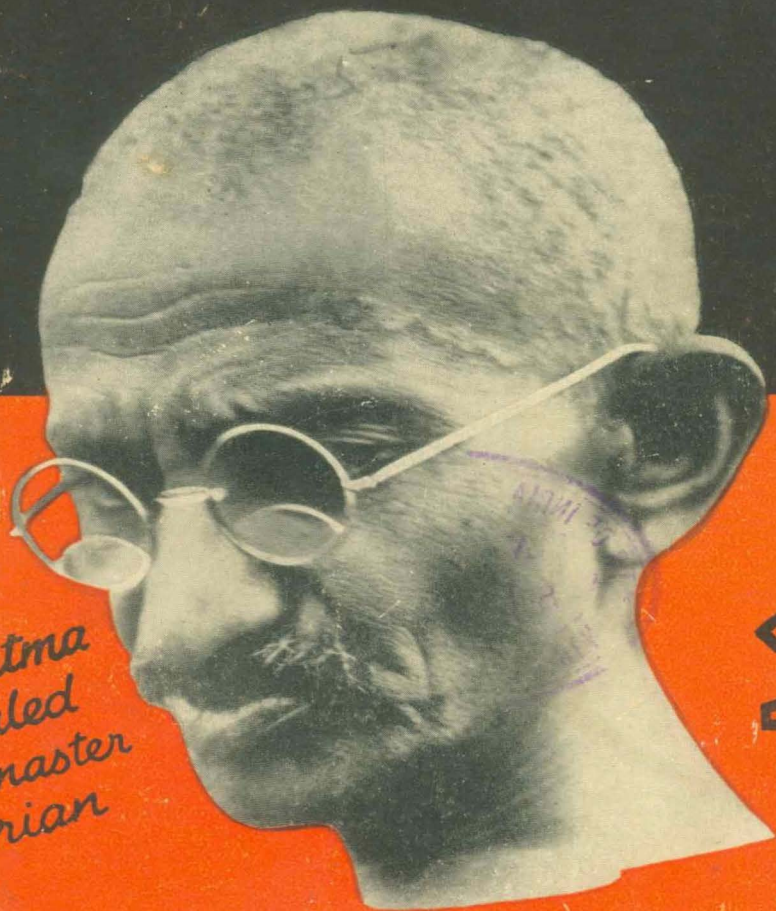


GANDHI

AND THE

INDIAN PROBLEM



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**GANDHI AND THE
INDIAN PROBLEM**

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by

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DEDICATION

TO THE SEVERAL INDIANS I HAVE KNOWN
WHO WERE IN EVERY RESPECT FITTED FOR
SWARAJ

PREFACE

THIS work has been rather hurriedly written from the notes for a book on a larger scale, which may yet be written, in order to meet the interest aroused by the Round Table Conference of September, 1931. I trust that inaccuracies will be forgiven, and at the same time brought to my notice.

I have obtained the bulk of my material from Gandhi's own very voluminous and illuminating writings, but I have also obtained valuable notes from the writings of the Revs. Andrews and Doke and Messrs. Romain Rolland, Fülöp-Miller, C. F. Bryant, E. Thompson, Prithwis Chandra Ray, K. T. Paul, and a large number of other Indian writers. If there are perversions from the original in some of the quoted passages it may possibly be due to retranslations from the French and German.

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INTRODUCTION

GANDHI—one pronounces it long to pronounce with barn or darn*—"that toothless, scrawny, half-naked wisp of a man", as an American lately described him, and whom we see so often depicted as seated cross-legged, beaming through big spectacles, bat-eared, with shaven skull and a straggling lock at its crown, probably occupies the centre of the world stage of publicity as no one else does. In England we perhaps regard him merely as a gadfly of a particularly irritating character: we lose sight of the interest of his method of non-violent revolution, which is such a new thing in world history. Many consider that he and Lenin have initiated what may be a new era on the earth. Both have had similar objects—the raising of the masses, but their methods have been poles apart. One believed in war and machinery; the other in peace and a return to a Golden Age of hand implements.

Gandhi is a great man, a very great man. I am not sure that Rabindranath Tagore, who finds himself in conflict with several of Gandhi's ideas, is not right when he rates him as the greatest man in India and perhaps in the world. But that is only if one measures greatness by unselfishness and selfless-ness. Judged by those standards, I think he is easily the greatest man alive to-day or who has lived since Christ.

At least I have heard or read of no other in history who seems to have been so utterly selfless. Yet such altruism is not necessarily a good thing in the world of politics. Indeed all history goes to prove the contrary. It is the good earnest men who have done the most harm in government: the bad, light-hearted men who have often governed best. James II and Charles II in our own history are often quoted as examples of this proposition.

On the other hand it is very hard to judge from too close

*The flat a so common in English practically does not exist in India, and every a is either long like barn or short like u; as in along, around.

a standpoint. If one comes down to the Amazon through dense jungle, one may often find it flowing in exactly the opposite direction to that which one expected. It may be just an eddy, yet so big that it seems to be the current of the main river. *Il faut reculer pour pour mieux sauter*—one must draw back to jump better, has a general application. I doubt if Gandhi knows it, but he may be being used for a higher and different purpose than that of which he is dimly aware. He is not a very clever man, and he seems to suffer badly from the Indian kink.

All nations have some kink in their national character, and doubtless foreigners who chance to read this will start eagerly forward to state what our particular kinks are. However, here we are concerned with the Indian kink. It seems to be a lack of the power to co-ordinate facts which are in themselves quite correctly observed. The Indian has wonderful microscopic powers but indifferent telescopic vision. The point is well illustrated by an incident related, I think, by Mr. Garratt in his "An Indian Commentary". An Indian university graduate quite correctly gave the dates of Alexander the Great's invasion of India as 325 B.C., and Mohamed's flight to Medina as A.D. 622, which probably only a few British graduates could do—and then blandly stated, in reply to a further question, that Alexander's religion was Islam! One comes across this kink constantly in India. I think it is bound up with their lack of historical sense. India produced no native historians previous to the Mahomedan invasions and empires of the eleventh century and onwards. I strongly suspect, though I have not gone into the matter, that most of the Moslem historians from that time have been more of invader stock than Indian. Gandhi betrays this lack constantly. He has wonderful powers of getting at the truth in individual matters, but very poor ones of co-ordinating such truth with other truths equally correctly observed. This makes for the tragedy of his life. He does so earnestly wish for the welfare of mankind, and particularly of his own beloved India, yet so far he seems to have brought her far more trouble than peace.

Gandhi has been described as a saint strayed into politics. He is not really interested in politics. He is, essentially, a social reformer, as Mr. Montagu recognized when he met him in 1917, and as a social reformer his work has been of

tremendous value. He has done, perhaps, more than any man so far towards the removal of untouchability and to hasten the downfall of the innumerable caste barriers that so hamper India. He has done much to raise the position of women. His spinning wheel propaganda, absurd as it seems at first sight, has really a very substantial, useful and practical foundation, and may yet come to be recognized as one of the greatest things done for India's regeneration. But excellence in the field of social reform is no training or guarantee in the field of politics. Gandhi is a great believer in the maxim that that State is best governed which is least governed. He has said that he has found it possible to be least governed under the British Empire. He has summed up the characteristics of his people often very correctly. Only as late as December, 1928, as I relate in Chapter IX, he realized that they were still gravely lacking in the elementary qualities necessary for independence. Yet fifteen months later he plunges into the stormy sea of civil disobedience with a view to obtaining that same independence, and now has it for his avowed object.

He is an extraordinarily humble little man. He has no illusions himself about the many great qualities claimed for him by the followers of his, *plus royalistes que le roi*. I think of these late years he has lost much confidence in himself. He saw his great non-co-operation movement of 1920-21 crumble to ruins within a couple of years. He has seen the Hindu-Moslem unity, for which he strove so hard and which seemed almost to be a reality in those years, now farther off than ever. Only his purely social movement, in regard to untouchability, goes well. It alone would be a sufficient achievement for any man. But his campaigns have had very solid bye-results. All of them we cannot yet appreciate, more especially as enthusiasm is easily raised and easily subsides in India. But he has undoubtedly given her a national consciousness of which she before had only a glimmering, if it existed at all. He has given her confidence in herself. He has attempted the task, probably never attempted before, of unifying a continent, for India is a continent, not a country. He may not succeed, but at least he will have laid very solid foundations for the future, and laid them in spite of obstacles probably bigger than exist elsewhere.

A great Englishman once said of the Sublime Porte that if you wished to forecast what would be its probable line of action in any given circumstances, you had first to eliminate what would be in its own best interests to do, what it seemed likely it would do, and what it seemed possible it could do. What it would do would then lie outside of those probabilities and possibilities. The same thing may almost be said to apply to Gandhi. He has the Indian kink I have mentioned in a very considerable degree, and this must prevent his intelligence as being rated first class. But his intelligence is still great—singularly great in the microscopical line, and he stands so high in altruism and energy and courage that the mass of mankind can easily be excused for overlooking this very dangerous deficiency which, next to altruism, is perhaps the most important feature of a man's character.

GANDHI AND THE INDIAN PROBLEM

CHAPTER I

YOUTH

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI was born on October 2nd, 1869, at Porbandar. It is a quiet little white-walled city on the sea coast, capital of a small native state of the same name, lying with numerous other native states in that old-world bit of western India, the peninsula of Kathiawar. It is well off the beaten track of tourists and others, and practically the whole of it, nearly the size of Ireland, is native state territory with a bare twenty to thirty Europeans living there. Many strange things are found in it which are not met with in India: the wild ass, white blackbuck, the only lions in Asia, the only negro colony (I believe) in Asia, curious Jain temples on the rare rocky hills, beautiful in colour and line. It is a quiet, restful land, with a lingering beauty in spite of its flat treelessness, and its inhabitants are free from that half-servile, half-resentful attitude so common in the rest of India.

The Gandhis belonged to the Vaishya, or trader class, the third of the four main orders of Hinduism. Gandhi has been described as low-caste, but this is scarcely correct, for these three higher orders rank together as the thrice born as against the fourth order, the Shudras, who are not "thrice born". On the other hand the Vaishyas are the middle class, and nearly always show a distinct trace of admixture of Dravidian blood. In the Gandhis this seems fairly strong, for he is very dark in colour, whereas the pure Aryans are as fair as Europeans, being, indeed, of the same stock.

Gandhi's grandfather, father and uncle were all in turn diwan, or prime minister of Porbandar State, and small though it was—a bare feudal estate of some fifty villages—its ruler

had the powers of life and death in his hands. Of the grandfather the story is told that having been dismissed by the chief, he sought and found employment under another prince. Him he would only salute with his left hand, ordinarily a deadly insult, but in such a case there could be no reason for an insult, and the prince asked the reason. The loyal old man replied that, though in disgrace with the court of Porbandar, his right hand with his loyalty belonged to his former prince.

The young Gandhi spent the first seven years of his life in this quiet little port where the shoaling waters no longer allow any but the most shallow draught of ships to come near. The house, described as a rambling four-storeyed building situated between two Hindu temples to Krishna and Rama, great figures in Hinduism whom Gandhi constantly refers to. The house still belongs, I understand, to his elder brother. Gandhi himself can remember nothing of his days there except of "having learnt in company with other boys to abuse our teacher, which would strongly suggest that my intellect must have been sluggish, and my memory raw."

When he was seven his father, like his grandfather before, fell from favour, and went with his family to Rajkot, lying a hundred miles to the north-east, then only connected by road, where he obtained employment with another native state. Here Gandhi went first to the vernacular school till he was ten, and then to the high school till he matriculated at seventeen. He was neither brilliant nor even clever, he says, and the fact that he managed to secure a few prizes was due to their being restricted to boys of certain districts and other qualifications. He says he had a distaste for any other reading than his school books, and that he suddenly found Euclid quite easy when he realized that it was pure logic. He gives a list of the subjects he had studied a good deal later on in his autobiography, and it is very significant that he omits any mention of history. There is little doubt but that he did study history at high school, but that he did not remember it is evidence of the lack of historical sense among Hindus which many writers have commented on, and has a strong bearing on the whole situation in India.

Gandhi was exceedingly shy at school and used to run home, evading all games and society of his fellows, as soon as he could. When an effort was made to keep him there for

compulsory games he made the excuse that he was nursing his father who had become an invalid. He now recognizes the mistake he made in this respect, and is very strongly in favour of games and physical training at schools.

He mentions that his handwriting was bad and that no efforts were made to check it at school, and how he noted in South Africa the great superiority of English clerks over Indians. I myself had considerable experience of Indian clerks and can most cordially endorse his condemnation. I believe that the evils of bureaucracy in India are much enhanced by this vile script of Indian clerks. We have only to imagine what our own red tape would be like if all our civil servants had to do their work in Hindustani and were allowed to write the worst of hands in that language!

Even at this early age he was already extraordinarily sensitive about the truth, and on one occasion, when his teacher threw doubts on his veracity, he was so bitterly hurt that he there and then resolved never again to place himself in such a position that a repetition of the incident could occur. He was able to see the teacher's point of view and did not blame him. His readiness to excuse his superiors also came out on an occasion when his teacher tried to make him surreptitiously copy from another boy at an inspection, so that the school might stand well with the inspector. This Gandhi refused to do, but thought no worse of his teacher for his prompting.

The itch to convert his fellows to his own way of thinking came out at school in the effort he made to reform a friend. Actually, the association worked out the other way, and the friend led the young Gandhi into the evil paths of meat-eating and smoking. Probably a determining factor in this meat-eating phase was that the boys had discovered that their schoolmaster, whom they venerated greatly, was a secret meat-eater. His own comment on this is a recognition of the fact that his judgment of his friends is apt to be at fault, and this has come out at other times as well. If the boy is father to the man we may well look for those who had led Gandhi into directions opposite from that in which he wished to go.

