

Indian Opinion

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CORPORATION-OWNED SLUMS

ASTOUNDING REVELATIONS OF APPALLINGLY SQUALID CONDITIONS

THE Durban Corporation have a sanitary department whose vigilance in keeping strict sanitation in the Town has often been deservedly praised. But while private people are being severely dealt with for the non-compliance with sanitary by-laws what of the Corporation themselves who break their own-made laws. Is there no one to punish them? That is what one wonders on reading the following account given by the special representative of the *Natal Advertiser* of the conditions prevailing in the slums owned by the Durban Corporation :—

It is no exaggeration to say—and the statement is quite a dispassionate one—that the Corporation of Durban is condoning and practising one of the most vicious habits that can be practised by any city of any magnitude. It has built slums, and into these it herds thousands of unfortunate men, women and children, and any ambition they may have had to attain a decent standard of living is submerged completely by their miserable environment. Filth is the hall mark of the three barracks I visited this morning.

This is a new country. India has countless centuries behind it. In India, poverty-stricken conditions are more or less expected, since they are the legacy left by the India of yesterday, while little attempt was made to uplift and enlighten the population. Instead of profiting by the pictures held up to it by India, Natal is starting its Indian population in the same vile conditions as exist in that aged country.

No right-minded man can see the hopelessly degrading conditions in the Corporation slums and then tell himself that the inmates are suitably provided for. There is not a person in Durban who could pass through those areas and come away without a feeling of repulsion.

Little Indian mothers of 22 and 23 years of age, with their families of four and five, battle bravely but vainly to overcome some of the squalor and make their rotting habitations worth while for their children. Families of nine and ten crawl into the dirty single rooms, which are their all, and spread about on the floor to spend their nights in suffocating discomfort.

The fathers work for their daily bread from the hands of a generous Corporation, which runs an ideal borough; the mothers wash and dress their children as best they can and send them away to learn a little of the white man's ideas of hygiene; the children enter heart and soul into the studies. But it is all to no purpose, for with all their conscientiously studied knowledge the little ones cannot combat the circumstances with which they are faced when they return to their hovels for the night.

There are three aspects of this question—the housing conditions, the living conditions and the social side.

How Hundreds are Herded in Squalor

This morning I visited the magazine barracks and the stable barracks, both on the Eastern Vlei, and the barracks located in the vicinity of the power

station. Everywhere it was the same thing—overcrowding and filth. In the majority of cases the rooms provided for these people in the barracks were 12 feet by 12 feet by 10 feet, but occasionally one came across rooms measuring 12 ft. by 10ft. They reeked of stagnant filth, filth that could not be checked owing to the astoundingly mean conditions of the premises.

In one such room in the magazine barracks, 10 people live, these being the mother and sons and daughters, two of the former being employees of the Corporation. Of this family the father died a few months ago after 20 years' service for a landlord who cared, it would seem, not one whit whether his life was one of misery or comfort so long as he performed the work allotted him without grumble.

The Bathrooms

The buildings in these barracks, squalid and mean as they were, were felt by the inmates to be as good a home as they could expect, and the only objection they had to their conditions was in respect of the bathrooms. Here, in a small room barely eight feet square, must the men carry out their ablutions. There is no accommodation for undressing, there is no privacy, so that the little children running about in the grimed yard are not to be prevented from watching their parents bathing.

If the living rooms and the bathrooms are deplorable, the kitchens in this locality are worse. Pokey tin shanties, affording barely sufficient room to turn around, are all that these people are permitted. There are no chimneys, so that the smoke hangs about against the low roof in a choking pall, with but a small part of it filtering through the chinks in the roof.

Magazine barracks afford accommodation for about 2,700 people. There are 14 mean bathrooms, so that, making allowance for women and children, it is safe to estimate that some 30 or 40 men must cleanse themselves as best they can in one dirty hole.

"Most of these men," wrote one of the inmates, "are being forced to bathe in their kitchens, and for this they are being arrested and made to pay a fine."

One was staggered by the state of affairs in the stable barracks, which lie towards the coast, where the ever-shifting sands fall in a fine, gritty pall over everything and everyone. In these barracks many of the rooms are built below the level of the yard.

