boarded the Steamer and extended to Mr. Sigamoney a hearty welcome home. On landing, Mr. Sigamoney was full of smiles to see all his old friends. His luggage having been attended to, Mr. Sigamoney with his mother and brother drove off to his residence at Overport.

PUBLIC RECEPTION IN PARSEE RUSTOMJEE HALL

A public reception was accorded to Rev. B. L. E. Sigamoney at the Parsee Rustomjee Hall, Durban, on Monday. The hall was well filled by representative Indians of all sections. Mr. H. L. Paul was in the chair and in well-chosen words expressed the welcome of the Indian community to Rev. Sigamoney and eulogised the work he had done for the community before going to England. Mr. Sigamoney was garlanded and upon rising to respond was received with deafening cheers as he is an old Durban boy and most in the hall were his personal friends. He paid a feeling and glowing tribute to his wife's sacrifices, which made it possible for him to go to England and take up his studies. Her letters to him in his darkest hours were full of spiritual upliftment and proved to be a source of great strength and courage to him. He felt that the garland he had received was more deservedly hers and he placed the garland over her amidst loud and prolonged cheers.

He spoke of his experiences in England and of the great differences between the Europeans there and those here. He believed that the root of the trouble was that these here did not practise Christianity, for, if they did, then they were bound to accept the principle of brotherhood irrespective of colour. He also believed that we on our part were not doing as much as we ought to in the way of education. Ignorance is a prolific source of misunderstanding, he said, and urged that those who have money should spend it on education. It was the richest legacy that one could leave to be inherited. He was firmly of the opinion that we must grasp the Native by the hand and assist him to better himself and treat him as an equal. He was a socialist and hundreds of English Clergymen to-day were socialists because Christianity taught socialism. It was a religion which if understood and practised, produced the best men and best results. He concluded by saying that he would promise nothing as to his future public work but would not be found wanting in every effort made whereby the condition of his countrymen would be bettered.

Among the many speakers called upon by the Chairman were Rev. Choouoo, Messrs. J. W. Godfrey, Rooknoodeen, R. Soma Sundrum, Sorabjee Rustomjee, J. M. Francis, V. Lawrence, J. L. Roberts, A. Royeppen, B. M. Patel, L. Gabriel, R. Bughwan, P. R. Pasher, T. M. Naicker, A. Sookdeo and S. L. Singh.

RECEPTION BY HOTEL EMPLOYEES UNION

On Wednesday afternoon, the Durban Hotel Employees Union received Mr. Sigamoney at a reception given in his honour at the Peter's Lounge, Grey Street. About 70 sat at the tables. A rousing reception was given him in recognition of his being the founder of the Union.

SPORTSMEN'S RECEPTION

The Joint Committee formed of the Durban District Football Association and Cricket Union extended a wel-

come to Mr. Sigamoney at the Paresse Rustomjee Hall on Wednesday evening. The Hall was filled with sportsmen. The chair was occupied by Mr. A. S. Soden, the Chairman of the Committee, assisted by Messrs. K. A. Chin, F. M. Naicker and J. M. Francis. Mr. Geo. Bull the Editor of *The Latest* was also present.

The Chairman in extending a hearty welcome to Mr. Sigamoney, stressed on the many activities in which he was interested and the part he played in sports. He hoped that in the profession he had taken, he would play a prominent part as he had hitherto played. The Chairman was followed by Messrs. T. M. Naicker, J. M. Francis, S. L. Singh, Ajam Haffjee, R. Bhngwan, Sorabjee Rustomjee and A. I. Kujee.

The Chairman then garlanded the guest of the evening and handed a bouquet to Mrs. Sigamoney. Mr. Sigamoney who was received with enthusiastic cheering, was very much touched by the receptions that he had received. He seized the opportunity of speaking on discipline and obedience which were so necessary on the football and cricket grounds.

The reception terminated, the gathering adjourned to the Sportsmen's Balcony Restaurant where they partook of refreshments. A fine reception terminated with the whole gathering singing "For he is a jolly good fellow" and three cheers for Mr. and Mrs. Sigamoney.