This meat-eating seems to have had its strongest inducement in the belief that the English obtained their power to dominate other races through the eating of meat, and that if

Indians wished to throw off the foreign yoke they must also do the same. The incident is very interesting in showing that in native state territory, where there should have been little anti-English feeling, it was actually strong enough so far back as the early 'eighties to cause boys to go against all the tenets of their religion. Gandhi kept on with it for a year, although the first experiment made him feel desperately sick and gave him bad nightmares. What worried him far more than the eating, however, was the tacit deceptions it involved him in. His mother used to worry that he had no appetite for his meals, for instance.

That he had to steal money to purchase cigarettes does not seem to have worried him very much, but his eventual reform came about through his stealing a piece of gold out of his brother's bracelet in order to discharge a debt which the same brother had incurred. It seems a curiously involved proceeding to a European mind, but Gandhi, in relating it, does not seem to think it requires explanation. This did prey upon his mind. He could not bring himself, through his shyness, to confess it to his father verbally, so he wrote out the confession, gave it to him, and then retired a short distance. His father read it, then slowly tore it into bits whilst a tear coursed down his cheek. He never said a word. The incident made the most profound impression on the boy, and to it, he says, he owes the whole of his teaching of non-violence. It made him give up all the bad habits he had got into, and so he thinks similar action will always have similar results. At the Sabarmati Ashram now, and in the schools in his settlements in South Africa, when his pupils erred, his method of correction was and is to inflict a penance, usually fasting, upon himself. He has always found it entirely efficacious. Will British schoolboys start a Gandhi movement in our schools here?

Another interesting event of these Rajkot school-days is the one when he and a young relative of his decided they would commit suicide, the reason being their dissatisfaction at not being independent! The method chosen was poison: there are two or three common plants in India well-known for their poisonous qualities, and it was not difficult to obtain. At the last minute their courage failed, and Gandhi lived to become the gadfly of the British in India.

The vexed question of "untouchability" arose once when

he was twelve, his mother warning him against contact with the latrine sweeper who served the household. He was deeply hurt that any human being should be so regarded, and seems to have decided at that early age that it was a matter which should be put right as soon as possible, and very nobly has he worked to that end. It should be noted that main drainage is practically unknown in India, and that latrine work is therefore highly unpleasant. The sweeper caste which does it is rated as about the lowest of the "Untouchables", who are sometimes regarded as forming part of the Shudra order, and sometimes as outside Hinduism altogether, according as whether it is desirable to weigh quantity or quality for Hinduism. If Gandhi himself is not the centre piece at any meeting, and has a choice of placing himself, it is always among these "Untouchables" that he goes nowadays, and his example has had a very great effect in raising their status.

When he was twelve Gandhi was married. The marriage was celebrated some years earlier than it ordinarily would have been, for economy's sake, as his brother and a cousin were also to be married, and of course the cost of such a triple wedding was but little more than a single one. Kasturbai, a year younger than he, was the third bride chosen for him, the two former having died before he was eight. She had spent some time in the Gandhi household before the marriage, so that it was not a matter of "sight unseen", as often happened in these child marriages, now happily forbidden by the Act passed almost unanimously two years ago by the Imperial Legislative Assembly.

Gandhi strongly condemns such child marriages, but points out two circumstances, one of which mitigated the evil and the other excused it. Such child brides, he says, usually spent half the year, until they were seventeen or eighteen, with their own parents and away from their husbands. The other point was that a couple grew up to a community of tastes and experiences such as adults do not have, and there are in consequence no awkward adjustments to be made and corners to be rubbed off.

Married life was not all bliss, however. Gandhi seems to have had decided views on the rights of a husband over his wife. Kasturbai, though only eleven, had equally decided views on her rights, and refused to order her movements

entirely to suit her lord and master. The young husband was also jealous, and he tells that there were frequent quarrels, and that these continued until they came to live a life of married celibacy in 1906.

When he was sixteen Gandhi's father died, being nursed to the end by his son. Nursing has always been a hobby of his, and one comes across instances of it time and again. There is no doubt the loss of his father was a great blow to the boy. He always speaks of both parents with the greatest affection and reverence, and their example seems to have been a very strong influence in his life.

Early in 1887 he matriculated, and went to the college at Bhaonagar, on the eastern side of Kathiawar, to take his degree. Here he found himself all at sea, and could make no headway at all. The family had, however, come to the conclusion that an Indian university degree would be of little use, so common were they becoming, in qualifying young Gandhi for the succession to the hereditary post of diwan of Porbandar, and decided that it would be better that he should go to England and qualify as a barrister, which would be something out of the ordinary.

The matter was not easy to arrange. The elder Gandhi had been careless with money, giving it away freely, and never availing himself of the many "perquisites" which most other Indians in his position would have taken, and it was only by borrowing and by the sale of all his wife's jewellery that the necessary funds were raised. Gandhi tried to get a scholarship after matriculating to help him, but Lely, the British political officer in whose power it lay to grant him this, refused it on the grounds that he should get a degree first. It is important, when taken with the incident described later when he came into conflict with the British officer at Rajkot, as being a possible cause of his underlying hostility to us. Then there was the opposition of his mother, who only consented after he had promised her to refrain from meat, alcohol and women. Here we may notice the difference between East and West; in the East it is the mother who extracts such a promise, not the wife. A promise to a parent is sacred; that to a wife is just an ordinary promise. Then there was the opposition of his caste; it divided in the matter, and one half excluded him. To this day he remains an "outcaste" to them, and he refused ever to make any

attempt to win them over lest it should lead to dissensions in the sect.

He travelled to England in September, 1887, going second class. Fortunately he was with a friend, for he was still so shy that he would speak to no one on board, and seems to have spent much time in his cabin. Food began to be a trouble to him, as he did not know English cooking, and what foods did and did not contain meat or meat fats or extracts in some form. He chose his best suit of white flannels to land in at Southampton, and was troubled to find it attracted unwanted notice to him.

In London he and his friend put up at one of the larger hotels in the vicinity of Victoria, but quickly found it far too expensive, and he began to board with a family at Richmond. Though he does not say so himself, others who know him personally, and possibly have gathered it from his conversation, say that he was very miserable at the start. Indeed, London must have been an enormous change to a lad from a small out of the world town like Rajkot. That he was shunned by the aristocracy because he was of low caste, as one American writer has declared, is, of course, absurd. Without wealth far beyond what he possessed and introductions, he never could have got into society. Caste never came into the question. On the other hand the fact that he was and is of small stature, but little over five feet, very dark, and very shy, were distinct handicaps then, as they probably would be in any European country even now.

CHAPTER II

LONDON AND INDIA

THE question of food again became a big matter. He says that for a time he existed entirely on bread, jam and spinach, this being his only safe ground. All through his life we find him worrying over food—dieting, fasting, and so on. Ascetic though he is and has been for most of his life, this does not mean that he has not a very keen appreciation of food. He has, and he notes that even fasting can be made a means of self-indulgence in the keener appetite and appreciation for food which it brings to one.

On a fortunate day he struck a vegetarian restaurant in Farringdon Street, and got into touch with the vegetarian movement, and from then on, if he suffered at all over his diet, it was either from self-imposed economy or the importunities of Indian friends to forget his vow and join them in their meat-eating. He took up vegetarianism keenly, and started a branch of the society in Bayswater, where he was then living. He got Dr. Oldfield, that pioneer of the movement, to take the chair of the branch, and Sir Edwin Arnold, author of the "Light of Asia," to be vice-president. Already we see in this shy Indian country lad an ability to organize. There are not many boys of that age—he probably was under twenty at the time—who, as strangers in a strange land, would have started and taken charge as secretary of such an undertaking. But though he was secretary he could never bring himself to speak. Once he wrote out a speech, meaning to read it, but for even this his courage failed and someone else had to do it for him. He eventually got over his shyness in South Africa. He does not think this constitutional shyness has been any hindrance to him, but rather the contrary. It has taught him economy in words, and he says that a thoughtless word very rarely escapes either his tongue or pen.

It was characteristic of the man that every few months he used to pack up his traps and move to a fresh quarter of London, so that he might gain personal experience of each of

its different neighbourhoods. It is a pity he is not more specific in the matter. Bayswater, Richmond, and Store Street off Tottenham Court Road are mentioned, but there were probably half a dozen more during the nearly four years he spent in our capital. He paid a visit to Paris during the Exhibition of those years, and spent vacations at Brighton and the Isle of Wight. There we see him running races with his landlady's daughter, a young woman whose athletic prowess he greatly admired in that she could easily beat him.

Always he made a point of walking to his work and elsewhere, a practice he has kept up through his life, and to it he ascribes the good health he has enjoyed. Indians are not fond of taking exercise, and there is no doubt that the poor health and short life of many of them are due to over-eating and under-exercising. Gandhi says that at one time he could walk forty miles a day, but that overdoing it just after a long fast in South Africa broke down his physique.

It was his insistence on keeping his promise to his mother in the matter of meat-eating that led him into a series of experiments to Anglicize himself. Asked to dine with one of his friends, he caused a great deal of embarrassment to the party and himself by refusing practically everything there was available, and made his friend lose his temper. Since Gandhi could not get over the vow, he determined to out-English the English in every other way. So he hied himself to Bond Street and invested in a top hat and evening dress, which cost £10, and started taking dancing lessons. These, however, defeated him at first, as he found he had no sense of rhythm. Nothing daunted he determined to learn what rhythm was. So he bought a violin and began taking music lessons. French and elocution were also added to the curriculum. Suddenly he awoke to the absurdity of the whole thing. He was not going to spend his life in England; what was the use of all these accomplishments? So he threw it all up. One wonders if the instructress who taught him his first steps, and on whose insteps he probably practised some of them, out of time too, remembers the little dark student who has now become such a world-wide celebrity? And do the Bond Street tailor and the hatter advertise themselves as "By appointment to Mahatma Gandhi"? There are many interesting speculations one can make about that past life of his here in London.

Of his reading for the bar we do not hear very much except that he found it so light and easy that he sought other avenues for his surplus energy, and found one in working for the London matriculation, which he managed to pass, though it involved what many find a fairly stiff Latin test, a language, of course, new to him. Of his legal reading he says that Williams and Edwards' "Real Property," and Goodeve's "Personal Property," interested him greatly, and that he found the former "read like a novel". On his return to India he found Mayne's "Hindu Law" had also the same charm as the two works mentioned above.

After a time he saw that he was spending a good deal more than he felt was justified, and began to cut down his expenses, living on a bare minimum of the cheapest food, so that he drew but £4 a month. Even in 1887 to 1891 that could not have secured much luxury. But he cooked for himself and did for himself generally, so saved in that direction.

Like most other Indian students who were married—and most of them were, and probably are to-day as well—he passed himself off as a bachelor by the simple expedient of not saying anything to the contrary. He formed a friendship with a middle-aged Englishwoman and her young companion, and after awhile his tacit deception on the question of his married state troubled him so much that he confessed it to her. She and her companion both seem to have been amused rather than annoyed, and it did not apparently affect the friendship.

He also came into touch with more serious-minded people, and notes how he was led to study the Bhagavad Gita for the first time at the desire of two English Theosophists. In much the same way he spent a good deal of time in study of the Bible. The Old Testament made no impression on him whatever, but the New Testament affected him very greatly, especially the Sermon on the Mount, and that seems to have been the leading religious text of his life, though he says it really but puts the teaching of the Gita in another way. Christianity, in fact, made a great impression on him, and he saw much of Christian missionaries in South Africa, attending their churches. It was not till 1901, when he was thirty-two, that he finally decided in favour of the faith he was born into. While in London he listened to Spurgeon, Farrar and Dr. Parker at the City Temple, but was only impressed by the last-named.

He always kept very accurate accounts of all he spent, and he has followed this practice throughout his life. To it he puts down the fact that he has never got into debt and has always managed to live within his means.

He notes with appreciation the fact that the West has brought the pleasure of dining to the rank of an art. Before sailing for India in June, 1891, he gave a farewell party at the Holborn Restaurant and made what he believes were the first arrangements to have vegetarian dishes served in an ordinary restaurant. He again tried to speak in public at this party but failed. Altogether he seems thoroughly to have enjoyed his time in England. Asked years later about English life, "Did it impress you favourably?" "Yes," he is reported to have said with emphasis, "even now, next to India, I would rather live in London than in any other place in the world."

He passed his exams. on the 10th of June, was enrolled as a barrister in the High Court on the 11th, and sailed for India next day.

At Bombay the caste trouble arose of which I have already spoken. As half the caste were for re-admission after proper purification, he proceeded to Nasik, a holy place of the Hindus, a hundred miles north-east of Bombay. After this he went home to Rajkot, and found that his mother had died some time before, the news having been kept from him lest it should distress him whilst among strangers. We hear that he again tried to restrict his wife's movements, was jealous of her, and that there was a good deal of marital strife. Once it went so far that he sent her back to her parents and would not take her back until, as he says, he had made her thoroughly miserable, a proceeding of which he later deeply repented.

He soon found that there was no money to be made in law at Rajkot. His dignity as a qualified London barrister forbade his taking up small cases and petty work, and there was nothing big. His family expected him, after all the money which had been spent on sending him to England and keeping him there four years, to make a large income and support them in style. So he decided to go to Bombay, and set up house there for himself, served by a Brahmin cook. He notes that the man, though belonging to the highest order of Hindus, was dirty, was absolutely ignorant of the Scriptures he should

have known thoroughly, and worst of all, knew nothing about cooking, so that Gandhi, from his own experience in London rooms, had to instruct him in this as well as in his Scriptures. It is a curious little commentary on life in the East—hiring a priest-cook and having to instruct him in both branches of his work !