The floors have rotted away, the galvanised iron roofs and walls have perished. There is no guttering to the verandah roof, so that when the rains come a constant curtain of water obscures the outside view. With no drains to take it, the water floats about in the yard, over the muddied verandah until it spills itself into the rooms all along the line. Indians—husbands, wives and babes—are forced to curl up on the soaked floors and sleep the night through as best they may.

Terrible Conditions

An Indian woman shrilled in Tamil: "See the bathrooms, the bathrooms for the women!"

No word is more expressive for this disgusting provision than the simple one of "rotten."

The women of the Indian community in that area are forced to bathe in latrines. The place was stinking. An open gutter was clogged, and filth floated therein to a depth of about six inches.

Above the whole place a tattered Union Jack flicked itself against its staff.

Returning to town, a visit was made to the barracks near the power station.

"Those have been condemned," is the official slogan when this dirty spot is mentioned. But, condemned they may be, they are still inhabited.

Here again the quarters were mean and pitifully squalid, but worst of all is a storm-water drain which runs under the buildings. This drain, which is open at either end, was clogged this morning, as, I was told; it is invariably clogged, and in its open depth of three feet or so it is a perfect death-trap for the tottering brown babies, who crawl about in the filth all day.

Sanitation in any shape or form has yet to be heard of in the living accommodation provided for the Corporation employees by those who have been trusted with care and control of Durban.

Whole Families Sleeping Together

The lives led by the unfortunates who have been forced to regard the corporation slums as their homes are shameful.

In those condemned erections behind the power station are to be found some of the most staggering slum conditions that one could conceive. In rooms built back to back these families are herded. Under such architecture ventilation is out of the question, and when the door is closed at night, there begins a gradual stagnation of the imprisoned air until morning finds the room fouled and totally unfit for human habitation. Long suffering as they are, the Indians in these quarters have been forced to raise their voices in protest.

A boy of 12 or 13 stood in the doorway of one of the rooms, and he told how he and his six brothers and sisters, with their parents all slept on the floor, huddled together. In another room a boy of 18 slept under the same conditions. But that is not all. He and his sisters, fast nearing the Indian marriagable age, have slept side by side on the floor for years. Babies are born under their eyes.

Pathos clings to every sight in these awful quarters.

A Painful Accident

On Sunday a ceaseless rain dripped on to the fire in one of the rotting kitchens, and when the mother found it impossible to continue her cooking, she removed the fire to the living room and there set a pot of water over the glow. While the water was boiling the fire was gradually falling away, and suddenly the whole outfit overturned. Two tiny baby girls were terribly scalded. One was rushed to the hospital where she is still an inmate, and the other, too tender in years to be taken from the side of its mother, was kept at home and the distracted parents did the best they could to alleviate its sufferings.

This morning I went into the room of misfortune and was staggered by the poignancy of the sight. There on the floor lay the baby. Bandages swathed its arms, face and chest; it was crying pitifully; the agony must have been awful. And all through the lack of elementary cooking facilities.

There are those in our midst who would try to take the Indian child and teach it to overcome the disadvantages under which it lives, but their endeavours barely find seed before they are uprooted and the ideal is lost.

There is a little school down in Cross Street, known as the Cross Street Indian Girls' School, where a devoted staff of teachers under the control

of a hard-working woman, Miss Porten, spend their day instilling into the receptive minds or their shamefully-overcrowded classes the elements of hygiene which could alleviate some of the misery of their home life. But to what purpose is it all?

Those 262 children in a shed-like single room are happy in their learning during the day. Yet they must needs go back at night to the haunts of misery in which they are destined to spend their tender lives. The atmosphere of the homes is overwhelming; they try to match their little knowledge against it, but what a poor chance they have of doing anything at all.

Happy and Smiling

When visiting that school this morning I was surprised to see the spick and span children, with clean smiling faces and sparkling eyes. They loved and lived every moment of their school hours. The principal called them out to perform a little flag dance for the benefit of the visitor, and notwithstanding the fineness of it all, it was pathetic to see the enthusiasm of those children. They waved their miniature Union Jacks and marched in first-class time; but one could not forget that at the end of the day they would all turn back to those squalid homes and lose their disciplined identity amid the meanness.

The Corporation has pleaded many excuses for refraining from spending money for the benefit of their own employees. They must needs build a new road in the fashionable part of the town; they must do this; they must do that. But the man who does the donkey work—well; why should they worry about him?

