

# Indian Opinion

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## FAREWELL BANQUET

TO MR. K. P. KICHLU AND MISS C. GORDON

**A** FAREWELL banquet in honour of Mr. Kailas P. Kichlu, M. A., and Miss C. Gordon, B.Ed., educational experts who represented the Government of India at the Indian Education Enquiry Committee appointed by the Provincial Council of Natal, was given by the Natal Indian Congress at the Town Hall, Durban, on Wednesday June 27 at 7 p.m. The Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri P. C., Agent of the Government of India presided.

There were present about three hundred souls including a large number of distinguished European guests.

After the toast of H. M. the King, Mr. Sastri and the honoured guests of the evening were garlanded by Mr. Sorabjee Rustomjee, president of the Natal Indian Congress. As a token of their esteem Mr. Kichlu and Miss Gordon were both presented on behalf of the Natal Indian Congress with leather dressing cases.

Mr. Sastri then proposed the health of the guests. He referred to Mr. Kichlu as a distinguished member of the Indian Educational Service, who had filled some of the highest posts open to Indians in the Education Department. And when it was realised that he was for a time head of the Department in the United Provinces, which had a population of 47,000,000, and that that Department handled something like £1,250,000 a year, it would be seen that Mr. Kichlu's responsibility was not a light one.

Miss Gordon, he continued, was associated with one of the foremost and oldest ladies' training institutions in India. It was situated in Madras, and had gained the love and the gratitude of the people there. In sending their guests to South Africa, the Government of India had paid due respect to the needs of the Indians of the Union.

For seven months, continued Mr. Sastri, Miss Gordon and Mr. Kichlu had given their labour to South Africa, and had proved of the greatest assistance to the Natal Education Commission, which recently concluded its labours. After service in Natal, they went to the Transvaal to inquire into education there, so that they could now be said to have done what they were deputed to do namely, to assist to the best of their abilities the local Government to put Indian education on a sound basis.

Proceeding, Mr. Sastri declared that the Commission which had recently sat at Maritzburg had already borne good fruit. Its report had been published, and if the suggestions were acted upon, it was sure to be of the greatest benefit to the Indian community. The members of that Commission were deserving of gratitude of the Indians for the patience they displayed in listening to their witnesses, and for the consideration they gave to the evidence which was led.

With the new spirit which now prevailed Mr. Sastri held that the Indian community could look for rapid advancement in the direction of education, and that in the course of a few years the whole of the Indian community in Natal would feel that their children were getting proper facilities.

Mr. Kichlu and Miss Gordon replied. Mr. Kichlu

appealed to his Indian brethren to strive to get a system of technical education for their children, in addition to the other facilities they enjoyed. It would be a difficult matter to provide technical education for Indians in South Africa, but they had to see if those difficulties could not be surmounted. He suggested that local students should be sent to India to take University courses and fit themselves as leaders of their people in the Union. Such a scheme would go a long way towards helping themselves along the road of educational progress.

Mr. Albert Christopher proposed the toast of the "Capetown Agreement." In the course of his remarks he said, under the Agreement it was said that those Indians who wished to remain as a permanent population of the Union were to adopt what was called the Western standard of civilisation. It was difficult to give a correct interpretation of that standard. If it meant the standard of civilisation that was adopted by the Europeans in this country then, said the speaker, Indians were not given an equal opportunity to live up to that standard. The speaker complained that there was a talk of equal pay for equal work but Indians were debarred from the Trade Unions and were given no facilities to qualify as efficient workers. After referring to the dark side of the Agreement the speaker said the greatest advantage derived by the Agreement was the presence amongst us of the Rt. Hon. Mr. Sastri. By his talent and winning personality he has done a great deal to dissipate the misunderstanding between the two communities. He expressed the hope that the Agreement would result in the extinction of that misunderstanding and the growth of a better understanding.

Mr. Karl Gundelfinger in reply said that the Gentleman's Agreement had resulted in bringing about a change of atmosphere. He referred to the words of Mahatma Gandhi who, expressing his views on the Agreement had said: "the compromise is acceptable not so much for what has been achieved as for the almost sudden transformation of the atmosphere in South Africa from one of remorseless hostility towards Indians to that of a generous toleration." There was much that could be achieved by a change of atmosphere, said the speaker, that could not be achieved by facts. Referring to the education of Indians the speaker laid stress on the necessity of character building and moral education.