But even Bombay brought no wealth. In his first case Gandhi broke down through his shyness, and had to hand the papers over to another lawyer. He found, however, that he could draft memorials, and soon got enough work of this kind to compensate for his inability to take court cases. It struck him that such work could equally well be done at home, and thus the expense of the double establishment could be saved. So back he went to Rajkot. His stay in Bombay seems to have been chiefly remarkable for the contact he made with the jeweller-poet-philosopher Raychandbhai, who influenced him as deeply as anyone, though neither he nor anyone else was ever enthroned as his Guru. "The throne has remained vacant and my search still continues," he writes in 1925.

At Rajkot he introduced English customs and food such as porridge and cocoa into the joint home of his elder brother and himself. He also started quarrelling with his wife, and again showed jealousy of her, and tried to control her. It must have been rather galling for her, that a husband who only came home for such brief intervals, should seek to order her every action whilst he was at home.

It was at Rajkot that occurred his first conflict with an English official. His brother had got into some trouble for which he had no real excuse, and sent the younger to try to smooth things over. The official was busy and did not wish to go into the matter, and asked the young Gandhi to leave. This he refused to do, persisting in his demand to be heard, with the result that he was turned out by force. For once in his life he wished to bring an action for assault, but the advice of older men decided him not to do so. Gandhi admits frankly that he was at fault in having gone to the official when his brother was admittedly at fault, but thinks that his impatience and anger was out of place. He says, regarding the counsel he received: "The advice was as bitter as poison to me, but I had to swallow it. . . . The shock changed the whole course of my life."

Incidents like this are frequent in India, and I do not think that the least blame can attach to Englishmen in such affairs. To them time is valuable, and having settled a matter, do not see why they should have to reopen it at the bidding of Tom, Dick and Harry. But the Indian has a curious disregard for time. I think it probably also has to do with his lack of historical sense. The sense of discipline also with them is far more shadowy and vague than it is with us. It is this difference in outlook which has led to so many charges of arrogance where from an English point of view there has been a great deal of patience shown where little was deserved.

The incident worried him a good deal, as much of his work at Rajkot lay in this Political Agent's court, and he imagined (unjustly I think, for Englishmen realize this difference of outlook and the Indian disregard of the value of time, and do not bear grudges on account of it) that he would be harmed by it. He incidentally notes that the Political Agent's chief clerk was supposed to make a bigger salary than the Agent through illicit means, and that the Administrator of the Porbandar State, "though an Indian, was, I found, one better than the *sahib* in arrogance."

Then in 1893 came the offer to go to South Africa to conduct a lawsuit for an Indian firm which had its headquarters in Kathiawar. The contract was for a year, all expenses paid and £100. It was not much from an English point of view, but was very fair from the lower standards of India, and Gandhi accepted.

CHAPTER III

SOUTH AFRICA, 1893-1901

IN 1893 he lands at Durban in Natal, wearing, he tells us, a frock coat and a Bengali turban. He found that there was no particular work for him to do; the law case was proceeding leisurely up country in Pretoria. He set about studying the matter and found it was largely a matter of accounts and bookkeeping, about which he knew nothing, so he bought books on the subject and started an intensive study. He soon had enough knowledge to go on, and asked to be sent up to Pretoria, and left Durban after being there a week.

His troubles began on the railway in the Orange River Free State. The guard objected to him, an Indian, being in a first-class carriage, although he had a proper ticket, and the Englishman with whom he was sharing it had no objection and even asked that he be allowed to stay there. This the guard would not allow, and forced him to detrain. There was worse trouble to come, in the coach journey (there was no through railway to Johannesburg in those days) from the rail head to that city, the coach conductor actually kicking and striking him because he protested at being turned out of the seat he had paid for. At Johannesburg he also found that few hotels would take in Indians, and the same thing occurred in Pretoria, but there of course he was among friends and the representatives of the firm he had come out to work for.

The whole question of Indians in South Africa was just beginning to get acute at that time. Natal had begun to import coolies on indenture from India to develop its plantations in the 1860's. For some time there was no problem at all. Some of the coolies returned to India; others had their families brought over after their terms of indenture were over and settled down as small market gardeners and the like, their produce being greatly appreciated in Durban and the few other big towns. Then traders, lawyers, etc., began to

trickle into South Africa in the wake of the coolies, and by the 'nineties the total number of Indians in Natal, where the great majority of them were, closely approximated that of the whites, who began to take alarm. The Orange River Free State had by special laws practically managed to keep them out altogether, by depriving them of all rights, whilst the Transvaal was far harder on them than was the case in Natal. In the Cape Colony, where there were a good many, there never seems to have been much trouble owing to the fact that their numbers were not such as to approach that of the white population.

Everywhere Indians, men of the educated and wealthy class, were called "coolies" or "sammies"—the last being a corruption of swami or sami—a common termination of Madrassi names and being originally the equivalent of "master". Once Gandhi pointed this out to a white man and apparently annoyed him over it. There were strict regulations restricting them from using first-class railway carriages, and they were not admitted to hotels, restaurants, etc. It was a very galling state of affairs to the young barrister who had experienced no such colour barriers while in England, and it wounded him deeply.

In Pretoria he also met with assault, this time by the Boer sentry on duty in front of Kruger's house. He pushed him off the pavement—Indians were not allowed in the Transvaal to walk on them—and kicked him. Gandhi had by now developed his doctrine of *Ahimsa* or non-violence and refused to bring any action for assault against the man, or against those who had ill-treated him on the journey up country. It was quite a sudden development, for it was only a year or two before in Rajkot that he had to be dissuaded from legal action for a similar personal injury.

He had obtained permission in Durban to try and compromise the law suit if he could, and this, after some time, he was enabled to do. He says that he has always been a great believer in compromise whenever possible. The suit was for £40,000, and he obtained a judgment of £37,000 from the arbitrators for his clients, but also arranged that the defendant should be allowed to pay it by instalments, thus earning his gratitude also. He came to the conclusion that "Facts are three-quarters of the law" over this case, and emphasizes the point strongly. His way in Pretoria was

considerably eased by finding in one of the lawyers there, a Dr. Krause, a member of his own Inn in London.

In Pretoria he called a general meeting of Indians with a view to considering how they could better their position generally, and it was here he made his first public speech. It is noteworthy that he preached the value of truth in business, which he thought did not receive the attention it deserved.

It was in Pretoria that he came into very close contact with several keen English Christians, going to their church and studying more Christian literature. He almost became a member of the family of Spencer Walton, then head of the South African General Mission.

He also began to study such writers as Edward Maitland and Anna Kingsford. He was so much struck by "The Perfect Way" that he started a correspondence with the former. Islam interested him too, and he read Washington Irving's "Life of Mahomed and his Successors," and Carlyle on Mahomed. He did not neglect his own religion and read Max Müller's "India—What can it Teach us?" and an English translation of the Upanishads and other Hindu books, all of which, he says, tended to raise Hinduism in his estimation. He mentions that he began Yogi practices at this time, though he is not specific on the subject. He read too the "Sayings of Zarathustra", thus showing that wide tolerance of and interest in all religions which has always distinguished him.

He started the study of Tolstoi's works and took the keenest interest in them. His "Kingdom of God is within You" overwhelmed him, he says. Ruskin's works worked on him in much the same direction and set his mind travelling in the direction of the Simple Life and a visionary Golden Age of the past which has been such a will-o'-the-wisp to him ever since.

His work being done and the year being up, he returned to Durban and prepared to sail for India about April, 1894. A farewell picnic was given in his honour, and at it by chance he picked up a newspaper, probably one used to wrap something up in, and his eye caught a paragraph about some intended legislation in Natal which was to deprive Indians of certain rights and privileges. He at once asked his companions about it. Yes, they knew of it, they said, but what could be done? A good deal, said Gandhi, not enough probably now to stop it, since the Bill would come up in a fortnight's time, but

enough to show that there was considerable opposition. On this they all begged him to cancel his passage and stay and organize the feeling on the subject. He agreed, and thus started his long twenty years' fight in South Africa for Indian honour.

Gandhi quickly got monster petitions out signed by 10,000 Indians. Copies of this petition were sent to the chief papers in England and India, and both the *Times* in London and the *Times of India* in Bombay supported the claims put forward. As he foresaw, the agitation was too late to influence the passage of the Bill, but it did show very forcibly that there was organized opposition and when the Natal Government sought to impose a killing poll tax of £25 per head on every Indian in the colony, it was this opposition which induced the then Viceroy in India, Lord Elgin, to whom the matter had been referred, to get it reduced to £3. Even then it was heavy, since it was levied on all males over sixteen and all females over thirteen, and so might come to £12 on a family of four. As coolies in Natal only earned about 10s. a week at the time, this would mean six months' wages.

Gandhi refused to take any salary for his public work in taking charge of the political interests of Indians in South Africa. He asked that instead they should as much as possible give him their legal work and twenty Indian merchants agreed to pay him retainers for a year. He never seems to have been troubled for funds in South Africa. At one time he is said to have been making good the loss on the paper he conducted out there, *Indian Opinion*, to the tune of £2,000 a year, and I think it was Gokhale who said that Gandhi was making as much as £5,000 to £6,000 a year by his legal practice.

He started the Natal Indian Congress in May, 1894, with a subscription of £3 a head annually—rather different from the four annas (=4d.) levied for similar membership in India, and we come across more of his very practical wisdom in the administration of such public bodies, much of which must have been inherent, though some seems to have been gained in the course of his experience. His ideas are worth quoting in full: "A permanent fund carries in itself the seed of the moral fall of the institution. A public institution means an institution conducted with the approval of, and from the funds of, the public. When such an institution ceases to have public support, it forfeits its right to exist,

Institutions maintained on permanent funds are often found to ignore public opinion and are frequently responsible for acts contrary to it . . . I have no doubt that the ideal is for public institutions to live, like Nature, from day to day." He believes in the strictest economy and in the strictest accounting and vouching for every penny spent.

He made an application to be enrolled at the Bar in Durban, an application which was opposed by the Law Society, but their opposition was over-ruled. He had already come into collision with the Courts in refusing to remove his turban. Indians do not, of course, do so: they remove their footgear on entering a house, not their head-dress, and in the first case he left the court and wrote to the papers on the matter. This led to some correspondence in which he was described as an "unwelcome visitor". He won his point eventually, and wore his turban throughout his stay in South Africa.

Sir Francis Younghusband, in his book "Dawn in India", notes having met Gandhi in about 1894 or '95 whilst he was on leave in South Africa and found him "a very enthusiastic, persuasive young man. I cannot say I recognized in him the grit and determination and courage and qualities of leadership he has since shown."

Gandhi brought out two pamphlets at this time entitled, "An Appeal to every Briton in South Africa", and "The Indian Franchise—An Appeal". He obtained very wide publicity by his conduct of the case of a Tamil coolie not only in South Africa but in India, which may be said to have been the foundation of his reputation in his motherland.

In 1896 he asked for permission to go to India for six months to collect his family—he had two sons now aged nine and five—as his stay in South Africa seemed to be likely to be prolonged, and sailed in June. He worked at Urdu and Tamil on the voyage in order better to be able to get on with Indians in South Africa, most of whom were Tamils, and those who were not would probably know the *lingua franca* of India.

When in India he brought out what became known as the Green Pamphlet on the Indian situation in South Africa, which obtained very wide publicity. Of this, a distorted précis reading, "A pamphlet published in India declares that the Indians in Natal are robbed and assaulted and treated like beasts and are unable to obtain redress. The *Times of*

India advocates an inquiry into these allegations", was telegraphed to the Cape and Natal, which made him so unpopular on his return. It is interesting to note that the editors of the English papers, the *Pioneer*, and the *Statesman and Englishman* in Calcutta, gave him attentive hearings, but the editor of a vernacular newspaper would not see him.

He met all the big men in Indian politics of the day: Gokhale, Surendra Nath Bannerjea, Pherozechaw Mehta and Tilak, and interested them in his cause of Indians overseas. It was Gokhale, that great statesman, of whom he speaks with the greatest affection and whom he calls his political Guru, for whom he always retained the greatest respect and love. He compares the three great men, Mehta, Tilak and Gokhale, to the Himalayas, the ocean, and the Ganges respectively—the last being to a Hindu, of course, the dearest of physical features.

In December, 1896, he sailed again with his family for South Africa, taking also a young nephew with him. At Durban he was greeted with a storm of public passion roused over the incorrect extracts from his writings in India. At first he and the other Indians were not allowed to land, being kept in quarantine for several days. When he did land he was stoned and kicked and might have been lynched but for the friendly and courageous intervention of a Mrs. Alexander, wife of the police superintendent, who stood between the little man and the hostile mob and conducted him to the police station, whence he eventually was taken out by a back way in disguise. Gandhi refused to prosecute anyone in the matter, and then showed that there was nothing he had said or published in South Africa as bad as he had already said in South Africa, in the pamphlets he had published there, or in his writings in the papers. This justification, with his magnanimity in refusing to prosecute, led to a revulsion of feeling in his favour, gave him great publicity and added to his practice.

It was about now that he begins to give a good deal of thought to the ideals of living—diet, *brahmacharya*, or asceticism, including married celibacy, the simple life, and the like. He bought a book on laundry work, studied it, and began to do his own washing. His first effort on a collar was not a success, it would seem, as he used too much starch and did not use a hot enough iron. The collar was soft and

dripped flakes of starch over him. His effort at cutting his own hair at first was equally unsatisfactory. "Hallo, Gandhi!" his friends in court greeted him with, "have the rats been at your hair?" The reason for the hair-cutting was that a European barber in Pretoria had once refused to do it for him. Chaff did not disturb him. In fact he says he was pleased to be able to afford merriment to others.

On the outbreak of the Boer War Gandhi at once offered to raise an Indian Ambulance Corps 1,100 strong, and did so, serving with it at the battles of Colenso, Spion Kop and Vaal Krantz, and being mentioned in despatches. The corps came under fire more than once but we are not told whether it suffered any casualties. This was done in spite of the fact that Gandhi states that his personal sympathies were with the Boers.