What would the visitor to Durban think of such a state of affairs?

Notes and News

MAHATMA GANDHI writes in *Young India* as follows on the Indian delegation which is on its way to South Africa to discuss the Asiatic problem with the Union Government at Capetown next month:—

I have already expressed my opinion about Sir Mahomed Habibulla's deputation. It is a carefully made choice. I am glad to find that it has been blessed by the public. The question of the status of Indians overseas is perhaps the one question on which all parties are united. Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians, Parsis etc., speak with one voice. European opinion coincides with the Indian. The Government backs public opinion. All this unity is needed if the cause of justice is to be vindicated. This remarkable unanimity of opinion cannot but react upon South African opinion. But this unity need not be confined to the question of the status of Indians abroad. Is it too much to wish to extend it to other equally natural and pure causes? Or is unity possible only on questions remote in space from the actors? True unity comes of itself. No attempt had to be made for achieving unity of opinion on the South African question. All instinctively thought alike. Unity on other matters will also come instinctively, when its time has come. I am optimistic enough to think that it is coming sooner than many of us expect or imagine. But let us return to the deputation. The settlers in South Africa have in Mr. C. F. Andrews a link between the deputation and themselves as also between the Union Government and themselves. Let them make the most of the opportunity that has presented itself to them. They must unite all their forces. The best workers among them should collect all the material and place it at Mr. Andrews' disposal. They should understand the

limits of the deputation and they must be as firm in their presentation of their claim as one expects them to be moderate. Moderation, firmness and unity combined with absolute adherence to truth should make victory easily possible.

Up to the time of going to Press the death roll has risen up to 14 and 38 Indians are receiving treatment at the Isolation Hospital.

The following telegram has been received by the Mayor of Durban from the Minister of the Interior in reply to the Council's invitation that the forthcoming Conference between representatives of the Union and Indian Governments should be held in Durban:—

"Your telegram 9th instant to Acting Prime Minister. After consultation with Government of India it has been mutually decided that venue of Conference will be Capetown. Whilst thanking you for your offer I regret it is not possible to accept the invitation of your Council."

The Smallpox Epidemic Committee of the Natal Indian Congress met last Monday when the question of the renewed outbreak of smallpox within the Borough was discussed. The Rev. C. F. Andrews as chairman, stated that the medical authorities would be glad if the Indian leaders would bring home to the poorer Indians the absolute necessity for immediate vaccination in case any had failed to be vaccinated at the time when vaccination was offered. It was decided to endeavour as far as possible to visit the Indian quarters and make a house-to-house notification, and also to publish leaflets in the different languages which would be distributed by Congress workers to house occupants, Indian schools, and by any other method of reaching large numbers of the Indian public. Furthermore, it was decided to urge upon all the branches of the Central Committee established throughout the Province, that every effort should be made to get the whole Indian community in Natal, cent per cent, vaccinated, and thus avoid any danger of a further outbreak. They have been urged to get closely in touch with the health authorities in their districts, and requested to ask for supplementary vaccination wherever the earlier vaccination had not been completed.

THE SLUMS OF DURBAN

(BY C. F. ANDREWS) *Stock & Pritchard*

I WANT to make two or three things clear at the outset before making any comments on what I have seen in Durban. First of all, I have seen much worse slum conditions both in England where I worked many years ago and in India where I have been working ever since among the poor. I have also seen worse cases of municipal neglect. But it seems to me to be palpably true, that two wrongs never make one right.

Secondly, after full enquiries I am convinced that Indian and European landlords are very much to blame for the condition of things with regard to the poor that now exist in Durban. I have said this openly; and in my own public message to the Indian community which was broadcast in all the newspapers and in the Indian vernaculars, the most solemn warning was given, in language that went home, that God was displeased at the oppression of the poor. But again I would add at once, two wrongs never make one right; and the selfishness that I have seen on the part of the white ruling race since I undertook these investigations concerning the housing of the

poor is equally ^{ie.} displeasing to God and must be equally condemned. For it has been written, 'To whom much is given from him much will be required.'