Mr. R. K. Khan proposed the toast of "Our European Guests." Much of the trouble, said the speaker, had arisen owing to misunderstanding. The European did not understand the Indian viewpoint nor did the Indian the European. That unfortunate state of affairs has been greatly improved by the presence and personality of the Rt. Hon. Mr. Sastri. He hoped for the day when both communities would understand each other better and there would be an end to the Indian question.

Mr. J. H. Nicholson responding to the toast, said that the Indian question was by no means the least difficult of all our questions, but a change of atmosphere would go much towards solving it. It was the nature of the British people, said the speaker,

that when they saw a person striving on his own they would assist him. If Indians would likewise be seen helping themselves they would find the British people coming to their help. He agreed with Mr. Gundelfinger that with literary education, moral education and the building of character was also essential.

Mr. Sorabjee Rustomjee then proposed the toast of "the Chairman," and in the course of his remarks said that Mr. Sastri's name had become a household word to us all. By his amazing personality Mr. Sastri was able to convert one who totally differed with him. The speaker hoped Mr. Sastri would not only prolong his stay but would always stay with us.

Mr. Sastri thanked the audience for the tribute paid to him on their behalf by their spokesman Mr. Rustomjee.

The proceedings terminated with the singing of the National Anthem.

[NOTE:—The full speeches of Mr. Sastri and Mr. Kichlu will appear in our next week's issue.—Ed. I.O.]

## Notes and News

THE Nationalist Party Women's Congress, which was opened by the Minister of Justice Mr. Tielman Roos, last Wednesday, June 20, at the Empire Theatre, Durban, discussed among other things the following items of their agenda:—

By the Head Committee:—

"Strict segregation of white and black in the towns and cities."

"That marriage between black and white be prohibited."

These resolutions were discussed in connection with the Vryheid proposal:—

"That coloured and natives be placed in locations."

Speaking on the resolutions, Mrs. Jansen said that the matter was not really one for Town Councils. On this matter they really had no public support. She mentioned the conditions at Maritzburg and Durban where the poorer classes had no opportunity or upliftment due to their smaller salaries. They were forced down to the level of coloureds and natives entirely through the economic situation. On the question of mixed marriages she stressed the undesirability of such a state of affairs, instancing cases in Durban where Europeans had stated that it is cheaper to maintain a coloured or native wife than a European wife. A law prohibiting marriage between black and white was very necessary. If no segregation for natives and coloureds was practicable then they should segregate the Europeans. It was decided that a deputation should be sent to the Prime Minister on this question.

In speaking to a resolution by the Head Committee, "That Indians should be placed under the same sanitary regulations as Europeans," Mrs. Jansen touched on the insanitary conditions of the Durban Corporation area, where there is no control whatsoever. If the Indian desires to live in South Africa then he should be made to conform with European standards. She thought this matter would be one to come under the aegis of the Commission to be appointed by the Minister of the Interior, and in which the Durban Corporation will be represented. It was resolved to send the resolution to the Minister of the Interior and to the Provincial Executive. Vryheid proposed a resolution asking for a law prohibiting the driving of motor-cars by coloured or natives. Mrs. Jansen said that the Law Courts in the Transvaal threw this out as being

*ultra vires*. She mentioned an article in the *Natal Witness* on this matter and a foot-note which stated that no difference should be made between black and white in this respect.

In connection with a Private Ordinance to amend the Transvaal General Dealers' Control Ordinance of 1926 which was proposed to be introduced in the Transvaal Provincial Council by Mr. Schonken M.P.C., with a view to empowering licensing authorities to refuse a licence without assigning any reason, we understand that the said Ordinance has been withdrawn by Mr. Schonken.

On Saturday 30th inst., at 2 p.m. the Right Honourable V. S. Sastri will preside at St. Xavier's Govt.-aided Indian School Exhibition of pupils' work and distribution of prizes.