The South African Indian Congress and its Critics

Sir,—I have read with interest your Leader on the Indian Settlement, and the various correspondences that have since appeared in support of your contention. Your Leader has evidently been taken as a lever by those who are not *ad idem*, to use a legal phraseology, with the officials of the Congress, to attack the work of the Congress. You will undoubtedly be pleased, Sir, with the support you have received in attacking the Agreement, and incidentally, the South African Indian Congress in its deliberations on the Settlement.

But knowing as I am, the public career of most of your correspondents, I am not at all surprised at their villifying temperament. I would have replied earlier to the numerous criticisms, but I had purposely waited on the enemy to exhaust his munitions. I have every hope you will allow me the space, if I step beyond the limit of space considerations.

Perhaps it would be as well that I give a brief survey of the activities of the South African Indian Congress since its inception.

Your correspondents, especially Mr. S. Aiyar, are as much cognisant of the tremendous amount of work put up by the South African Indian Congress, as the officials are. This is by the way, however.

The S.A.I.C. was formed for the specific purpose of guarding the interests of the entire Indian community of South Africa. The Congress knows no sections. Its constituent bodies are the Natal Indian Congress, the Transvaal British Indian Association and the Cape British Indian Council. Howsoever, your correspondents may say to the contrary, these three bodies are representative in their respective provinces. In so far as the Natal Indian Congress is concerned, you may rest content that we have sufficient proofs that it is representative. Many attacks were launched against the Natal Indian Congress, with a view to repudiating its representative character, but thanks to the solidarity of the Indian community in Natal, it has been able to successfully resist all these attacks. Any work that the S.A.I.C. does is done in the name of the Indian community. Its work in connection with the Duncan's Class Areas Bill and many other repressive laws is too well known to need any recapitulation here. It was the extensive propaganda work that had brought about the suspension of the Areas Reservation Bill; not forgetting, of course, the well-merited credit that is due to the many Europeans who have been active in this work.

marks against the Bill. The events that followed the suspension of the Bill are a matter of history.

You will pardon me if I give you some facts, as they would undoubtedly be distasteful to your correspondent Mr. Aiyar. Mr. Aiyar, be it mentioned, is a personal friend of mine. His attacks against the Congress leave me no alternative but to give your readers bare facts, by which one will be able to judge the reasonableness or otherwise of his arguments.

Mr. Aiyar was a member of the Natal Indian Association, a body that is now defunct, and as such interviewed Mr. Duncan on the Class Areas Bill. It was sometime in January of 1926, that he found that the Natal Indian Congress was representative and he enrolled himself as a member. His action in now turning back and attacking the Congress does not in the least redound to his credit, but on the contrary it savours of inconsistency, hypocrisy and cant.

His article is a pure conglomeration of phrases and a distortion of Mr. Godfrey's speech, written entirely with a view to blackening the good work of the South African Indian Congress. The interpretation placed on his speech is as mischievous as it is preposterous. It would be sheer waste of space were I to answer to his whole article. His statement that the Congress has accepted the Indo-Union Agreement because it does not affect its clientele, is, to put it bluntly, stupidity personified. Mr. Aiyar is well aware of the statement presented to the Paddson Deputation—a document that dealt exhaustively with the Indian question. The statement presented to the Habibullah Deputation was on the same lines. How Mr. Aiyar now comes forward with that glaring statement certainly passes one's comprehension.

The Congress has accepted the Agreement subject to certain criticisms, because it is felt that it is an honest attempt to arrive at a settlement of the Indian question. It is well for Mr. Aiyar to attack the Congress, but he has not up to now given us an idea of his requirements.

In my next correspondence I shall deal with the other articles.

Yours faithfully,

P. R. PATHER.

[The above has been sent to us by Mr. P. R. Pather as being the copy of that sent to the *Natal Mercury*. As would be evident the *Natal Mercury* has curtailed much of Mr. Pather's letter.—ED. I.O.]