Now let me say plainly what I saw last Sunday. Instead of going to Church I went to the Corporation barracks. The corrugated iron sheds, in which Durban municipal authorities house many of their employes ought to have been condemned long ago. They break every single rule of health including the municipal rules which have been published in every Indian language I have seen the copies of this municipal pamphlet, which gives the rules for Indians to read. It is many years old, obviously, and it was published in all good faith. It states that 300 cubic feet air space must be allowed in building for each individual in residence. That works out at a room 12x12x10 to accommodate 5 people.

A week ago, when I was engaged in the same task, I found a family group of 11 persons, those of whom were in municipal employment, living in one room of 12x12x10 dimensions. After reporting it to the housing Committee, I have been glad to find that action has been taken and I hear that the family has been given two rooms in the new barracks. But I could easily go on and give the Corporation quite a long list of over-crowded families which break through their regulations almost equally badly. There is, for instance, a father and mother and seven children who are only allowed one room of 12x12x10 in the very worst barracks I have yet seen. There is another father and mother and seven children living in another room in the same block, in an even more dilapidated condition. It is quite impossible to describe the misery of these poor people. I am asking to be reprinted, in another part of this issue, an article which was written by a Reporter of the *Natal Advertiser* who went round with me on a tour of inspection. There is no necessity to repeat what he has described. The Reporter of the *Natal Mercury* uses just the same language and I can vouch for its correctness.

We are shamefully late in discovering all these things. It is terrible to think that these conditions have gone on so long unremedied. The silent rebuke contained in the gratitude of these poor people when we came at last is a sufficient witness to the depth of our own criminal carelessness and neglect of our own brothers and sisters.

God grant that we may be able soon to help to put things right that we may not be guilty of a similar offence again. The poet, Rabindranath Tagore has said in his wonderful prayer to God:—

"Strike, Lord, strike at the root of paucity in my heart.

Give me the strength, never to disown the poor

Or bow my knee before insolent might."

We have learnt the latter part of that prayer lately. We do not bow our knees before insolent might as we did before. But it is equally mean and degrading to character, it is equally a root of

'penury in the heart' contemptuously or carelessly or unthinkingly to 'disown the poor.' May God save us also from that sin.

The Search For God

(BY C. F. ANDREWS)

In a new Anthology, I have just been reading one of Jalaluddin Rumi's poems, translated into English; and it has touched me so deeply, and given me so remarkably the message I needed in the difficult work that lies ahead in South Africa, that I have determined to copy it out and share it with the readers of *Young India* before I go, in the hope that it may appeal to them as it has appealed to me. It runs as follows:—

He asked : Who standeth at My door ?

I answered : Thy indigent slave.

He asked : What dost thou have ?

I said : I am come to greet thee; O my Lord;

He asked : How long wilt thou persist.?

I said : Until Thou call me in;

He asked : How long wilt thou desire it ?

I said : Till the last day of time, O Lord !

I laid claim to His love : I took solemn oath, that for love of Him I had renounced wealth and power.

He asked : Doth not a judge demand a witness to prove a claim ?

I said : Lord, tears are my witness, and this pale face of mine the evidence.

He asked : Is thy witness trustworthy, when thine eyes are wayward ?

I said : I swear, by Thy great Justice, they are pure free from guilt.

He asked : What desirest thou of Me ?

I said : Thy constancy and friendship!

He asked : Who was thy comrade ?

I said : The thought of Thee, O King!

He asked : Who called thee hither ?

I said : The rumour of Thy Festival.

O ask ye no more from me. Were I to tell you more words of His, ye would burst your bonds; no roof or door could restrain you.

Jalaluddin Rumi, in Central Asia, was the contemporary of St. Francis of Assisi,—the seven hundredth anniversary of whose death will be celebrated in Italy, and elsewhere, just about the time that this article will appear in the press. God, in His infinite compassion and mercy, has no East and West, but only one family of mankind, to which we all belong; wherein we all alike receive our daily bread. Just when my heart was crying out in its search of God, this message came as my daily portion; and I am taking the precious thought of it with me on my journey.

There have been many voices of discouragement of late, stating,—what seems almost evident on the surface,—that journeys to South Africa are useless, while the colour bar remains so firmly established; while the daily treatment of Indians in the streets, in the railway trains, and in constant social ways, marks them out as an inferior and subject race. All this I know full well, from a bitter and intimate experience. Nevertheless, in face of an Asiatic Bill, which has only been suspended, not withdrawn, I have confidence and hope. For God is there, keeping His high Festival in human hearts, quickening love in them among the Dutch and English, even as He is doing here among ourselves; and surely He will meet me there as the Companion who is my Lord and King—

“He asked : Who called thee hither ?