## FAREWELL!

MR. KAILAS P. KICHLU and Miss C. Gordon the educational experts representing the Government of India on the Indian Education Enquiry Committee will be leaving the shores of South Africa on Monday morning. They have well spent their seven months in South Africa. While we do not wish to minimise in any way the work of the Indian Government representatives who have come to this country in the past in connection with the Indian question, we would say this, without the slightest hesitation, that the work that has been done by the Indian Educational Experts has been the most practical of all and the good fruits of their labours we are already beginning to experience. It may be said that it is the Education Enquiry Committee that is to be thanked for the benefit we are able to derive. While that is so it should hardly be forgotten that the Committee could never have come to the conclusions it has, had it not been for the convincing evidence laid before it by the Indian community, and most of all, had it not been for the very important memorandum prepared by Mr. K. P. Kichlu in which Mr. Kichlu has proved to the hilt the injustices done to the Indian community in regard to their education by the Provincial Administration. Although the comparison between the many practical suggestions made by Mr. Kichlu in his historical document and the report of the Education Enquiry Committee and the steps taken by the Natal Provincial Council towards improving the educational conditions of the Indian community is rather disappointing, Mr. Kichlu, we believe, is the first representative of the Government of India who will leave the shores of South Africa

with the satisfaction of seeing with his own eyes the fruits of his labour. They may be poor at present but let us hope that they will be richer in time to come.

While both Mr. Kichlu and Miss Gordon are Government officials they have by their simple and amiable ways won the hearts of the Indian people. They were above the ordinary officialdom and mixed freely amongst Indians and entered into their very life. Thus their presence in this country was doubly beneficial to us. Firstly, because they were helpful towards improving our educational conditions and, secondly, we had the privilege of knowing and coming into intimate contact with some kind friends from the Motherland.

Mr. Kichlu has not spent a minute in vain. He had come in connection with the educational conditions in Natal but, we understand, he has inquired also into the condition prevailing in the Transvaal and has prepared a very important and useful memorandum which, while it may not be published, will be of immense guidance to the education department. We wish Mr. Kichlu and Miss Gordon farewell and assure them that they will carry away with them the best wishes of the Indian community of the whole of the Union.

### INDIAN BOY SCOUTS

THE Scout Movement among Indians in South Africa, which was turned down by the Scout Authorities and Sir Arthur Pickford, the Overseas Scout Commissioner who was then visiting this country some 5 years ago, has been revived in the Transvaal by the Rev. Bernard L. E. Sigamoney with the Rt. Hon'ble V. Srinivasa Sastri as Patron.

We congratulate Rev. Sigamoney upon the work he has undertaken. He is a worker in many causes and fearless in championing causes which are not free from difficulties. He finds the Transvaal Scout Authorities are not sympathetic. They are against Indians and other non-Europeans in South Africa becoming Scouts. But he feels, as all those who are interested in the Scout Movement must feel, that the Scout Authorities at Headquarters cannot, if the Scout Law has any meaning at all, consistently refuse the benefits of the Scout Law to any who would join it. In European as in Asiatic countries the Scout

Movement is becoming a household word. Only in this country, the Scout Authorities have so far been reluctant to extend to Indians a movement that is universally recognised as the best character-building movement that knows no race nor colour and appeals equally to boys and girls.

We have no doubt workers in the Scout Movement will work as hard for Indian Girl Guides as they will for Indian Boy Scouts.

Rev. Sigamoney is keen on Seaside holidays for countryborn Indian children and as a beginning he is bringing some 40 pathfinders—Indian Boy Scouts—who have never seen the sea to Durban on the 4th July. They will be the guests of the Natal Indian Congress and the pathfinders will most probably camp on the Indian Recreation Grounds.

We wish Rev. Sigamoney, an old Durban boy, and his merry pathfinders a pleasant holiday in Durban.