Value of Islam

Mr. Pickthal's Lecture at Madras

The first of a series of lectures on Islam by Mr. Marmaduke Pickthal was delivered recently at the Lawley Hall, Madras, Sir P. Ramaswami Iyer presiding. Mr. Hamid Hasan, Secretary of the Islamic Cultural Association, introducing the lecturer, said Hindu-Muslim unity could be obtained only by a knowledge and appreciation of each other's culture and religion. Sir Ramaswami Iyer observed that the fact that a Hindu had been asked to preside on the occasion was a symbol, a proof, a manifestation of that innate, ineradicable unity that ought to possess the souls of Hindus and Muslims alike in dealing with each other's religion and culture. Out of complete comprehension and perfect sympathy alone comes concord not only in belief and thought but also in action and evolution of ideals, without which India was a country of mixed confused babel of two cultures. Mr. Marmaduke Pickthal said that Islam aimed at universal brotherhood. Islamic civilisation was immensely important not only to those who belonged to the faith, but to everybody. It did not aim at progress for the individual or a group of individuals, but for humanity as a whole. Human progress was its definite and avowed aim. It was not a religion of fatalism. It accepted the existing conditions as necessary evils, but commanded men to strive at progress. The remarkable success of those who belonged to this community was a matter of course.

What am I to do to serve India?

(BY THE LATE MR. W. W. PEARSON)

(More than twelve years ago, when I first came to India, I read a novel by an Irishman entitled, "Benedict Kavanagh" in which there is a chapter describing the answer given by a priest to Benedict's question "How am I to serve Ireland?" The copy of this book with pencil marks against certain passages which I, at the time, quoted to some of my students who asked me the same question as regards their duty to India, recently came into my hands and I think the passages have a message for the young men of to-day as well as for those of 1908. I therefore quote without comment a large part of this chapter.)

Benedict had gone to the village where the priest lived, and had asked him the question which was troubling his heart. At that moment two peasants passed on their way back from the market, and the priest pointed at them, saying:—

"What did you notice about them? Their clothes are coarse and they are poor. Yes, and what else? The man is sober. He has not touched drink to-day, though he was in the big town, as they call it, and was buying and selling. Therefore the woman looked happy. She was not drooping or tired, and her beauty for all the hard work she does, will not leave her in a year or two. And what else? Could you see their eyes? They have brave steady eyes, the man especially. People who have such eyes have self-respect. No one has bullied them, or will or can. These two, the man and the woman, are not afraid of anyone. They have learnt to speak the truth. There has been joy in their lives, singing and dancing, hurling, racing and much laughter. Why are they like that? Why is that man not reeling home along the road, straightening himself as he passes me, and looking at me with furtive, lying eyes? Why is the woman not cringing to you, begging, lying, grumbling? Let me tell you. Because a man lived in their village of Carrowkeel for forty years as parish priest who had found out how to serve Ireland. Father Moran was my predecessor. Men called him a fool. They despised him, because they said he did not know how to get on in the world. They saw his shabby coat, but they did not see that his coat didn't matter. They did not understand the real greatness of the man, how he kept the people to their Irish tongue and Irish way; how he taught them to be sober, self-respecting, and truthful. They called him a fool, but he had found out the way to serve Ireland, and he worked at the service without reward or praise. Let them call him a fool. I ask no more for myself than to be just such another fool as Father Moran."

Benedict made no answer, and for a time Father O'Meara did not speak again. They walked together along the road, drawing nearer to the ruins of an ancient tower. Across the bay, far out towards the west, the village of Carrowkeel could be dimly seen. But now the lights shot out from the windows and the open half-doors of the cottages where lamps were lit of fires blown to a blaze beneath the kettles which hung over them. Father O'Meara stretched out his arm and pointed.

"Have you good eyes? Then look out there. Do you see the three lights in a line a little to the left of the village? That's what we call our technical school, a very grand name for a shed with a galvanised iron roof. If you were in there now, you'd see the boys gathering for their carpentry class. They are not being made into carpenters, given a trade, but just taught the use of tools. We want no more gaps in walls, blocked with old harrows and rotten beams. We want neat gates to swing on hinges, shelves in the houses, chairs mended, good doors for

the stables. It's all part of the same work. It's the learning of self-reliance and self-respect."

Benedict gazed across the empty bay. He saw the three lighted windows, imagined the scene within, felt hope rise in him.

"And you have done that for them," he said,—"you or Father Moran?"

"No I have not done it for them. There you touch the great mistake which has brought to ruin so many fine-surrounding schemes. Things must not be done for our people. They must learn to do things for themselves. Nothing, literally nothing, can be done from outside. Have we not had enough of that? Money poured out and wasted. Strangers coming to teach and going away disheartened. For our people there is only one hope, and that is in themselves, themselves alone. Even we, the priests, who are of the people as no other educated men are, and know them as no else can, even we must not do things for them, must not drill and drive them."