I said : The rumour of Thy Festival.

O ask ye no more from me ! Were I to tell you more words of His, ye would burst your bonds: no roof or door could restrain !”

Hawkers' Licences

Municipalities and Jurisdiction

The decision that, contrary to a Provincial Council Ordinance, a hawker cannot be forced by a municipality to take out a hawker's licence while he holds a Government licence to trade as a pedlar was made at the Pretoria Magistrate's Court when judgment was given by Mr. W. A. Rowan in the case in which Padiachy, an Indian flower-seller, was charged by the Pretoria Municipality with trading in the Pretoria streets contrary to regulations and without a licence. Padiachy was discharged on both counts.

According to this judgment flower sellers who trade in most of the streets of the Transvaal towns will be allowed to carry on.

The defence, for which Mr. Curlewis appeared, was that the Ordinance under which Padiachy was charged was *ultra vires*. Padiachy, it was stated in evidence, had a Government licence to trade anywhere in the municipality of Pretoria. Although under the Licensing Act flower sellers did not have to carry a Government licence it was contended that the Government licence covered flowers under the term “any goods.”

Municipality's Power

Delivering judgment, Mr. Rowan said there was an incongruity in the two charges, as one alleged that the Act was prohibited and the other indicted Padiachy for not having a licence under this forbidden Act. The municipality had the right to “regulate, supervise and licence” street traders. It did not have the power to suppress them, but actually implied that they could not be suppressed. Therefore, the validity of Section 12 Government Ordinance No. 875 of 1906, could not be upheld and in so far as it prohibited street trading by street licences it was *ultra vires*. Accused would, therefore, be discharged on this count.

The second charge raised the point whether street trading did not include the activities of such street traders, as hawkers and pedlars. After reviewing the ordinances, and by-laws Mr. Rowan said he must come to the conclusion that he was justified in holding that persons who sold flowers on the public streets of Pretoria were not required to provide themselves with hawkers' or pedlars' licences. Padiachy would, therefore, be discharged on both counts.—*The Star*.

The Truth About East Africa

The Loss of Southern Rhodesia As a Free Immigrant Country

(BY C. F. ANDREWS)

Nothing could be worse in the long run than feeding ourselves on vain hopes about the Indian position in Africa. It is much better to know the truth (as far as we can) and the whole truth, without reservation.

While we have to struggle to maintain every inch of the ground and not to lose one inch more than we possibly can, yet at the same time, as realists, facing the hard facts of life, the time has come when we must realise how bad our position is, and not expect to gain an easy victory, while India herself is in such a weak and handicapped political condition. The Imperial Conference has described the position of India to-day in vague language. India is not quite in the old sense of the word a “Dependency” nor she is she a “Dominion,” though she is allowed to take a part with the Dominions at the Imperial Conference itself. She is described in the Reciprocity Agreement as an “important part of the British Commonwealth of Nations” and that evidently was as far as those gentlemen, who drew up that famous Resolution, could distinguish her.

Here then, in the story I am about to tell, is an example of how this “important part of the British Common-

wealth of Nations" is treated by another "important par." namely Southern Rhodesia. The statement is made by one of the late Indian domiciled residents of Southern Rhodesia. He holds Residential Certificate number 254 issued on October 9th, 1919, and a passport of the Rhodesian Government number 2604 issued in October 27th 1919.

The statement reads as follows :—

"I entered the Rhodesian territory at the end 1912 in company with my father, and I have resided at Bulawayo ever since. My father was a hawker of fruit. I was sent to Bulawayo coloured school from 1913 to 1916 for I was educated to read and write English.

"After leaving school I took the place of a servant in my brother Adamji Ismail's store at 13th Avenue, Lobeganda Street, Bulawayo. My service was from 1916 to the end of 1919. I do not know how much my regular wages were, but my father knows it. I had not anything fixed about my wages at my brother's store, but as my brother respects me I believe he will give me a good salary when I return. About £10 a month he will give me. When I left Bulawayo in 1919 it was for a holiday to get married and to go home to my parents in India.