The following description is given by a European writing in the *Illustrated Star of Johannesburg* in July, 1911, of his war activities and the Indian Ambulance: "I saw the man and his small undisciplined corps on many a field of battle during the Natal campaign. When succour was to be rendered they were there. Their unassuming dauntlessness cost them many lives, and eventually an order was published forbidding them to go into the firing line.* Gandhi simply did his duty then, and his comment the other evening in the month of his triumph, at the dinner to the Europeans who had supported the Indian movement, when some hundreds of his countrymen and a large number of Europeans paid him a noble tribute, was that he had simply done his duty."

In 1901 he decided that his work in South Africa was finished and planned to return to India for good, but agreed to come back should there ever be cause to do so. He did not then foresee that the Boers, with whom he sympathized, were going to give his Indians a far harder time and more trouble than ever the people of Natal had done. There were great demonstrations of gratitude towards him and he and his wife were loaded with presents, including a very costly necklace. This weighed very heavily on Gandhi's mind

*Correspondence in the *Morning Post* during 1931 would seem to deny the fact that Gandhi and his corps came under fire. This is the only statement I have come across saying that he did, and as it was written some eleven years after the event, it probably requires discounting.

because of his views that one should never accept anything for public service. Even such presents struck him as payment, and after a night of hard thinking he decided that they must be given back. He owns that he had not the courage to face his wife over the necklace. Instead he summoned his sons, then aged 14 and 10, explained the ethics of the matter to them, and sent them as shock troops into the battle. It was a bitter blow for poor Mrs. Gandhi. She had sacrificed all her original store of jewellery to send her husband home for his education: now she had to surrender this wonderful gift! But it was done. One fancies Gandhi having heard about the matter more than once since then. All the presents were sold and the receipts were put into a Trust Fund—he had not yet come to his views against endowments—for the service of the community.

We find him attending the Indian National Congress at Calcutta in December this year, where he hoped to get a hearing for the case of Indians in South Africa. He offers to help in any capacity, and is taken on as a clerk by one of the leaders of the nationalist movement, and thus got to know a good deal about the inner working of the body, and of course came a good deal into contact with the leaders. After it was over he spent a month with Gokhale, his reverence and love of him growing as he got to know more of him. His stay in Calcutta for the Congress brought him into close contact with many Bengal families and was the beginning of his intimate connection with that great province. He mentions visiting the temple of Kali from which the city takes its name, and of being disgusted with the rivers of blood he met flowing from it from the sacrifice of goats and other animals.

He decided at this time that he must learn at first hand what third class travelling meant in India, and also that he might come in closer contact with the common people. So he started, taking only a blanket, a warm coat, a towel, a shirt, and a loin cloth besides the clothes he had on him. He found it far worse than the same accommodation provided in South Africa for the negroes, whilst the dirty and inconsiderate habits of Indians made things worse, "their spitting, yelling, shouting, using foul language". I do not know what third class travelling costs in South Africa, but in India it was and still is incredibly cheap compared with other countries.

First class used only to be an anna (=a penny) a mile while third class was but a fourth of that in mail trains, and about a sixth to an eighth in ordinary passenger trains.

He was very greatly disappointed with the dirt and irreverence shown at Benares, the holy city of the Hindus, and with the cupidity of the priest in charge of the shrines. It was here he first met Mrs. Annie Besant.

He settled in Bombay again. His second son Manilal fell ill of typhoid here and Gandhi nursed him through it himself, refusing to let him have meat extracts, as the boy himself did not want it. He notes that he successfully used Kuhne's treatment. Professionally he did well, his work in South Africa of course helping very greatly, and he no doubt obtained many cases from his former clients in that country.

CHAPTER IV

SOUTH AFRICA, 1902-1914

AT the end of the South African War in 1902 trouble for the Indians again rose. This time it came from the Transvaal, and a number of Europeans—one gathers they were from Ceylon and Malaya rather than India—with Asiatic experience, were put in charge of the Asiatic department in Pretoria, and brought in a system of registration of Indians which they felt to be a distinct grievance. I have not been able to hear the other side of the question—the winning party does not as a rule trouble to make out its case—but have no doubt that there was a good deal to be said for it. Gandhi himself throughout seems to have realized that the Europeans in South Africa had an excellent case: always he seems to have been far more concerned with saving the "face", or honour of the Indians by getting laws and regulations so worded that they should not be insulted. For instance, he urged that exclusion laws could equally well be drafted on an educational basis which few Indians would be able to pass, as on one of colour or nationality, and it seems a pity more attention was not paid to this by the governments in Africa. It would have saved both sides much unnecessary trouble and loss.

In the present case it was the personality of the European officials appointed to the Asiatic Department, especially of the subordinate officers, that caused trouble. As often happens after a war, there were a number of the better-dead type of scallywags who managed to find posts in this service and began taking bribes to let Indians in, and otherwise abused their position. Gandhi, on coming out, speedily got them dismissed and managed to ease matters. It is characteristic of him that after securing the dismissal of the guilty subordinates, he bore no grudge against them and even aided them to secure posts under the municipality where they would not be able to exercise their talent for illicit speculation. His action in the matter bore good fruit in lessening all official antagonism to him.

Gandhi had been included in the deputation to Joseph Chamberlain in Natal: he then hurried up country to be present on the Transvaal Indian Delegation, but was prevented by the authorities, who feared him, on the ground that he had already been on such a body. This made him decide to set up his office in Johannesburg instead of Durban, so as to secure domicile rights in the Transvaal where there were far more restrictions on Indians than in the British colonies.

In 1903 he began to be troubled by headaches and constipation. He tried the "no breakfast" plan and also the earth treatments recommended in Just's "Return to Nature", which meant tying earth-filled bandages on the stomach. This was very successful with him, and he found it of particular value next year in an outbreak of pneumonic plague in Johannesburg. Then he applied the treatment to three out of twenty-three who fell ill and saved two: nineteen of the other twenty died, so that there seems to be something to be said for it, unless the cures were due to his talent for nursing of which he was inordinately fond.

These experiments led him to write his "Guide to Health" which, he says in 1925, had the widest sale of any of his writings. It was written originally for the paper *Indian Opinion*, which he started in 1904, thinking that there should be some organ to represent Indian opinion and thought in South Africa. He had come to believe in a diet of nuts and fruit, and made a vow to touch no milk, which he kept until 1918. He then only broke it to the extent of taking goat's milk because of what he felt to be the urgency of his recovering his full health so as to deal with the Rowlatt Bills agitation. He admits that it was juggling with truth to allow that "milk" only meant cows' milk and not that of other animals. He very strongly advises other people not to give up milk unless they find themselves benefited by doing so, but says that the use of any animal food renders *brahmacharya* (asceticism) far harder to carry out.

Indian Opinion was published in English with Tamil, Gujarati and Urdu supplements at first. He soon found that he had to put all his savings into it to keep it going and later cut out the vernacular parts. It was a very fine education for him, he says, from the correspondence which poured in on him and showed him all sorts of aspects of

life he knew little about. "In the very first number of *Indian Opinion* I had realized that the sole aim of journalism should be service," he says, and found in it a splendid training in self-restraint. "I know that the tone of *Indian Opinion* compelled the critic to put a curb on his own pen," he relates.

In 1904, he came into touch with a Mr. West, an Englishman, who became a fast friend of his and took over the management and part editorship of *Indian Opinion*, going down to Durban to do so. West discovered that the finances of the paper were far from what they had been reported to be to Gandhi, and he had to hurry down to Natal to put matters right. It was on this journey that a book hurriedly thrust into his hands by Polak, another European friend, Ruskin's "Unto This Last", seems to have fired his imagination with the idea of the Tolstoyan Simple Life Colony which he presently founded at Phoenix, two hours by rail from Durban, and whither he transported his family, the workers on *Indian Opinion* and several others. The teachings he gathered from Ruskin's work he summed up as being that the good of all included the good of the individual, that all work was equally valuable, and that the life of manual labour was the only life worth living. He founded another similar settlement, the Tolstoy Farm in the Transvaal near Johannesburg. At both these settlements every worker received an allowance of £3 per month irrespective of colour or nationality. Phoenix consisted at first of 20 acres, later increased to 100, and cost £1,000. The whole press of *Indian Opinion* was moved there and was at first worked by hand.

It was here that he started schools for his sons and other children of the colonies. He says that his sons have occasionally complained of the quality of the education they received, but he felt that the training of character which they got was far more important than the mere book-learning which would have enabled them to pass examinations or take degrees. He himself seems to have been headmaster. "Under ideal conditions true education could be imparted only by the parents", he holds, and goes on to say, "I found in the course of my work that I had very little to teach them beyond weaning them from their laziness and supervising their studies. As I was content with this I could pull on with boys of different ages, and learning different subjects, in one and the same

classroom." We here find him first starting the system he has so often since followed of vicarious punishment, by inflicting on himself a fast of seven days on account of the moral fall of two of the inmates of Phoenix and further limited himself to one meal a day for four and a half months, as he felt himself, as the teacher, to be morally responsible. I think his views on education generally are very sound. "One thing we have completely to unlearn," he writes, "is that because anyone can write and speak fluently he is more educated than one who has had, every day of his life, Nature's own great education in the fields, at the plough, or in the forest."

It is in accordance with this that he does not believe in education for the peasant. In his book on "Indian Home Rule", written originally in 1908, he says, "What do you propose to do by giving him a knowledge of letters? Do you wish to make him discontented with his cottage and his lot?" This, of course, is on a level with his attacks on everything which entails European culture, and he includes in the ban the many conveniences which he himself utilizes frequently—railways, telegrams, European machinery, including necessarily printing presses and all they imply. His reply to the obvious argument against this was that he hoped that, with the issue of his book which finally brought about the ideal state of things he advocates, it would be the expiring effort of the last press in the world.

In another place he says of education: "There is one big obstacle in our path. We are enamoured of degrees. The very life seems to hang upon passing an examination and obtaining a degree. It sucks the nation's life blood." He thinks that character-building, agriculture, music and military training are all neglected in Indian education and should find a place there, but he is against compulsory education. "It appears to be not in keeping with the times to experiment in free and voluntary education . . . The results of my examination of the Baroda system have been so far unfavourable. But no weight can be attached to them as my examination was wholly superficial." He is naturally against the English system of education, although in the following passage it seems to reflect more on the ability of Indians to take in those elements in it which in Europe bear such practical results. "Teaching of science is dry. Pupils can make no

practical use of it . . . It is no exaggeration to say that the teaching of Hygiene is a farce. We do not know at the end of sixty years training how to save ourselves from plague and such other diseases. It is in our opinion the greatest reflection upon our educational system that our doctors have not been able to rid the country of these diseases. I have visited hundreds of homes but have hardly seen a house in which rules of hygiene were observed. I doubt very much if our graduates know how to treat snake-bites, etc. . . ."

Like many another reformer he damns the English system of education because "it ignores the culture of the heart and the hand and confines itself simply to the head". Yet in Indore, a large Mahratta native state where they were anxious to introduce religion into the schools—and the population is almost entirely Hindu—it was found impossible to do so because the heads of the different sections of Hinduism could not agree on a common syllabus of instruction—a trouble which has not been unknown in Christian countries. Gandhi's ignorance of history prevents his knowing that the English system was introduced very much on the advice and recommendation of Ram Mohan Roy, the Father of Indian Social Reform, and the idea behind it was that such education, given to the upper classes, would be translated by them into the vernaculars and would "filter down", to use a phrase very common at the time.

Bentinck and Macaulay gave the Indian upper classes of that day and later days credit for more altruism than they possessed. They took all the education they could get from the Government, but they did not pass it on, or trouble to translate it into the vernaculars and institute a system of Indian education. The fault has not lain with us but with the Indians, from first to last.

To return to history. Politically, there was not much doing in the first years of his return. In 1906 occurred the Zulu Rebellion and Gandhi again was to the fore in raising an Indian ambulance corps. This campaign brought home to him the horrors of war to a far greater extent than did the Boer War, for he had to deal with the wounded and flogged Zulus who had taken part in the rebellion. "At any rate my heart was with the Zulus," he notes. He held the rank of sergeant-major of the Corps, this strange man whom we meet

in so many guises—lawyer, nurse, schoolmaster, doctor, journalist and politician. It was about this time that his wife gave birth to his third child at Phoenix, and Gandhi, who had been studying obstetrics for some months before, acted as midwife to her.

During the six weeks of the Zulu campaign his mind again reverted to the subject of *brahmacharya* or married celibacy and asceticism generally. On his return he discussed the matter with friends and relatives, and finally took the vows of asceticism in the middle of 1906.

It was in this same year that the most intense period of his political activity in South Africa started. The Transvaal Draft Asiatic Law Amendment was published, forcing all Asiatics entering the colony to register. Gandhi at once organized a huge demonstration against it, and then went to London, and got the home government to suspend the royal assent for a while. The South African Government, however, pressed the matter, and next year the royal assent was given, and Gandhi began his civil resistance campaign in July, 1907. He called it *Satyagraha*, from the Sanskrit words *satya*—truth, or just right, and *graha*—force. He distinguished it from passive resistance in that he said it meant non-violence all the way through and a loving of the enemy, which, so far as he had seen, passive resistance did not. Naturally enough he had very carefully observed the results of passive resistance, at that time being freely used by Suffragettes, who had taken it from Nonconformists. It is worth noting that "Indian Home Rule" was written on the voyage back from London to South Africa in 1908 in answer to the school of violence then very prevalent in India, and also to some extent in South Africa. He says: "I came in contact with every known Indian anarchist in London." A vigorous Liberal and Labour campaign against Capitalism was being waged in England at this time, and probably this had a good deal to do with causing Gandhi to magnify the evils of the capitalist system, especially as Lloyd George was the chief expounder of the evils.