"But the Father Moran whom you spoke of?"

"He did not do things for them. He taught them the spirit which now makes them able to do things for themselves. I try to follow his example."

They came to the point of the road above the old tower, climbed the wall and went across the grass. They sat down together on some stones which lay where they had fallen from the ruin years before.

"But you have not told me," said Benedict, "how I am to serve Ireland. I am not a priest."

"But Ireland wants your service too. You can do what a priest cannot do, if you will."

"What is it?"

"Would you be willing to live here among these people? Remember that you will have no educated men to speak to except me, and no other. You will be cut off from many pleasant and good things. You will only now and then be able to go away to hear good music, see pictures and plays. You will miss the stimulant of clever talk about great matters and exciting events. Your interests will be narrowed as time passes. You will grow to be in one way a smaller kind of man than you might have been, smaller intellectually, of less culture. Are you in a position to count the cost of such sacrifice, and having reckoned will you make it?"

"I am ready to make it. I think I have already counted the cost."

He thought of his friends in Dublin, of living as a gentleman, of the delight on which he had turned his back the week before, and believed that he knew what the sacrifice asked of him meant.

"You tell me," went on the priest, "That you intend to sell this estate of yours to the tenants at once. But when you sell it you do not get rid of your responsibility towards those who would have been your tenants. You now cease to be a landlord over these tenants of yours. You become instead their friend. As their neighbour, as a brother farmer—for you must learn to till the land you keep—you may in time become their friend. If you love them they will in time love you and trust you."

Benedict sat silent, hesitating. He had come to Father O'Meara as a prophet. He had expected to be bidden to do some great thing. And now he was asked to turn farmer, to plough fields, to talk to ignorant men about calves and bullocks, to find adventures and stirring emotion in experimenting with potatoes. Could this indeed be the service of Ireland, the fitting worship of the queen who was to be crowned, the way to win the companionship with those hero-souls who waited in the mountain caverns?

"Is there no more than that?" he asked.

"What do you want more?" asked the priest. "Do you not realise that Ireland's future is in the hands of those peasants who are buying their fields?"

In their hands for the future will be the responsibility for the conduct of public business. Their representatives will levy rates, spend money. Already the management of part of the education of the country depends on them. It is for them to start schools like that one across the bay, to find instruction for themselves and their sons in better ways of farming, and to found libraries. Do you not see that for four-fifths of Ireland everything depends upon them? If they are lazy, thriftless, selfish; if they are content to give over the business of the country to the care of shallow demagogues; if they come to regard corruption and shame and lies as natural, inevitable features of public life; if they themselves refuse to think greatly, patriotically; then the final ruin of Ireland must be something far completer and more hopeless than any of her misfortunes in the past. But if they have friends, not masters and governors, but friends, who themselves feel high things and live in the light of great hopes, who hate baseness, and will not let the canker of it eat the heart out of the public life, then our people will rise to their opportunities. Then we shall have the foundation of our nation noble, the men who drive spades into the brown earth, the women who rear babies in the cottages; if these are noble all will be well with us. It is for you, who are not a priest, to go into the fields and work, into the battles and fight, into the life of politics, national local, and to see that the work is well done, the fight fought bravely, the life lived nobly. Is there no more than that you ask. Why, the honour I offer you is so great as to be intolerable. But I say to you again, count the cost before you venture. These are no light travail pains; nor quickly past. To work for Ireland is no holiday task. What you mean for good will be taken for evil. The truth you speak will be distorted into lies. You will not win cheers, or not often, but instead of them, reviling. Can you bear such things? Dare you go on speaking the truth when those who love lies curse you and the mob shrieks at you? Can you bear that? You will find that the people you love will not always love you; that at times, often, your name will be for a hissing and a reproach to them. Can you bear that? But there is more than that. There are harder things still. Have you the courage to rise again after you have fallen? To go back and start afresh when you have missed the path and gone astray? Have you the indomitable spirit of persistence which will enable you to return to work again after mistaken effort, after miserable failure? This is the spirit that we want. It takes no courage to bray out sounding words when the crowd is in the humour to cheer us. But it does take courage to serve Ireland faithfully. Where are we to find it?