"My father left Bulawayo at the beginning of 1919 to go to India. At the time I left Bulawayo my brother gave me £135 and told me that the sum of money was the balance of my wages. He told me that out of that balance he would open another store and take me into partnership. As he informed me, my brother opened another store opposite the 'Chronicle' Office between 9th and 10th Avenues, Rhodes Street, Bulawayo. In that business we were three partners, Adamji Ismail Sussat, Hasan Ismail Sussat and Musaji Ismail Sussat. We carried on the business as Adamji Bros. Another store was carried in the partnership at 13th Avenue, Rhodes Street, under same partnership, Adamji Ismail Sussat, Hassan Ismail Sussat and Musaji Ismail Sussat as General Dealers. I have a third share in the above-mentioned stores.

"I left Bulawayo in November 1919 for a holiday to India. My marriage to Khatija, the daughter of Ebrahim Hana, was concluded. After my marriage I did not do any work. The reason of my living so much longer in India, was that my parents were always unhealthy and as they were old now they could not do anything for themselves and I was left for their protection.

"After some time, my brother sent me some money for my expenses, £25, £30, £15, £25; out of the sum of my wages for two years and 11 months, namely £350. There is still left with my brother £120, which has been carried into the partnership of Adamji Bros. These expenses of mine have been going on, also my brothers have remitted some money to my parents, but I do not know how much. My father knows it.

"After two years' absence I made up my mind to come to Rhodesia, but nobody was to take care of my parents. I could not come.

"Now the cause of my coming has been that some people from Rhodesia came and told me that my residential certificate would not hold good any longer and that the Immigration Department was passing some new laws." Therefore I made up my mind to go back to my place in Rhodesia, as otherwise perhaps I might lose my rights. Therefore I have come back so quickly and I was sure that I would receive my right. The time I received my residential certificate I saw the Hon. B. Brun-delle. I understood that the residential certificate would hold good for any time. At present I have left my wife to take care of my parents. I should take my place at my business store at Bulawayo if I am allowed to enter Rhodesia."

I examined the Indian Mussalman who gave me this statement, as thoroughly as I could, and he stuck to the main point that he had been assured when he took out his residential certificate that it was a permanent and not a temporary permit. I saw a copy of one actual certificate, made out in handwriting and there was certainly nothing about a temporary permit there, or about the certificate being valid only for a certain time, temporarily &

am making a far more thorough enquiry before taking any action. But I feel it necessary to give the facts, just as far as I have been able to gather them, to the Indian public, and I shall be equally prepared to publish anything that may be said from the other side later. What appears to have happened is simply this. It would appear that the Governor in Council has decided that on economic grounds no Indian should be allowed in future to enter Rhodesia. If any Indian has been away for less than three years and returns, he is allowed to enter. But if he has been away for more than three years he is not allowed to enter. The section in the Immigration Ordinance makes it clear that the powers used to prohibit Indians on 'economic grounds' are vested in the Governor in Council and not in the Legislative Assembly.

Against this autocratic power there is no appeal. It can be put into operation by a stroke of the pen. Indeed, it would seem to be accomplished more easily than that, merely by a rubber stamp inserting the section under which the Deportation Order is issued and signed by the Customs House Officer. As far as I can gather, though coming under the head of Governor in Council, the individual cases do not come up before him at all. The matter is decided *en bloc* and the door in Southern Rhodesia is closed more tightly even than the door in South Africa. All this has been done since the time that Southern Rhodesia received Responsible Government. This is the first way in which the legislators exercise their responsibility. Is it likely, I ask again, that Kenya will be more lenient towards Indian immigration than Southern Rhodesia has been? Will it not take still harsher steps than Southern Rhodesia, when once it gets responsible Government?

The Story of My Experiments With Truth

[BY M. K. GANDEI]

PART II.

Chapter IV.

THE FIRST SHOCK

Disappointed I left Bombay and went to Rajkot where I set up my own office. Here I got along moderately well. Drafting applications and memorials brought me in on an average Rs. 300 a month. For this work I had to thank influence rather than my own ability, for my brother's partner had a settled practice. All applications, etc., which were really, or to his mind, of an important character, he sent to big barristers. To my lot fell the applications to be drafted on behalf of his poor clients.