Literally thousands of Indians went to gaol in this campaign. The question was one of registration, which, as it was not put on whites or blacks, the Indians resented intensely. Gandhi induced Indians from Natal to cross over into the Transvaal and offer themselves for imprisonment,

and he, his wife, and both sons, besides many wealthy and influential Indians, were imprisoned. Gandhi himself only received a sentence of two months and was deeply humiliated over it, as many others received sentences of six months.

Negotiations were opened with General Smuts and Gandhi claims that he, in the presence of official witnesses, promised that the law would be repealed if Indians would promise voluntarily to register themselves. This they did, but Smuts, he says, failed to keep his promise, and so the campaign went on, and Gandhi himself twice again went to gaol in 1908 and 1913. In 1909 he paid a visit to England with a friend in the cause of his countrymen. Lord Ampthill, who had become president of a committee set up in London to watch the interest of British Indians in South Africa, wrote the preface to Gandhi's "Indian Home Rule," in August, 1909, and says in it, "The subject of the sketch, Mr. Gandhi, has been denounced in this country, even by respectable persons, as an ordinary agitator, his acts have been misrepresented as mere vulgar defiance of the law; there have not even been wanting suggestions that his motives are those of self-interest and pecuniary profit.

"A perusal of this paper ought to dispel any such notions from the mind of any fair man who has been misled into entertaining them." He goes on to show that the Indians in the Transvaal are only struggling for the maintenance of a right and the removal of a degradation. He goes on: "It is not realized in this country that in the Transvaal, during the past three years, Indians have for the first time been deprived of a right which they have enjoyed, at any rate in theory, and still enjoy in every other part of the Empire, viz., the legal right of migration on the same terms as other civilized subjects of His Majesty. . . ." What is to be the result in India if it should finally be proved that we cannot protect British subjects under the British flag? . . . And what if India—united, mortified and humiliated—should become an unwilling and refractory partner in the great Imperial concern? Surely it would be the beginning of the end of the Empire."

It was when Gandhi called off *Satyagraha*, owing to the agreement, that he suffered assault at the hands of some of his own countrymen, being left bruised and bleeding in the

gutter. The reason was their indignation at his stopping the movement. Gandhi refused to take any action against the offenders, and was rewarded by the chief of them later on becoming a close supporter of his.

In 1910 the Union of South Africa took place and next year a second provisional agreement was arranged, though no formula really acceptable to South Africans, Indians, and the British Government could be found. Indians took to leaving the cities and their employment there as hawkers, market gardeners, etc., thus upsetting the supply of vegetables which they alone used to grow, and disorganizing life for the whites.

In 1912 Gokhale, Gandhi's "political Guru," came out to South Africa on a visit to him, not for political reasons but purely on account of his health, which was then failing, and to afford Gandhi his favourite recreation of nursing. C. F. Andrews, who with another Englishman, W. W. Pearson, both close friends and supporters of Gandhi, and strong pro-Indians, had gone out to South Africa to help the Indian cause, writes: "It was pathetic and beautiful to observe the way these two old friends refused to see anything but the best in each other, in spite of their fundamental differences of temperament and often of outlook."

It was about this time, on hearing of the shooting of some Indians in South Africa, that Gandhi changed his dress from that which he had worn for twenty years to that of a common Indian coolie. It was a year or two later that he discarded all but the loin cloth, on being taken to task in Madras by an Indian who only wore this himself and thought that Gandhi should not be better clothed.

In 1913 the movement spread to Natal and in November of that year Gandhi was charged there on three counts at Dundee and received his third sentence of imprisonment of nine months, which he elected to take in lieu of the alternative £60 fine. It was about this time that there occurred Lord Hardinge's "calculated indiscretion" in a speech at Madras, wherein he strongly criticized the South African Government for their treatment of Indians, and there is little doubt but that his speech had a considerable effect in bringing about the settlement next year.

In 1914 came the end of the struggle. General Smuts, who in 1909 said he would never agree to the repeal of the

Asiatic Law, did in July of that year have it passed through the Legislature, and the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement, which secured peace, was arranged. Gokhale wrote to him suggesting that his work being done in South Africa he should return to India via London where they could meet, and in July Gandhi sailed, arriving in England just after the War had broken out. There was an interesting incident on the voyage which he was making with a European friend, a Mr. Kallenbach, who owned a costly pair of binoculars in which he took considerable pride and pleasure. Gandhi, who holds that owning anything which is not strictly necessary is the equivalent of theft, charged him with this offence and words arose. The little man was only satisfied when Kallenbach threw the offending binoculars into the sea!

At the end of 1911 he published in the *Indian Review* what he considered to have been the advantages of Passive Resistance in South Africa. They were, he said, the disallowance of several obnoxious laws, a propaganda of knowledge in India regarding such disabilities abroad, the raising of the status of Indians, and the giving them self-confidence and the courage not to fear gaol. These claims seem to have been well founded. It is worth noting that Gandhi considers that the Tamils, who in India are rather looked down on, with other Southern Indians, as lacking in courage, had borne the brunt of the struggle. They were of course in a great majority which may partly account for it, but at any rate they did not shirk as they might have done.

It is interesting to note that the *Natal Mercury*, a paper not noted for its pro-Indian proclivity, once handed the following bouquet to Gandhi. "Mr. Gandhi writes with calmness and moderation. He is as impartial as anyone could expect him to be and probably a little more so than might have been expected, considering that he did not receive very just treatment at the hands of the Law Society when he first came to the Colony."

Perhaps the tragedy of the whole of this struggle was that it was over a mere matter of words. Gandhi, in *Young India*, at the end of 1925 when the matter was again to the fore, wrote: "A time was reached when the late General Botha and General Smuts were ready to concede almost every material point, provided what they called the sentimental objection against race distinction was waived by the Indian

community. From that time, i.e., from 1908 the struggle chiefly centres round that one 'sentimental' objection, and General Botha had declared that on that point no South African Government could yield an inch; and he said that in further prosecuting the struggle the Indian community would be 'kicking against pricks.'"

CHAPTER V

INDIA, 1915-1918

As soon as he landed in England Gandhi set about organizing an ambulance corps, calling a meeting of Indians in London. There was considerable dissension, many being in favour of using the opportunity to push the case for Indian Home Rule instead. Eventually some eighty agreed to work and a corps was formed. There were clashes at first with the authorities. Indians do not like or appreciate discipline—one of the reasons why they have never been able effectively to combine against an invader—and imagined a military unit could be a sort of republic with the right to elect their own officers and non-commissioned officers and that they could discard such military regulations as were displeasing, and Gandhi himself, in speaking of his previous military experiences, does not seem to have absorbed the idea of the necessity of strict discipline. Matters were eventually arranged by the bulk of the corps being sent to Netley.

In the meanwhile Gandhi had developed pleurisy owing to his habit of walking to the drills of the corps and doing so one day in the rain. His health had already suffered owing to his overtaxing his strength directly after a fast in South Africa, and as he refused to take milk and other nourishing food recommended by doctors, he found himself unable to recover in England and so decided to return to the warmer climate of India.

He reached Bombay in January, 1915. His family and colony from South Africa had preceded him and were at Rabindranath Tagore's Ashram (religious colony and school—the Hindu equivalent of a monastery cum convent cum school) at Shantiniketan in Bengal. Lord Willingdon, then Governor of Bombay, sent for Gandhi on his arrival, and asked him to defer taking any steps to embarrass the Government without seeing him first, to see if matters could not be amicably arranged, a promise which he gladly gave. It was in this month that he received the gold Kaisir-i-Hind for his

services for India in South Africa, a signal mark of Government appreciation. He then went up to see Gokhale at Poona, then a very sick man and near his end, which came next month. Gokhale made him promise to do nothing for a year until he had toured India and learnt what conditions were like in the country.

The two were far from seeing eye to eye in political matters in spite of the great love they bore each other. Gokhale was a far greater statesman and endowed with an infinitely greater wisdom and knowledge of politics and world affairs, and his death was perhaps one of the greatest losses we suffered in India. Had he lived another ten years, the history of India would have been very different to what it was, and it is more than probable that he would have managed to curb Gandhi's activities of the non-co-operation period. Gandhi always regarded him as his "political Guru", and would probably have listened to his statesmanlike advice. As it was Tilak, always a fierce and bigoted extremist with whom Gokhale had been in active conflict practically all through their careers, was left as the strongest character in Indian politics, and though not the fanatic Gandhi showed himself to be, bore our Government little goodwill.

Gokhale, who was a comparatively rich man, undertook to bear the expenses of the Ashram which Gandhi wished to found in his own country of Gujerat, and which he placed close to Ahmedabad, the capital of the province which includes, linguistically and ethnologically, the peninsula of Kathiawar. At first it was a temporary settlement in a bungalow which he arranged, but later, when funds were available, secured the permanent home he now has and which was, he was glad to find, quite close to the gaol. A Satyagrahi, he said, must be prepared to spend frequent periods in such a place, and so it would be nice to have it conveniently close. One of his favourite walks when not in gaol is to the gaol gates, which he probably regards as a home from home.

He then started touring India. In March we find him at Calcutta, strongly condemning to the students there all forms of violence, assassination, and dacoities. He also gave forth the dictum, "I have more than once said that that Government is best who governs least. And I have found that it is possible for me to be governed least under the British Empire." Two months later, down in Southern India,

he notes how much he disagrees with other political leaders at the time. "I am in a position to say that I seem to be at war with my leaders. Whatever they do or whatever they say does not somehow or other appeal to me. The major part of what they say does not seem to be appealing to me." I think this extract is from a translation of his speech in the vernacular. He seldom speaks as bad English as the above; indeed he writes and speaks, too, I believe, very good English with but one annoying trait—he always refers to "friends" as "*the* friends". Indian languages do not have the definite article and Indians consequently find it exceedingly difficult to know when to put it in or to omit it in English.

He always travelled third class, again noting its discomforts and placing the blame equally on to the officials and on his own people. Here he fails to realize I think the exceeding cheapness of railway travelling in India: comfort could only be increased by increasing the cost and in view of the poverty of the people it is more than probable this would not be appreciated. It should be noted that there is an intermediate class between third and second, at, I believe, a cost of between the $\frac{1}{4}$ d. and the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a mile charged for those two classes, which is available for those desiring more comfort. He confesses once to having allowed his wife improperly to use a second class bathroom in a railway station when she had only a third class ticket. It is pleasing to find even our Indian St. Peter nods at times.

At Hardwar, near the foot of the Himalayas and the hill station of Mussoorie, a famous religious fair is held every ten years, and it fell in 1915. Gandhi arranged to attend it with the whole of his Phoenix Colony party, and undertook to do latrine work for the pilgrims there. The fair had a great effect on him. "During these roamings I came to observe more of the pilgrims' absentmindedness, hypocrisy and slovenliness, than of their piety. The swarm of *Sadhus* (Hindu fakirs)* who had descended there, seemed to have been born but to enjoy the good things of life," he writes, and goes on to mention the case of a cow with five legs which was shown as a religious wonder, yet he learnt that the fifth leg had actually been grafted on to the animal from a live calf! Yet elsewhere he states that Hindus are the gentlest people on the face of the earth: they would not harm a fly! It is

*Fakir should properly be applied only to Moslems.

that curious kink I have mentioned at the beginning of this book from which Gandhi suffers as much as most of his countrymen. He is so struck by the hypocrisy at Hardwar that he decides to inflict on himself vicarious penance for it all, and does so in the shape of deciding to limit himself to no more than five articles of food for the rest of his life. I have not been able to ascertain if these five can be changed from day to day or not. He notes that he had now been under vows of diet for thirteen years and that whilst they had been a severe test they had also been a shield to him, adding years to his life, and probably saving him from many an illness.

From here he goes on a short pilgrimage to the nearby shrine of Hrishikesh and is taken to task by the priest there for not wearing the sacred thread and the *shikha*. This last is the little tuft of long hair left at the crown of the head. Gandhi explains that he had given both up on going to Europe in 1887. He was ready to take to *shikha* again and did so, but the sacred thread he refused on the grounds that since it was forbidden to Shudras and outcastes, he also would not wear it. Of what he learnt here he says: "But the Hardwar experiences proved for me to be of inestimable value. They helped me in no small way to decide where I was to live and what I was to do."

The question of his Ashram came up about this time. He insisted that it should be open to untouchables equally with all the higher castes, and this led to trouble and the stoppage of funds to such a point that they were preparing to move next day to the untouchables quarter of the town, where it would be cheapest for them to live. Suddenly a rich Hindu appeared on the scene with a gift of £890. He notes that since then the Ashram has been supported mostly by donations from rich orthodox Hindus which, he says, is a clear indication that "untouchability is shaken to its foundations".

In February, 1916, we find him on the dais at the Hindu University at Benares, founded by Mrs. Besant, with her and the Maharaja of Darbhanga on the platform. Gandhi in his speech made the unfortunate statement: "If we are to receive self-government we shall have to take it, we shall never be granted self-government," and Mrs. Besant, the Maharaja and others found themselves compelled to leave to dissociate themselves from him. With the best intentions in the world, and perhaps because he has been a leader and uncriticized

by any immediate superiors from such an early age, Gandhi suffers, as many others have in like cases, from occasional slips into wholly unnecessary tactlessness. He was at this time quite loyal to the British Government, having indeed stated during this year, "I tender my loyalty to the British Government quite selfishly. I would like to use the British race for transmitting this mighty message of Ahimsa to the whole world", and as we shall see, in 1918 actually engaged in a recruiting campaign.