Well done Rover Scout "Sigs" ✓

### THE PASSING AWAY OF A PROMISING YOUTH

IT is with deep regret that we have to note the sad death of R. Jegathesan Moodley, youngest son of Mrs. V. R. R. Moodley, at the early age of twenty-three which took place on Tuesday night at 10-30 after a week's illness. The late Jegathesan Moodley who was working for Messrs. Pather & Co., now for some years was a very promising young man. Though he was not a committee member of the Natal Indian Congress he was always an active silent worker and rendered services without any remuneration. His ambition was great not knowing that his life was but short. Owing to adversity he had not the opportunity of receiving educational qualifications to his satisfaction and it was his keen desire to go to England to study for the Bar. He was devising means whereby he could maintain himself and at the same time pursue his studies, but his desire remained unfulfilled until the end. It was remarkable how in his young age he had taken up responsibilities and discharged them with admirable success. The late young Moodley was Secretary of the Young Men's Vedic Society, assistant secretary of the M. K. Gandhi Library Committee, and his latest office was the secretaryship of the

recently formed Vedic Lawn Tennis Club. It was from this Club that he had returned last Sunday after a game of Tennis that he took to his bed and never recovered. The largely attended funeral which took place on Thursday afternoon was a proof of how he had won by his ever smiling face and his obliging ways the hearts of his compatriots. To his sorrowing mother and other members of the family we tender our deepest sympathy in their tragic loss.

## Natal Indian Teachers' Society's Reception

The Peter's Cafe Lounge was the venue of an interesting function on Sunday, June 23, the occasion being a farewell dinner given by the Natal Indian Teachers' Society in honour of Mr. Kichlu, M. A., and Miss Corrie Gordon, B.Ed.

With the exception of the Rt. Hon. V. Sastri, P.C., and Mr. J. W. Tyson, I. C. S., the gathering was confined to officials and members of the Natal Indian Teachers' Society.

Mr. Anand Rai, the President of the Society, who presided, referred to the work of Mr. Kichlu and Miss Gordon in Natal.

He stated that Mr. Sastri's presence lent special grace to the function. The thanks of the Society were conveyed to Mr. Sastri on his establishing a Teachers' Training College and High School in Durban.

In referring to the efforts of the educational experts, Mr. Rai conveyed the appreciation of the Society for the work they had accomplished, and stated that the memorandum submitted by them on the various aspects of Indian education in this Province to the Indian Education Enquiry Committee would remain a valuable and historic document.

No better choice could have been made than Mr. Kichlu for his onerous duties, and they would also remember Miss Gordon's valuable services. They were worthy representatives of the people of India, and if they, as teachers, were to derive any benefit in the future they would remember that they owed at least a part of it to Mr. Kichlu's and Miss Gordon's efforts on their behalf.

In conclusion, Mr. Rai, on behalf of the Natal Indian Teachers' Society, wished Miss Gordon and Mr. Kichlu a pleasant voyage to India and many years of health.

### Mr. Kichlu's Reply

Mr. Kichlu, in responding, spoke as a brother teacher, as he was himself an ex-teacher. It was a pleasure to Miss Gordon and himself to find themselves amongst a body of teachers. He thanked the Natal Indian Teachers' Society on behalf of Miss Gordon and himself for the kindness shown to them and the hospitality rendered.

He eulogised the work of the Teachers' Society and asked them to continue in their efforts to bring up Indian education to the desired level. The Society had done much in the past, he added, and he had every confidence that it will continue its laudable work.

He especially thanked the President, Mr. A. Rai, the Secretary, Mr. E. Thomas, and Mr. E. J. Choonoo for the assistance given him in supplying facts and figures connected with Indian education.

Referring to the Indian Education Enquiry

Committee, he spoke in glowing terms of the evidence led by the Teachers' Society and the statement presented, on which they were complimented by Mr. J. Dyson, M. E. C., the Chairman of the Enquiry Committee.

The rendering of a few songs by Miss Clara Martin and Mr. P. R. Singh brought a successful function to a close.—*Natal Mercury*

## ✓ Mr. Sastri On Pan-African Exhibition

The Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri has expressed the following views to a representative of the *Natal Advertiser* in connection with the determination of the Publicity Association to take the first real step towards the staging of a Pan-African exhibition in this country in five years' time:—

"I am no business man, nor have I ever taken a hand in the administration of public affairs. No practical guidance or advice can be expected of me in such a project as an international exhibition. But I can appreciate the greatness of the idea to those who are trying to realise it.

"The pessimist and the cynic will be there, and the man of the small mind, who cannot follow where others lead. In Hindu mythology there are evil spirits whose nature it is to oppose the good and who cannot be happy unless they are doing all they can to hinder it.