Transvaal Colonial-born Indian Association

Election of Officials

At the Eleventh Annual General Meeting of the Transvaal Colonial-born Indian Association held on Thursday the 24th March at the offices of the Transvaal British Indian Association, Johannesburg, the following officials were elected for the ensuing year:—

Patron David Esq.; Vice-Patron A. E. Peters Esq.; President Mr. William Godfrey; Vice-Presidents Messrs V. S. Naiker, Baboolal Marujh, Ramlal Mooloo, D. M. Nursoo, M. B. Frances, V. L. Jack, Samuel Joseph, Dada Farid, D. Sabistain, and L. Sabistain; Hon. Secretary V. M. Hoodley; Hon. Treasurer Ramdayal Singh; Com-

mittee Messrs. Samson Paul, Harry Earnest, W. Earnest, P. M. Ramsay, M. B. Frances and V. S. Naiker.

The Story of My Experiments With Truth

[BY M. K. GANDHI]

PART II.

Chapter XVIII

THE COLOUR BAR IN SOUTH AFRICA

The symbol of a Court of Justice is a pair of scales held evenly by an impartial and blind but sagacious old woman. Fate has purposely made her blind, in order that she may not judge a person from his intrinsic worth. But the Law Society of Natal set out to persuade the Supreme Court to act in contradiction to this principle, and to belie its symbol.

I sought to be admitted as an Advocate of the Supreme Court. I held a certificate of admission from the Bombay High Court. The English certificate I had to deposit with the Bombay High Court when I was enrolled there. It was necessary to attach two certificates of character to the application, for admission, and thinking that these would carry more weight if given by Europeans, I secured them from two well-known European merchants whom I knew through Seth Abdulla. The application had to be presented through a member of the Bar and as a rule the Attorney-General presented such applications without fees. Mr. Escombe who, as we have seen, was legal adviser to Messrs. Dada Abdulla and Co., was the Attorney-General. I called on him and he willingly consented to present my application.

The Law Society now sprang a surprise on me by serving me with a notice opposing my application for admission. One of their objections was that the original certificate was not attached to my application. But the main objection was that when the regulations regarding admission of advocates were made, the possibility of a coloured man applying could not have been contemplated. Natal owed its growth to European enterprise and therefore it was necessary that the European element should predominate in the Bar. If coloured people were admitted, they might gradually outnumber the Europeans, and the bulwark of their protection would break down.

The Law Society had engaged a distinguished lawyer to support their opposition. As he too was connected with Dada Abdulla and Co., he sent me word through Seth Abdulla to go and see him. He talked with me quite frankly and inquired about my antecedents which I gave. Then he said:

"I have nothing to say against you. I was only afraid lest you might be some Colonial-born adventurer. And the fact that your application was unaccompanied by the original certificate supported my suspicion. There have been men who have made use of diplomas which did not belong to them. The certificates of character from European traders have no value for me. What do they know about you? What can be the extent of their acquaintance with you?"

"But," said I, "every one here is a stranger to me. Even Seth Abdulla first came to know me here."

"But then you say he belongs to the same place as you? If your father was Prime Minister there, Seth Abdulla is bound to know your family. If you were to produce his affidavit, I should have

absolutely no objection. I would then communicate to the Law Society my inability to oppose your application."

This talk enraged me, but I restrained my feelings. 'If I had attached Dada Abdulla's certificate,' said I to myself, 'it would have been rejected and they would have asked for Europeans' certificates. And what has my admission as advocate to do with my birth and my antecedents? How could my birth, whether humble or objectionable, be used against me? But I contained myself and quietly replied:

"Though I do not admit that the Law Society has any authority to require all these details, I am quite prepared to present the affidavit you desire."

Seth Abdulla's affidavit was prepared and duly submitted to the counsel for the Law Society. He said he was satisfied. But not so the Law Society. It opposed my application before the Supreme Court which ruled out the opposition without even calling upon Mr. Escombe to reply. The Chief Justice said in effect:

"The objection that the applicant has not attached the original certificate has no substance. If he has made a false affidavit he can be prosecuted and his name can then be struck off the roll, if he is proved guilty. The law makes no distinction between white and black people. The Court has therefore no authority to prevent Mr. Gandhi from being enrolled as an advocate. We admit his application. Mr. Gandhi, you can now take the oath."