In 1917 Gandhi starts an agitation for the immediate passing of a bill to abolish the indenture system for the Colonies, which had been promised the year before as soon as an alternative arrangement could be made, with the result that the necessary legislation was passed in July. He also interested himself in an abuse which existed in Bihar which required every peasant there to cultivate three-twentieths of his acreage with indigo for the benefit of European planters, in spite of the fact that this was far from being a profitable crop ever since the introduction of the synthetic dye had killed the industry. There seems to have been no question of the injustice, as a Committee appointed by the Lieutenant Governor, on which Gandhi was asked to sit, found, and the matter was speedily put right by the Bihar Legislative Council. During this Champaran Campaign there are several points of Gandhi's conduct that deserves the highest praise. First, he refused to allow any political capital to be made out of it, asking the various vernacular newspapers not to send reporters as he would himself furnish them with all the necessary news. It was an economic case, not a political one, and should not be wrongly capitalized as the latter. Then he refused to accept large sums of money for the conduct of the campaign. Satyagraha, he holds, should pay its own way or by the work of volunteers. Only some £200 was spent in what was a fairly big campaign. Then he started a number of schools and a model dairy, having noted how badly the Bihari peasant treated his cattle. He writes: "The Champaran bullock is still made to work beyond his capacity, and the so-called Hindu still cruelly belabours the poor animal, and disgraces his religion". The schools unfortunately died out soon after his energizing presence was removed. The campaign was a very great vindication of Gandhi's policy of Satyagraha and gave him great confidence in it.

1917 saw two events of major importance in India's history. One was purely external—the Russian revolution. It had, and has had an enormous influence on India. Of all countries in the world, India has recognized in Russia that which most closely approximated to her in its huge size and population, the poverty and oppression of its peasantry, its bureaucratic and autocratic government, a government which had long been one of England's bogeys. The revolt struck them with the greatest significance.

The other was the declaration of the coming reforms and of Dominion status for India, made in the House of Commons in August by Mr. Montagu, then Secretary of State, together with his visit a few months later to India. Mr. Montagu interviewed Gandhi among other leaders of Indian thought, and gave this as his impression: "He is a social reformer; he has a real desire to find grievances and to cure them not for any reasons of self-advancement but to improve the conditions of his fellow men. . . . He dresses like a coolie, forswears all personal advancement, lives practically on the air, and is a pure visionary. He does not understand details of schemes; all he wants is that we should get India on our side".

The next two campaigns he took up seem to have been more or less contemporaneous—a mill-hands strike at Ahmedabad and one to help the peasants in the Kaira, or Kheda district in Gujerat. Though his lieutenants claimed this as a victory it really seems to have been a complete defeat. Gandhi himself says "the end was far from making me happy, inasmuch as it lacked the grace with which the termination of every Satyagraha Campaign ought to be accompanied. . . . The poor were to be granted suspension, but hardly any got the benefit of it," and he concluded by saying that he could not enthuse over it. The object of the campaign was to get a remission of taxation, as the peasants of the district claimed that their crop was under twenty-five per cent. of the normal. Gandhi, himself always utterly truthful and honest, believed them. Now the Indian peasant has many very real and sterling qualities, but like many another peasant, all the world over, is quite ready to distort facts in matters of taxation if he can gain an advantage over it. In the present case the report of what Gandhi had done in Champaran had spread far and wide, and to an ignorant and illiterate peasant, was

probably represented as a readiness to get a remission of taxation on the slightest excuse. There is little doubt they obtained justice if they did not obtain all they hoped for. Gandhi notes here that the ancient law of the land gave a quarter of the produce of the land to the State. We have never taken more than a tenth to a twelfth, or a twenty-fourth in Bengal where a permanent settlement of land revenue was unfortunately made in 1785 or so. He notes that Bombay merchants, in spite of his remonstrances, had insisted on sending him money which was not required, and in the district "it seemed wellnigh impossible to make them realize the duty of combining civility with fearlessness".

The Ahmedabad mill-strike sees him in the guise of a labour agitator, with a sister of one of the mill-owners as a faithful ally of his. He strongly impressed on the workers the need for absolute harmlessness to all, including strike-breakers. Certain philanthropists began to give them alms, and are denounced by Gandhi. Work is what they should provide for them, and he himself made every endeavour to find such work for them in the neighbourhood. Presently some of them began to weaken and to go back on their promise to him not to give in. This makes him decide to fast as a penance to bring them back into the straight and narrow path. Too late he found that it was a weapon used against the mill-owners, with whom he had, curiously enough, managed to remain friends. This distressed him greatly. It was not playing the game, he felt, and he earnestly requested them to take no heed of it. However, it brought about an atmosphere of goodwill, and a settlement on terms midway between the respective minima of the two parties followed. Presently, in March, 1918, he was summoned to Delhi to attend a War Conference there. He hesitated over accepting, because the Ali Bros. were in prison and he had begun to take up the cause of the Mahomedans who were getting anxious about the fate of the Caliphate. The Brothers had been imprisoned early in the War for activities which were calculated to cause disaffection and had naturally been apotheosized as martyrs. Eventually he goes, and speaks there in Hindustani—the first time, he says with shame, that the native language of the land had been used in its highest Council. As a result of the Conference he undertakes to raise recruits in the Kaira district and tries to do so, but finds no enthusiasm at all

where a month or two previously they had provided him with every facility in his anti-tax campaign. It is during this work that he addresses a letter to the Viceroy in which he says: "If I could make my countrymen retrace their steps I would make them withdraw all the Congress resolutions and not whisper 'Home Rule' or 'Responsible Government' during the pendency of the War." One sees that at times he can be statesmanlike. Had such advice been followed there is little doubt that India would have received a larger measure of self-government than the reforms of 1919-21 did concede, and would have been granted them with a far better grace.

His activities during this recruiting campaign brought on dysentery which he aggravated by his own lack of care and over indulgence in food he was fond of—he still remains excessively human at times. (One's heart always goes out to a great man who errs even as we do ourselves. I wonder many great men do not do this sort of thing on purpose.) It was rather a protracted illness. Then came news of the proposed Rowlatt Bills—recommendations of the Committee that Mr. Justice Rowlatt had come out from England to preside over, to deal with the revolutionary activities in India, more especially in Bengal and the Punjab, when the War was over and the Defence of India Act of 1915 would no longer apply. He was very excited and decided he had to get well at any rate to deal with the matter. This was when he broke his vow to abstain from milk, taken early in the century, and began to drink goats' milk in order quickly to regain his health.

CHAPTER VI

1918-1920

GANDHI'S espousal of the agitation is the greatest tragedy in Indian history—a tragedy because it was so stupid, so unnecessary. There must have been some clever wirepullers and revolutionaries in the background who managed to convince him that the Bills were a deadly insult to Indians. How any intelligent Indian could extract such an interpretation of these Bills it is most difficult to gather. It is, perhaps, the most vivid illustration of that kink I have referred to more than once.

These Bills did but arrange to prolong, *where necessary*, the operation of the Defence of India Act of 1915. Those are two very important points. The Legislation was already existing and in action everywhere. Further, it was only to be put into operation *where necessary*. Had the Government in England arranged to extend the operation of our beloved Dora after the War to such districts in which it might be found necessary, because, let us say, of the activities of suspected spies and pro-Germans there, I am sure no one would ever have raised a whisper about it. There is and can be no question that the whole of the agitation against the Bills was the acme of falsity and misrepresentation. The very fact that the Acts, which were duly passed in March, 1919, were never brought into operation shows this. This fact was hailed by the extremists triumphantly as proof of their entire uselessness. So might a troop of burglars and house-breakers point to the fact that a householder, who had possessed himself of a revolver to keep them at bay, had done so entirely unnecessarily. It is, I consider, the greatest reflection on Gandhi's intelligence that can be made. It was this agitation which brought about all the Punjab troubles of April, 1919, and the blood of Jallianwala Bagh, I consider, lies wholly on his head and no other. Had he not started this very stupid agitation, it is possible the Afghan war of 1919 would not have occurred, and we might have had a fairly calm and

untroubled atmosphere in which to work the new Reforms instead of the very poisoned one which Gandhi's activities brought about.

It is most significant that Gandhi seems to have taken not the least notice of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, outlining the reforms which were to come, which was issued unfortunately at nearly the same time as the Rowlatt Committee Report. Unfortunate because the latter killed the good effect of the former. Had the latter been delayed for two or three months, or been issued two or three months earlier, the Reforms might have had a better chance. As it was the extremist element concentrated on the Rowlatt Report and prejudiced the Reforms, which did not go as far as even the Moderates had hoped. It is not easy from Gandhi's writings to make out when he took up the question of Rowlatt Bills agitation, but as I have said, it is most significant that he paid not the least attention to the far larger and bigger question of the Reforms. The absurdity of the agitation I have pointed out. It was like a man quarrelling with a peck of rubbish in a ton of the richest gold ore, concentrating on the former instead of on the gold.

He started the Satyagraha Society as the organized body to conduct the agitation, yet writes of it "I could see that already my emphasis on truth and *Ahimsa* had begun to be disliked by some of its members." (*Ahimsa*=without violence, or Harmlessness.) By the end of the year, with the collapse of Germany and Turkey, Moslem agitation about the Caliphate grew very keen. Gandhi, by the accident of his having always wished to secure Hindu-Moslem unity, for he had had experience of the ill effects of the animosity in South Africa, found in the agitation against the Rowlatt Bills and that in favour of the Khilafat, a wonderful opportunity to combine the adherents of the two faiths in one body against the British Government. He had grown into such a habit of opposition that he did not seem happy unless he had an evil, or a supposed evil to combat. Failing a real one, he set up the bogey of the Rowlatt Bills.

In February, 1919, he issued a manifesto to the Press against the Rowlatt Bills. In it he notes that "I was a babe when Sir Dinshaw Wacha and Babu Surendranath Bannerji were among the accepted leaders of public opinion in India. Mr. Sastriar is a politician who has dedicated his all to the

'country's cause' and yet goes on to say that he must oppose these men, experienced as they were in Indian politics, in his agitation. The pity of it, a great man like Gandhi not realizing where his greatness ended.

In March he issues the first Khilafat manifesto but urges that "there should be no boycott of British goods by way of revenge or punishment. Boycott, in my opinion, is a form of violence." In the same manifesto he notes his disbelief in the frequent charges made against the British Government of provocation. "I have been told that the Criminal Investigation Department sometimes provokes violence. I do not believe it as a great charge." He then goes down to Madras, and it is there that he conceives the idea of a general *hartal* all over India as a protest against the Rowlatt Act. A *hartal* is a general strike in which all shops are closed and everyone ceases work. The date originally fixed was March 30th, and orders were actually sent out. Then he saw that orders could not get out everywhere in time to make it universal, so he changed the date to April 6th, and went north to Bombay. At Delhi, however, the orders for the change were received too late and the *hartal* was held on the date originally fixed, and was held with some bad clashes with the police, leading to loss of life and many injuries. The rioters coerced stallholders to close, stopped trams and other vehicles, threw brickbats, and marched to the station to demand the release of those who had been arrested for violence. Gandhi condemned the violence of the mob as being contrary to the obligations of the Satyagraha Pledge. He said, however, that "there was no justification to fire on the innocent people". Here the kink comes out again. Gandhi must be well aware that magistrates had the power to order such firing, and that though it had been very infrequently resorted to, yet this had been done in a sufficient number of cases within recent times as to be generally known as a possibility when a mob gets out of hand. He may deplore such powers and prohibit them when he becomes a Dictator, but till then he should recognize the existence of brick walls and do all he can to prevent his people running their heads into the wall instead of abusing the wall for being there, in the hopes that such abuse will cause it to melt away.

As soon as Gandhi heard of the troubles at Delhi he started to go north, but was turned back. At the same time there

occurred the arrests of Drs. Kitchlew and Pal who had been in the forefront of the agitation in the Punjab.

It was the news of these arrests—Gandhi's turning back was so reported—that set Amritsar, Ahmedabad, Nadiad and several other places ablaze, resulting in the tragedy of the Jallianwala Bagh at the first named town, and considerable loss of life elsewhere. At Amritsar the mob got out of hand and murdered several Europeans including a lady. It looked to many Englishmen in the Punjab at the time as if we were to see the horrors of the Mutiny enacted again. The Mutiny succeeded to the extent it did because it was not promptly crushed. General Wheeler's inaction at Meerut may be said to be entirely responsible for the outbreak there becoming the Mutiny instead of one of the two dozen or so former outbreaks, all of which had been crushed by instant action. Most officials in India had to study these matters. The English in India are but "a corporal's guard". At no time in history has such an insignificant force held so huge a country.

This is not written to excuse General Dyer. I have never gone deeply enough into the evidence either to excuse or condemn. I am merely pointing out that we English in India have a very lurid background of what occurred in the past. That background must always be in the minds of a microscopic minority in a far foreign land. The Hindu may ordinarily be very mild and gentle, but when roused he murders women and children indiscriminately and throws their bodies pell mell into wells. That picture was probably very strongly before General Dyer's mind. It had been reinforced strongly by the Englishwoman murdered three days previously with barbarity. The Indian mind, with its lack of historical sense and inability to correlate facts, is blind to their misdeeds of the Mutiny (I am fully aware that we, too, had very much to our discredit, but it followed, and did not precede: it was by way of revenge—not original).

The vigour with which the outbreaks in the Punjab were put down had the effect of promptly quelling the incipient rising. Indians, like all other peoples, respect determination and force, however much they may abuse it. The three hundred killed at Jallianwala Bagh, who had assembled there contrary to orders and most of whom must have known that there was a probability of trouble, do constitute a very real tragedy in our history of India: if we had been weaker, who

can say that three thousand or thirty thousand might not have perished before order was restored again ?