"The Editor of the *Natal Advertiser* and his sympathisers must have enough faith in the beneficence of the thought that has been vouchsafed to them, and in its ultimate success to treat such critics and friends with forbearance and good humour and press on towards their goal.

"Among the expressions of opinion that have already appeared one sees the misgiving that a Pan-African exhibition may prove beyond the resources and organising capacity of a young country. Now a young country must grow, and in order to grow must educate itself in the tasks of nationhood. A profound philosopher has said that one of the secrets of the art of education is to set the scholar now and then a task just beyond his powers. Of course, it must not be so far beyond as to cause him dismay. But if it is just beyond, all his previous knowledge and experience are called into full play, and all his latent powers are exercised as well as discovered.

"Maybe in essaying to organise an exhibition of Africa, its achievements and potentialities, the Union will know herself, and how best to realise herself."

At the annual meeting of the Durban Corporation Barracks Vishnu Temple Free Night School held in the School Hall on the 3rd June, 1928, the following officials were elected for the ensuing year:—Patrons Messrs. A. A. Peters and N. R. Padayachee, President Mr. P. A. Pandithar, Chairman Mr. G. P. Nair, Vice Chairman Mr. R. P. Naransamy, Treasurer Mr. M. D. Pillay, Hon. Sec. Mr. M. B. Pillay, Assistant Secretary Mr. M. S. Govinder, Trustees Messrs P. M. Pillay and V. M. Govinder, Sub and Executive Committee Messrs. R. P. Naransamy Chairman, K. Naidoo, S. Basdeo, A. Nair, S. Naidoo, K. K. Pillay, M. P. Pillay Secretary, M. S. Govinder Assistant Secretary, M. D. Pillay Treasurer, and P. M. Pillay, V. M. Govinder Trustees; School Management and Finance Committee: Messrs. G. P. Nair Chairman, R. Barblall, M. Govindasamy, S. Basdeo, Narasiah, R. P. Naransamy, M. P. Pillay Secretary, M. S. Govindas Assistant Secretary, M. D. Pillay Treasurer, and P. M. Pillay, V. M. Govinder Trustees.

## News About India

We cull the following three notes from the *Leader* (Allahabad):—

There is one person who, though not an Indian by birth, loves India so dearly and labours for her so strenuously as to put born Indians to shame. That person is Dr. Annie Besant. At the age of nearly 81, she works with an unflagging zeal, an indefatigable energy, an unconquerable optimism, a youthful enthusiasm and an undying faith, which baffles description. She believes in India's destiny. She wills that India should be free. And she labours to this end ceaselessly and unselfishly. She is again going to England to work in the furtherance of India's cause. More strength to her elbow. May her noble mission be crowned with success.

The Soviet press has described Britain as 'the arch-robber.' There is not much love lost between the British and Bolsheviks who have been addressing each other in such terms of endearment as murderers, assassins, robbers, thieves, etc. The British press may just remind the self-righteous Bolsheviks that the Soviet has repudiated foreign debts amounting to such an insignificant figure as £1,782,544,291. The Bolsheviks have seized the assets of the Tsarist regime but have disclaimed its liabilities. Perhaps they saved their conscience by arguing that they only robbed the arch-robbers.

'A Mem Sahib of 67' who has just returned to England after four years' sojourn in this country relating her experiences in the *Morning Post* says, 'I can assure you that all the masses are most loyal to the British Raj and desire no other.' She says she frequently cycled for miles with her luggage in a bullock cart and not a soul with her except the driver of the bullock cart, and every bullock cart driver took the greatest care of the little English Mem-Sahib and never attempted blackmail, thus showing their respect for the British Raj.' And how did the Mem-Sahib return the kindness shown to her by the people of this country? She says she has left India 'because I will not be under black collectors, sub-collectors, etc.' One would not be sorry that she left; indeed, one would be glad if all those who would not like to be 'under black collectors, sub-collectors, etc.,' vacated the country. But even this small insistance would show how the political domination of one country by another, besides being against the interests of the subject country, spoils also the members of the ruling race.