OBJECTION TO THE TURBAN

I stood up and took the oath before the Registrar. As soon as I was sworn in, the Chief Justice addressing me said:

"You must now take off your turban, Mr. Gandhi. You must submit to the rules of the Court with regard to the dress to be worn by practising barristers."

I saw my limitations. The turban that I had insisted on wearing in the District Magistrate's Court I took off in obedience to the order of the Supreme Court. Not that if I had resisted the order the resistance could not have been justified. But I wanted to reserve my strength for fighting bigger battles. I should not exhaust my skill as a fighter in insisting on retaining my turban. It was worthy of a better cause.

Seth Abdulla and other friends did not like my submission (or was it weakness?). They felt that I should have stood by my right to wear the turban while practising in the Court. I tried to reason with them. I tried to press home to them the truth of the maxim, "When at Rome do as the Romans do." 'It would be right,' I said, 'to refuse to obey if, in India, an English Officer or a Judge ordered you to take off your turban; but as an officer of the Court, it would have ill become me to disregard a custom of the Court in the Province of Natal.'

I pacified the friends somewhat with these and similar arguments, but I do not think I convinced them completely, in this instance, of the applicability of the principle of looking at a thing from a different standpoint in different circumstances. But all my life through the very insistence on truth has taught me to appreciate the beauty of compromise. I saw in later life that this was an essential part of Satyagraha. It has often meant endangering my life and incurring the displeasure of friends. But truth is hard as adamant and tender as a flower.

The opposition of the Law Society gave me another advertisement in South Africa. Most of the newspapers carried the opposition and advertisement. The Law Society's advertisement was the most prominent. It was the only one that was not suppressed.

England of To-day

A Lecture on "ENGLAND OF TO-DAY" will be delivered at 7-30 p.m. on Thursday, the 7th April, 1927 at the Parsee Rustomjee Hall, 140 Queen Street, Durban by REV. B. L. E. SIGAMONEY who recently arrived from England.

All are invited to attend.

B. M. PATEL,

Hon. Secretary.

The M. K. Gandhi Library and Parsee Rustomjee Hall Committee.

હાલનું ઈંગ્લાંડ

ઇંગ્લાંડથી અત્રે પધારેલા રેવરન્ડ બી. એલ. ઈ. સીગમણી આવતી તા. ૭ એપ્રિલ ૧૯૨૭ ના ગુરુવારના સાંજના ૭ા વાગે ૭:૩૦ ક્વીન સ્ટ્રીટમાં આવેલા પારસી રસ્તમજી હોલમાં હાલનું ઈંગ્લાંડ વાળા વિષય ઉપર એક મહેર ભાષણ આપશે.

આ ભાષણ સાંભળવાને હાજર થના સર્વેને વિનંતી છે.

બી. એમ. પટેલ,

એનરરી સેક્રટરી.

બી એમ. ઈ. ગાંધી ભાષણેરી અને પારસી રસ્તમજી હોલ કમીટી.

BOOKS FOR SALE

To be obtained from the *Indian Opinion Press*, Phoenix, Natal. Postal Orders to be made payable at Durban.

The Hon. Mr. Gokhale and the Indenture System	2 0
Indian Home Rule, by M. K. Gandhi	1 6
A Book—and its Misnomer	1 0
Asiatics Registration Amendment Act (1908) in English and Gujarati	
Hindu Social Ideals, by P. J. Mehta	2 6
The Indians of South Africa, by H. S. L. Polak (Helots within Empire and how they are treated)	2 0
Life of M. K. Gandhi (in Tamil)	2 6
The Golden Number of "Indian Opinion"	
Paper covers	2 0
Bound in Cloth	2 6
Speeches on Indian Affairs, by John Morley	3 9
The Hon. Mr. Gokhale's Tour in South Africa: Special INDIAN OPINION Souvenir.	2 6
Essay on Indian Economics, by Mahadev Govind Ranade	3 3
Vaishavite Reformers of India	2 6
M. K. Gandhi and the South African Indian Problem.	1 0
Essays on Indian Art, Industry and Education	2 6
Sri Madhwacharya	1 6
Position of the Women in the Vedas	6
Education as a Medium of Instruction in the Indian Colonies	1 6
Madhwaraj's Speeches and Writings	1 6