Gandhi returned, from being turned back from the Punjab, to Bombay and arrived in the midst of rioting. Here we see his blind side in evidence. In the midst of the violent mob which the police are trying to keep in order he declares to a police officer that they would not hurt a fly ; he had shortly before in his manifesto to the Press on the Rowlatt Bills, declared that the Committee ignored the historical fact that the millions of India were the gentlest people on earth. So may tigers be till their claws come out. We, who experienced those claws in the Mutiny, cannot forget them.

The toad beneath the harrow knows
Exactly where each tooth point goes.
The butterfly upon the road
Preached contentment to that toad.

Gandhi was deeply hurt by the outbreaks of violence on the part of his people, and at Ahmedabad on April 14th, he spoke words which, in the opinion of his friend, C. F. Andrews, "are in the supreme manner of Cardinal Newman". He said: "And as all these things have happened in my name I am ashamed of them, and those who have been responsible for them have thereby not honoured me but disgraced me. A rapier run through my body could hardly have pained me more. I have said times without number that Satyagraha admits no violence, no pillage, no incendiarism ; and still in the name of Satyagraha we have burnt down buildings, forcibly captured weapons, extorted money, stopped trains, cut off telegraph wires, killed innocent people and plundered shops and private houses. If deeds such as these could save me from the prison house or the scaffold I should not like to be so saved. It seems that the deeds I have complained of have been done in an organized manner. There seems to be a definite design about them, and I am sure that there must be some educated and clever man or men behind them." The last sentence is most significant. I myself am sure that all along there must have been clever men in the background who have been using Gandhi, unknown to himself, as a marionette to do their bidding. He has probably often defeated them, through his innate honesty. On the other hand he is credulous and always believes in the best in other

people and in none of his writings have I ever observed the slightest suspicious streak. Early in his life he was twice taken in badly. If or when the full truth of the revolutionary movement comes out, I should not be surprised to see that a very clever cabal in the background staged the Rowlatt Bills agitation, and much else that has troubled the waters of Indian history these past twelve years and more.

It was at this time that he made use of the expression "Himalayan miscalculation" which has so often been repeated, and which does very accurately represent his misjudgment of things. On the 18th April, he orders the suspension of Satyagraha, and certain young Punjabis threaten him with assassination in consequence. Lala Lajpat Rai, a Punjab nationalist, starts the idea of boycotting the new Councils, which the Reforms were to introduce, until the Government should atone for the Punjab wrongs, and Gandhi joins him with the idea of tacking the Khilafat campaign on to it. It was about May that he decided he must have a central band of "well-trying, pure-hearted volunteers who thoroughly understood the strict conditions of Satyagraha" in order to control mobs and prevent the outbreak of violence such as had recently occurred. Even these disappointed him. The "well-trying, pure-hearted volunteers" only three years later threw still living Indian policemen into raging flames at Chauri Chaura and again stopped Gandhi's campaign.

He is now asked to take up the editorship of *Young India*, a weekly in English, and *Navajivan*, a monthly in Gujarati, which he did, turning the latter also into a weekly, and combining the editorial offices at Ahmedabad. These two have since been his mouthpieces to India. At the height of the campaign their circulations rose to 40,000 each—not much by European standards but we must remember that literacy only reaches eight per cent. in India, and there is the trouble of the difference of languages, far greater than occurs in Europe. By 1926 the circulation had fallen to below eight thousand, and they were of course below even this during his two years' imprisonment—1922-4. As he will not take advertisements for them, holding that these tie and cramp a paper, they have not been always on a paying basis.

The Government had appointed the Hunter Committee to inquire into the slaughter at Amritsar and the troubles generally. Gandhi had at last obtained leave to visit the

Punjab, and had there met Pundit Motilal Nehru, who became one of his closest supporters. Together they decided on the very negative attitude of boycotting the Hunter Committee and of forming a Congress Committee with the same purpose. It is difficult to reconcile this with his love of truth. To boycott a Committee which is trying to arrive at the truth would not ordinarily show a love for it, and if there are many who believe that Gandhi is a wily old fox and disbelieve in his protestations of love for the truth, he has only himself to blame for his foolish attitude. He may convince the majority of Indians, but the impartial outsider must shake his head gravely over bias of this nature.

He himself was placed on the Congress Committee to inquire into the "Punjab wrongs", and they got out their report next year just ahead of that of the Hunter Committee. He also attends a Hindu-Moslem Conference at Delhi to secure unity. The Greek landing at Smyrna in the middle of May and the massacres there had aroused Indian Moslems to a further heat of resentment, and feeling was high. The questions brought up were the Khilafat and Cow Protection. Gandhi manages to get the latter matter dropped to avoid the appearance of bargaining. If the Hindus would support the Mahomedans without asking for any *quid pro quo* he was sure, he said, that the good sense of the latter would lead them to avoid wounding Hindu susceptibilities. It was here that the word non-co-operation was first used, though it did not become known till some months later.

At the end of the year he attends the Indian National Congress at Amritsar, and we find him moving a resolution for co-operation with the Government on the Reforms against strong opposition, but a compromising amendment to the resolution was found and passed. He notes that it was impossible to arrive at a real vote at the Congress owing to there being no arrangements to distinguish between delegates who had a right to vote and any stray visitor who might chance to wander in and put up his hand. The main resolution at this Congress was the drafting of a new constitution for the Congress. Since 1918 it had definitely fallen into the hands of extremists after having been run by Moderates until that time, and it was felt that its constitution should accordingly be revised. From his known ability as a draftsman Gandhi was placed on the Committee to do this, with two

proxies for Tilak and Das, then the heads of the Extremist movement. Of this Congress Gandhi notes: "It was a perfect treat for me to put up my first fight on a Congress platform. All courteous, all equally unyielding: the great Malaviyaji trying to hold the balance evenly, now pleading with the one and now with the other. . . . I had a rare time between Lokamanya and Deshabandhu." Lokamanya and Deshabandhu were the popular titles given to Tilak and Das and signified the People's Pride and the Country's Servant.

1920 saw the campaign of non-co-operation in full swing. Besides the general organization of this campaign, Gandhi also had the inquiry into the "Punjab wrongs" and the Congress Constitution on his hands. Some South African friends took up with him his espousal of the Turkish cause, pointing out their notorious oppression of the Armenians. Gandhi defends himself in *Young India*, though his line of defence is weak and largely based on that old legal maxim, "No case: abuse the plaintiff". The best he can say is that the Mahomedans "have accepted the principle of taking full guarantees for the protection of non-Moslem minorities" and that "the European powers are themselves in a measure responsible for what misrule there may be in Armenia and Syria." Here his lack of historical knowledge is very deplorable. One would think that before taking such an important decision he would at least have looked up some brief record of recent Turkish history, written from an impartial standpoint.

Events in Europe regarding Turkey had considerable influence on India that year. Mustapha Kemal set up a nationalist government at Angora, and the Sultan at Constantinople condemns the leading Nationalists to death and sends an army against them. *Per contra*, the Greeks in June and July occupy Eastern Thrace and on August 10th, the Treaty of Sevres, which assigned Thrace and Smyrna to Greece, and spheres of influence to France and Italy, and made Armenia a separate government, was forced on the Sultan. The Turkish Nationalist government repudiated this, and of course carried all the Indian Moslems with it in sympathy. Another incident of this year which C. F. Andrews claims had a very great effect on the Indian mind, was the publication of a book on British war propaganda, much of which was false but was related with pride. And in England the fact

that a resolution was passed in the House of Lords condoning General Dyer's action, and the raising of a purse of £20,000 by the British public to compensate General Dyer for having been forced to retire, caused infinitely greater ill-feeling in India than the actual shooting had done. It, Indians felt, had been done in hot blood; the condonation and approval was done in cold, and this they felt could not be forgiven. Again we see their lack of imagination, the inability to see how English eyes could not help reverting to the Mutiny days.

Early in May the Congress cleverly managed to get out their report on the Punjab troubles before the Hunter Committee. It is naturally a very *ex parte* report, showing none of the more impartial attitude of the latter. Its summing up was "Whilst therefore we believe that the mob excesses in Amritsar and elsewhere were wrong and deserving of condemnation, we are equally sure the popular misdeeds have been more than punished by the action of the authorities" and goes on strongly to condemn the inaction of the Viceroy in failing to make a personal visit of inquiry to the Punjab.

In June, 1920, Gandhi writes two letters to the Viceroy; one an open ultimatum that non-co-operation would begin on August 1st, should not the Government show clearly signs of atonement over the Punjab and Khilafat, and the other one on behalf of Indian Moslems and the Khilafat, and arrangements are made for a special Congress at Calcutta in September in order to consider the whole question of non-co-operation. The Government, of course, took no action over the ultimatum and on August 1st, Gandhi returned his Kaiser-i-Hind order. Tilak died this same month and Gandhi felt the loss keenly; he looked at Tilak as his greatest bulwark, yet Tilak had expressed himself strongly against Gandhi's policy of non-co-operation, as did also C. R. Das, Rabindranath Tagore, and a host of others. Gandhi himself recognized this when he said: "I have been told that I have been doing nothing but wreckage and that by bringing forward the resolution I am breaking up the political life of the country."

The Congress at Calcutta carried the policy of non-co-operation in spite of strenuous opposition. I have not been able to make out whether it was of the Congress, or the main one in December, of which C. F. Andrews writes in the *Life* which prefaces Gandhi's *Speeches and Writings*, but it is

certainly interesting. He says: "For, as we have said, though many had jubilantly proclaimed their faith in his progress, it was found that as time drew near for putting his plans into practice they were busy finding loopholes to escape the rigour of Mr. Gandhi's discipline. Everybody would throw everybody else into the struggle. A body of men who had sworn by Mr. Gandhi and denounced those who had the courage to differ from him were suddenly faced with an awkward dilemma. . . . This was to their mind the only course left open, that was to thwart Mr. Gandhi's resolution in the open Congress. But Mr. Gandhi had prepared the ground with characteristic thoroughness. Khilafat specials from Bombay and Madras had flooded the Congress with delegates sworn to vote for him." It is the last sentence I would draw particular attention to. It was, of course, quite allowable under the Congress Constitution which had never tried to secure real proportional representation of the country, but it was a practice which one does not somehow like to associate with Gandhi's otherwise absolute honesty. To my mind it savours very strongly of sharp practice. An ordinary politician might do it—not a statesman or a Mahatma.

He felt very strongly that there should be no co-operation with the elections to the coming Councils, even in the matter of standing for election and then obstructing from within, as the Swarajists were to do later. "I frankly confess to you," he said at Madras in August, "that I have not that trust in so many Indians making that declaration" (of not taking the oath of allegiance) "and standing by it." At about the same time he was taken to task for using the adjectives immoral, unjust, debasing, and untruthful with regard to the Government, and in answering it we get an interesting insight into his family affairs. "I use these adjectives with the greatest deliberation. I have used them for my own true brother with whom I was engaged in a battle of non-co-operation for full thirteen years and although the ashes cover the remains of my brother I tell you that I used to tell him that he was unjust when his plans were based upon immoral foundation." Prithwis Chandra Ray, a nationalist writer and the biographer of C. R. Das, thus comments on Gandhi's decision to boycott the Councils: "If the object of the Nationalists was to attain complete self-government in a short time, they could not have committed a greater blunder than by boycotting the

Councils in the decisions of 1920. . . . They mortgaged the future of India to achieve a temporary and histrionic effect. But their absence from the first Council under the new constitution did incalculable harm in the cause of Indian progress, and did not allow the people to get a glimpse of the defects of dyarchy in good time."

It was at the end of this year that the Government at last decided they must take some action against the non-co-operation movement, and published a proclamation stating that henceforth anyone using language likely to stir up trouble would be arrested. This, of course, was gladly welcomed by the keener non-co-operators and they flocked to gaol, so that at the Congress at the end of the year there was a poor showing of its leading lights on their "Treasury bench".

The Congress, when it met at Nagpur in December, confirmed the non-co-operation resolution passed at the special Calcutta session. In June of this year a Council had been created which was to be obeyed in action and abstention and was the first permanent body created during its thirty-five years of life. Gandhi says that the Congress changed entirely from this year, becoming a constructive instead of a petitioning body. He thus speaks of it: "The longest and most important Congress ever held has come and gone. It was the biggest demonstration ever held against the present system of Government. The President uttered the whole truth when he said that it was a Congress in which instead of the President and the leaders driving the people, the people drove him and the latter."

CHAPTER VII

NON-CO-OPERATION, 1921-1922

It is said that Rabindranath Tagore, perhaps India's most outstanding son to the world, did more than anyone else to kill non-co-operation. He hated it as being the essence of negation and threw all his mighty weight against it. And he carried his province of Bengal, the largest and politically the most important in India, with him, not only because of his lead, but because it had tried the same policy from 1905 to 1908 and had burnt its fingers so badly that it was in no hurry to try it again. Edward Thompson, in his splendid "Reconstruction of India", says "Rabindranath Tagore did do more than anyone else to wreck the movement in Bengal; and its failure in Bengal ensured its failure elsewhere, even though Das and Tilak were swept in by the force of public feeling. I was told at the time that Mr. C. R. Das, fighting an uphill battle, without his mind in the job, used to close each busy day with a full dress commination of the poet, a fervent exposition of the text 'Gott strafe Tagore'."

Tagore in September, 1920, had written to Andrews, "Let us forget the Punjab affairs—but never forget that we shall go on deserving such humiliation over and over again until we set our house in order. Do not mind the waves of the sea, but mind the leaks in your vessel. Politics in our country is extremely petty. It has a pair of legs, one of which has shrunk and shrivelled and become paralytic and therefore feebly waits for the other one to drag it on. There is no harmony between the two, and our politics in its poppings and totterings and falls, is comic and undignified". He deplored that Gandhi's great gifts should be made to serve political ends. "It is criminal to transform moral force into force," he said; he instinctively recoiled from all that stood for negation instead of construction. "The present attempt," he wrote in March, 1921, "to separate our spirit from that of the Occident is a tentative of spiritual suicide . . . to say that it is wrong to co-operate with the West is to encourage

the worst form of provincialism." "Tagore did not doubt Gandhi, but he feared the Gandhists", says Romain Rolland.