Addressing a public meeting at Ahmedabad Mr. Subhash Chandra Bose said that the only criterion of their fitness for freedom was the will to be free which should be roused by an intensive propaganda in villages. India was in a stronger position to-day than in 1921, Europe and Great Britain were much weaker economically and politically than in 1921. If they took advantage of it at this opportune moment their progress would be rapid. The beginning that was made with the boycott of the Simon Commission should be followed by the boycott of British goods. They were ready to boycott all foreign cloth if the Indian millowners assured them that they would not act as they did during the Swadeshi agitation. Despite discouraging reports from Mahatma Gandhi, he had a lingering hope in the Indian millowners that they would co-operate with the people. Two months' propaganda in Bengal had led the merchants there to cancel their contracts. What would be the effect of a campaign carried on throughout the country for 12 months? By organising the country for boycott of foreign cloth the country

would be prepared for civil disobedience. They meant to carry the struggle to the bitter end if their demands, which were reasonable and legitimate, were not conceded by England.

In his closing address to Maharashtra Provincial Conference held at Poona recently, Mr. Subhash Bose congratulated the Conference on its successful session which had restored unity within the ranks of Congressmen in the Province and agreed to a common policy and programme. Most of the trouble in the country seemed to him due to the fact that they forgot that there were more points of agreement among Indians than those of difference. It was, therefore, the emphasis on the point of agreement which was the necessity of the moment. Once the country went forward with work along the lines of a general agreement, the points of difference would disappear altogether. There was, therefore, only one method of restoring unity, namely, to begin work jointly and immediately. The responsibility of youth of both sexes in this work was great, and his message to youth was to pay the price of complete independence, to pay sixteen annas for sixteen annas of Swaraj to consecrate their whole life to the work of setting the country ablaze with the desire for freedom. A movement was afoot in England to make it appear that the boycott of the Simon Commission was crumbling. This movement was with a view to influence international opinion and the most effective answer was for the country to carry on the vigorous boycott of British goods. This boycott should be supplemented by Swadeshi. —*Tribune*.

## The Story of My Experiments With Truth

[BY M. K. GANDHI]

### Part IV. Chapter XIX.

#### THE PHOENIX SETTLEMENT

I talked the whole thing over with Mr. West, described to him the effect *Unto this Last* had produced on my mind, and proposed that *Indian Opinion* should be removed to a farm, on which every one should labour drawing the same living wage, and attending to the press work in spare time. Mr. West approved of the proposal, and £3 was laid down as monthly allowance, irrespective of colour or nationality.

But it was a question whether all the ten or more workers in the press would agree to go and settle on an out of the way farm, and be satisfied with a bare maintenance. We therefore proposed that those who could not fit in with the scheme should continue to draw their salaries and gradually try to reach the goal of becoming members of the settlement.

I talked to the workers in terms of this proposal. It did not appeal to Sjt. Madanjit who considered my proposal to be foolish and opined that it would ruin a venture on which he had staked his all, the workers would bolt, *Indian Opinion* would come to a stop, and the press would have to be closed down.

Among the men working in the press was also Chhaganlal Gandhi, one of my cousins. I had broached the proposal to him at the same time as to Mr. West. He had a wife and children, but he had from childhood chosen to be trained and work under me. He had full faith in me. So without any argument he agreed to the proposal, and has been with me ever since. There was the *Machineist*

Govindswami who also fell in with the proposal. The rest did not join the scheme, but agreed to go wherever I removed the press.

I do not think I took more than two days to fix up these things with the men. Thereafter I at once advertised for a piece of land situated near a railway station in the vicinity of Durban. An offer came in respect of Phoenix. Mr. West and I went to inspect the estate, and within a week purchased twenty acres of land. It had a nice little spring and a few orange and mango trees. Adjoining to it was a piece of 80 acres which had many more fruit trees and a dilapidated cottage. We purchased this too, both costing a thousand pounds.

The late Mr. Rustomjee was always my help in such enterprises of mine. He liked the project. He placed at my disposal secondhand corrugated iron sheets of a big godown and other building material, with which we started work. Some Indian carpenters and masons who had worked with me in the Boer War helped me in erecting a shed for the press. The structure which was 75' x 50' was ready in almost a month. Mr. West and others at great personal risk stayed with the carpenters and masons. The place which was uninhabited and thickly overgrown with grass was infested with snakes, and obviously dangerous to live in. At first all lived under canvas. The main building was ready in a month. We carted most of our things to Phoenix in about a week. It was thirteen miles from Durban, and two and a half miles from Phoenix station.