I must confess that here I had to compromise my principle of giving no commission, which in Bombay I had so scrupulously observed. I was told that conditions in the two cases were different, that whilst in Bombay commissions had to be paid to touts, here they had to be paid to Vakils, who briefed you; and that here as in Bombay all barristers, without exception, paid a percentage on their fees as commission. The argument of my brother was, for me, unanswerable. "You see" said he; "that I am in partnership with another Vakil. I shall always be inclined to make over to you all our cases that you can possibly deal with, and if you refuse to pay a commission to my partner, you are sure to embarrass me. As you and I have a joint establishment, your fee comes to our common coffers; and I automatically get a share. But what about my partner? Supposing he gave the same case to some other barrister, he would certainly get his commission from him." I was taken in by this plea, and felt that if I was to practice as a barrister I could not press my principle regarding com-

myself, or to put it bluntly, how I deceived myself. Let me add, however, that I do not remember ever to have given a commission in respect of any other case.

Though I thus began to make both ends meet, I got the first shock of my life about this time. I had heard what a British officer was like, but up to now had never been face to face with one.

My brother had been secretary and adviser to the late Ranasaheb of Porbander before he was installed on his "gadi" and hanging over his head at this time was the charge of having given wrong advice when in that office. The matter had gone to the Political Agent who was prejudiced against my brother. Now I had known this officer when in England and he may be said to have been fairly friendly to me. My brother thought that I should avail myself of the friendship and putting in a good word on his behalf try to disabuse the Political Agent of his prejudices. This I did not at all like. I should not, I thought, try to take advantage of the trifling acquaintance in England. If my brother was really at fault what use was my recommendation? If not, he should submit a petition in the proper course and, confident of his innocence, face the result. My brother did not cherish this advice. You do not know 'Kathiawad' he said. 'And you have yet to know the world. Only influence counts here. It is not proper for you, a brother, to shirk your duty, when you can clearly put in a good word about me to an officer you know.'

I could not refuse him. So I went to the officer much against my will. I knew I had no right to so approach him and was fully conscious that I was compromising my self-respect. But I sought an appointment and got it. I reminded him of the old acquaintance but I immediately saw that Kathiawad was different from England; that an officer on leave was not the same as an officer on duty. The Political Agent owned the acquaintance, but the reminder seemed to stiffen him. 'Surely you have not come here to abuse that acquaintance, have you,' appeared to be the meaning of that stiffness, and seemed to be written on his brow. Nevertheless, I opened my case. The sahib was impatient. 'Your brother is an intriguer. I want to hear nothing more from you. I have no time. If your brother has anything to say, let him apply through the usual channels.' The answer was enough, was proper. But selfishness is blind. I went on with my story. The sahib got up and said: 'You must go now.'

'But please hear me out' said I. That made him more angry. He called his peon and ordered him to show me the door. I was still ranting when the peon came in, placed his hands on my shoulders and put me out of the room.

The "sahib" went away as also the peon, and I departed fretting and fuming. I at once wrote out and sent over a note to this effect: 'You have insulted me. You have assaulted me through your peon. If you make no amends I shall have to proceed against you.'

Quick came the answer through his sowcar.

'You were rude to me. I asked you to go and you would not. I had no option but to order my peon to show the door. Even after he asked you to leave the office, you did not do so. He therefore had to use just enough force to send you out. You are at liberty to proceed as you wish.'

With this answer in my pocket, I came home crest-fallen, and told my brother all that had happened. He was grieved, but was at a loss as to how to console me. He spoke to his Vakil-friends. For I did not know how to proceed against the "sahib." Sir Pherozesah Mehta happened to be in Rajket at this time, having come for some case. But how could a junior barrister like me dare to see him? So I sent him the papers of my case, through

the Vakil who had engaged him, and begged for his advice. 'Tell Gandhi,' he said, 'such things are common experience of many Vakil and Barristers. He is still fresh from England and hot-blooded. He does not know British officers. If he would earn something and have an easy time here, let him tear up the note and pocket the insult. He will gain nothing by proceeding against the 'sahib' and on the contrary, will very likely ruin himself. Tell him he has yet to know life.' The advice was as bitter as poison to me but I had to swallow it. I pocketed the insult, but also profited since by it. Never again shall I place myself in such a predicament, never again shall I try to exploit friendships as I have. Thus said I to myself, and since then I have never been guilty of a breach of that determination. The shock changed the course of my life.

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