Only one issue of *Indian Opinion* had to be printed outside in the *Mercury Press*.

I now tried to carry with me and draw to Phoenix those relations and friends who had come with me from India to try their fortune and who were engaged in some business or other. They had come in search of wealth and it was a difficult job to persuade them, but some agreed. Of these I can single out only Maganlal Gandhi's name. The others went back to business. Maganlal Gandhi left his business for good to cast in his lot with me, and by his ability, sacrifice and devotion he stands foremost amongst my original co-workers in my ethical experiments, and as a self-taught handicraftsman his place is unique among them.

Thus the Phoenix Settlement was started in 1904, and in spite of numerous odds *Indian Opinion* continues to be published at the Settlement.

But the initial difficulties, the changes made, and the hopes and disappointments demand a separate chapter.

## Chapter XX.

### THE FIRST NIGHT

It was no easy thing to issue the first number of *Indian Opinion* from Phoenix. Had I not taken two precautions, the first issue would have to be dropped or delayed. I had little inclination to have an engine to work the press. I had thought that hand-power would be more in keeping with the atmosphere where agricultural work too was to be done by the hand. But as it had not appeared feasible, we had installed an oil-engine. I had however suggested to West to have something handy to fall back upon in case the engine failed. He had therefore a wheel which could be worked by the hand. The size of the paper was that of a daily and was considered unsuitable in an out of the way place like Phoenix. So it was reduced to the foolscap size, in order that in case of emergency copies might be struck off with the help of a treadle. In the initial stages, we had all to keep late hours before the day of publication of the paper. Every one, young and old, had to help in folding the sheets, and we usually finished our work between ten o'clock and midnight. But

the first night was unforgettable. The pages were locked up but the engine refused to work. We had got out from Durban an engineer to put up the engine and set it going. He and West tried their hardest, but to no avail. Every one was anxious. West in despair at last came to me, with eyes wet, and said, 'The engine will not work, and I am afraid we cannot issue the paper in time.'

'If that is the case, we cannot help it. But it is no use shedding tears over it. Let us do whatever else it is humanly possible to do. What about the hand-wheel?' I said comforting him.

'Where have we the men to work it? We are not enough to cope with it. It requires relays of four men each, and our own men are all tired.'

Building work had not yet been finished, and so the carpenters were still with us. They were sleeping on the press floor. I said pointing to them, 'But can't we make use of these carpenters? And we may have a whole night of work. I think this device is still open to us.'

'I dare not wake up the carpenters. And our men are really too tired,' said West.

'Well, that's for me to negotiate,' said I.

'Then it is possible that we may get through the work,' said West.

I woke up the carpenters and requested their co-operation. They needed no pressure. They said, 'If we cannot be called upon in an emergency what use are we? You rest yourselves and we will work the wheel. For us it is easy work.' Our own men were of course ready.

West was greatly delighted and started singing a hymn as we set to work. I partnered the carpenters, and all the rest joined turn by turn, and thus we went on until 7 a.m. There was still quite a lot to do. So I suggested to West that the engineer might now be asked to get up and try again to start the engine, so that if he succeeded we might finish in time.

West woke him up, and he immediately went into the engine room. And lo and behold! the engine worked almost as soon as he started it. The whole press rang with peals of joy. 'How could this be? How is it that all our labours last night were of no avail, and this morning it has been set going as though there was nothing wrong with it?' I enquired.

'It is difficult to say,' said West or the engineer, I forget who. 'Machines also sometimes seem to behave as though they required rest like us.'

For me, the failure of the engine had come as a test for us all, and its working in the nick of time was the fruit of our honest and earnest labours.

The copies were dispatched in time, and every one was happy.

This initial insistence ensured regularity of the paper, and created an atmosphere of self-reliance in Phoenix. There came a time when we deliberately gave up the use of the engine and worked with the hand-power only. Those were, to my mind, the days of the highest moral uplift for Phoenix.

## WANTED

A Librarian and Assistant Librarian.  
Apply for further particulars to:—

The Secretary,

M. K. Gandhi Library and Parsee Rustomjee  
Hall Committee,  
140 Ouden Street, Durban.