It is very doubtful whether Gandhi would have obtained the success he did for his movement during this year had there not been grave economic bases for the discontent in India besides the political ones which were the ostensible causes. In the first place it was the year of the great slump all over the world, and it hit India with particular force owing to the fact that the exchange had been forced up to two shillings and tenpence in February, from a normal one and fourpence, and then fell in July to one and eightpence, leaving merchants very badly in the air with stocks which they had ordered and hoped to pay for at the former high rate. Then there were the two bad harvests of 1919 and 1920, which, in a country where the population is eighty-nine per cent. rural and eighty per cent. agricultural, as in India, is bound to cause grave trouble. Prices had everywhere risen during the War and the short post-War boom of 1919 and still stood at that level. There were grave troubles in the labour world with the unprecedented number of four hundred strikes. A further cause lay in the thousands of demobilized Indian sepoys kicking against the inertia and dullness of life in their primitive villages after the exciting times, and, to them, relatively far greater comfort and higher standard of living which they had had in the army. Lastly, and perhaps most important of all, was the discontent of thousands of educated Indians who during the War had taken the place of Europeans who went to the War, had done their work for them as efficiently, or so they thought, as they had themselves, and then had to take back seats again at lower rates of pay. It is now so generally recognized that political trouble is usually ninety per cent. or more economic, that these several reasons for the slight apparent success of the non-co-operation movement should be given full value. One of the worst features of the non-co-operation campaign was the calling of students away from Government schools and colleges. It is true that these were stated in the Imperial Legislative Assembly to have numbered only seventeen hundred out of what I calculate to have been about six to eight million students and pupils. Even C. F. Andrews called it "the most painful result". It brought politics into the schools, and while it may, as Gandhi claims, have destroyed the prestige of the Government

institutions, the complete failure of the nationalist movement to found schools, to take the place of the Government ones, must have destroyed their prestige to a far greater extent. No one in future will believe a promise from them that they can organize such an educational movement.

Gandhi's power in India at this time was undoubtedly enormous. Paul, an Indian Christian writer of moderate nationalist views, who is far from endorsing Gandhi's policy, says of him at this time: "It may be said, without exaggeration, that every single household in the country took the name of Mahatma Gandhi when the lamp was lit in the evening. . . . The news of Mr. Gandhi, his words and his acts, flew over the country with the zest and the thrill of an arrived millennium. . . . Here was a man who rang true in his words, a man in flesh and blood who was genuine enough to put into practice his own unpractical idealism." There was also the fact that some twenty thousand men and women went to prison at his bidding. Gandhi, with his close allies the Ali Brothers, Mahomed and Shaukat, often referred to as "the Brothers" till Mahomed died recently, made strenuous efforts all through this next year of 1921, when the campaign may be said to have been at its height. Lord Reading relieved Lord Chelmsford of the viceroyalty in March, and shortly after the new viceroy interviewed Gandhi at Simla. One of the points which came up was the conduct of the Ali Brothers. Gandhi, in effect, apologized for them and promised that they would be more careful in what they said in future. This excited a good deal of adverse comment in the vernacular Press, the grounds taken being that they saved themselves thus from imprisonment whilst the smaller fry were allowed to go to gaol—imputations which seem to have wounded Gandhi and the Brothers deeply. He argues that slaves are not free when at large in their masters' house; they are only free when he locks them up in cells for rebelling against his authority. Gandhi himself is so perfectly happy when in gaol that there is probably not the slightest hypocrisy in this argument of his.

He is not very happy early in the year at how non-co-operators are behaving themselves. In February, 1921, he writes: "But one hears of non-co-operators being insolent and intolerant in their behaviour towards those who differ from them. . . . Whilst we may not be dissatisfied with the

progress made so far, we have little to our credit to make us feel proud", and a little later, regarding the outbreak at Malegaon he said: "If the facts reported in the Press are substantially correct, Malegaon non-co-operators have been false to their creed, their faith and their country. They have put back the hands of the clock of progress. . . . The murder of the men who were evidently doing their duty was, if the report is correct, deliberate. It was a cowardly attack. Certain men wilfully broke the law, and invited punishment.

"There could be no justification for resentment of such imprisonment. Those who commit violence of the Malegaon type are the real co-operators with the Government," and he goes on to advise people to cease talking of the evil of the Government and the officials whether European or Indian. In a later issue of his paper he reverts to the subject: "I observe there is a tendency to minimize the guilt of the non-co-operators at Malegaon. No amount of provocation by the Sub Inspector could possibly justify retaliation by the non-co-operators."

In June, after his Simla visit, he says, "I have the hardihood to say that Swaraj could not be granted even by God. We would have to earn it ourselves. Swaraj from its very nature is not in the granting of anybody," and then goes on to define the non-co-operation programme; the date, 20th June, of course refers to 1922. "We must redouble our efforts to go through our programme. It is clearly as follows: (1) Removal of untouchability; (2) Removal of the drink curse; (3) Ceaseless introducing of the spinning wheel and the ceaseless production of Khaddar leading to an almost complete boycott of foreign cloth; (4) Regulation of Congress numbers, and (5) Collection of Tilak Swaraj Fund. . . . We are under promise to ourselves to collect one crore rupees, register one crore members, and introduce twenty lacs of spinning wheels in our homes by the twentieth June." (A crore=ten millions; a lac=one hundred thousand.)

In August, on the anniversary of Tilak's death there is a great demonstration at Bombay and bonfires of foreign cloth are made at Gandhi's suggestion. This was very strongly condemned all round. He stoutly defended the correctness of his action, but the prognostication, "Things first, men next", was soon shown to be painfully true in the riots that followed

the efforts made to boycott the Prince of Wales' arrival at Bombay in November.

September 1st saw the outbreak of the Moplah rebellion in the South of India. They had literally taken Gandhi at his word in promising Swaraj within a year, as from September 1st, 1920. They took it to mean the setting up of a Moslem Empire in India, and promptly started killing and forcibly converting all the Hindus in their country. The rebellion took some months to put down, military forces having to be despatched there. They were the first internal military operations in India since the Mutiny. Gandhi did not add to his popularity by praising the Moplahs as brave men. He admitted that nothing had so disturbed the atmosphere since the inauguration of the non-co-operation as this, "But it is clear that Moplahs have succeeded in taking half a dozen lives and have given already a few hundred We must not betray any mental or secret approval of the Moplahs. We must see clearly that it would be dishonourable for us to show any approval of the violence. We must search for no extenuating circumstances. . . . The Moplahs are among the bravest in the land. They are God-fearing. Their bravery must be transformed into purest gold. . . . Here is the testimony given to Moplah valour by the writer in the Imperial Gazetteer of India. 'The one constant element is a desperate fanaticism; surrender is unknown; the martyrs are consecrated before they go out and hymned at death.' Such courage is worthy of a better treatment."

September saw the arrest of the Ali Brothers. Probably stung by the reflections on their shirking prison, already alluded to, they laid themselves out to court it, and succeeded by speaking and writing to induce Indians in civil and military employ to leave employment under the British Government. Gandhi issued a manifesto upholding the right of citizens to express their opinions openly on the rightness or otherwise of service under Government. Shortly after this he publishes his article in *Young India*, entitled "Honour the Prince", advocating the boycott of his visit, since it was being made to exploit the benefit of British rule. He ignored the fact that the Prince was coming to convey the thanks of the King and England to India for the help she had given to us during the War, and with his lack of imagination, he failed to realize how adversely it would affect British opinion of Indians in general.

I venture to think that nothing since the Mutiny has done India such harm in England as this wilful and unnecessary insult to the heir to the Crown.

The Prince arrived in Bombay on November 11th, and the riots broke out in which non-co-operators tried violently to prevent others to do him honour, and led to something like two hundred deaths and some thousands of injured—most of whom were, fortunately, of those who had provoked the disturbance. In Gandhi's own article on the subject he notes that Parsi women were roughly handled by the crowd, and that none among the crowd of fifteen hundred denied this, that the police he saw were exceedingly restrained, and that fire brigades were being obstructed in their work of saving property. He is very deeply distressed over the outbreak and in calling off civil disobedience, says, "I confess my inability to conduct a campaign of Civil Disobedience to a successful issue unless a completely non-violent spirit is generated among the people.

"I am sorry for the conclusion. It is a humiliating confession of my incapacity. . . . If I can have nothing to do with the organized violence of the Government, I can have less to do with the unorganized violence of the people."

The Congress this year was held at Ahmedabad. Again many of the leading lights were in prison, including C. R. Das, who was president-elect. The main resolution was to continue the programme of non-violent non-co-operation by inviting enrolment in the ranks of the Volunteers, who had been prescribed as illegal organizations by the Government. The other most important resolution was that which appointed Gandhi as practical dictator with full powers, save only the powers to make peace, and the power to nominate his successor in the event of his own arrest. Gandhi opposed a change of the Congress creed, to the "attainment of Swaraj or complete independence, free from all foreign control, by the people of India, by all legitimate and peaceful means" on the grounds that it had been changed only the year before to practically the same thing but within the British Empire, and got it rejected by a large majority.

1921 saw the first year of the working of the new Legislative Assembly and Councils. They both gained and lost by the self-imposed abstention of the Extremists. They gained in smoothness of working and lack of needless obstruction, and

did much sterling work. Their first acts were the removal of all restrictive and class and race distinctive legislation. But the absence of the Extremist element forced much of the rôle they would have taken upon Moderates. The several very evident reforms which they brought in, including fiscal reforms, made for a considerable revulsion of feeling in their favour, especially on the part of the trading classes, and it is very probable that funds did not pour into the non-co-operation movement coffers to the same extent.

The spirit of the new Assembly, moderate though it was, showed the rather childish nature of the Indian, in their demand during this, the first year of its working, for further powers. Mr. Woolacott, author of "India on Trial", mentions having met Mr. Montagu shortly after the incident and finding him deeply hurt and disappointed at the demand. "We have," he said with emphasis, "granted these people a brand new constitution, and now, before the ink on it is dry, they are demanding another. I will be no party to any change unless it can be shown either that the machine or the Constitution has proved unworkable, or that those who are working it have given proof of their fitness for further responsibility. Neither of these conditions exists, and I may tell you that my position in the matter represents the considered decision of His Majesty's Government." This is the man whose death a couple of years later was deplored by all Indian nationalists and whom many Englishmen felt had betrayed their cause so much by the reforms he granted that the following lines found great favour with them :

Oh Lord Almighty give his due
To Edwin Samuel Montagu.
What is his due we cannot tell
But chance it, Lord, and give him . . .

In England many felt that the end of our rule had come in India and this made itself shown in the very poor recruitment for the Indian Civil Service. Only twenty-six out of the eighty-six applicants for appointment were Europeans, in spite of the fact that men were clamouring for work at this time, and of the appointments made only three were Europeans, one of whom immediately resigned. Mr. Lloyd George, in order to reassure the Civil Service, made a statement in the House of Commons on the subject, but worded it

in such a manner as to excite lively resentment among Indians, especially as he had somewhat earlier referred to the Reforms as being but an experiment.

The Government of India during this year had found it necessary to avail themselves of some of the safeguards under the constitution, those of certifying legislation which the Councils would not pass, and of deporting undesirables. Indians thought the use of these safeguards negated the whole scheme instead of realizing that if brakes were provided for a new and untried machine, it was only reasonable to suppose that they would have to be used. The wonder is not that the safeguards have been used so much but that they have been used so very little during these past ten years, especially in view of the often violently revolutionary tone which has been displayed.

In the King's message to the Legislative Assembly in February the term "The beginning of Swaraj within my Empire" was used, and he also expressed his sorrow, as did the Duke of Connaught, who opened the new legislatures, over the tragedy at Amritsar, and both these statements made a deep impression. So though non-co-operation was generally taken to be at its apogee during this year, it also carried within it many seeds of decay. A good monsoon too, ensuring a good harvest and lower prices, at once lessened the economic discontent which was such a potent cause during the past two years.

It is interesting to note that an Indian Christian writer already mentioned, K. T. Paul, considers that the riots signaling the Prince of Wales' visit marked the unifying of a national movement of the whole nation, and mentions that Gandhi's message was contained in the songs of beggars and children and in the drama, and that it caused an outburst of new literature, art, songs, drama and romance, all with a very definite ethical purpose. This did not, however, apply to Bengal. That province had had this renaissance during the Swadeshi movement of 1905-8, and remained calm, just as it refused to take up non-co-operation. Indeed the period was remarkable there for the publication of books by the hotheads of that earlier period, recanting their old pet theories of a short cut to Swaraj. This at least is Mr. Prithwis Chandra Ray's summing up. I personally do not agree with Mr. Paul's conclusion; the movement flickered out with Gandhi's arrest

four months later, and has since been more and more distinguished for the cleavage between Hindus and Moslems and between extremists and moderates. During January, 1922, a conference of some two hundred leaders of Indian political thought was called at Bombay. Gandhi attended this Conference but refused to become a member. The object of the conference was to consider the terms of reference on which they might ask for a round table conference on the question of India's constitution. Gandhi assisted in the debates and framing of the resolutions. Then without apparently informing anyone of his intention to do so, he sent an ultimatum to the Viceroy in his rôle as dictator of the Congress, threatening the resumption of civil disobedience in Bardoli if some impossible concessions were not made. Regarding this conference he wrote, "The mind of the Conference seems to be centred more on a round table conference than upon asserting the popular right of free speech, free association, and free Press which are more than a round table conference. . . . I observed an admirable disposition on its part to consider the Government's difficulties. Indeed the Government's case could not have been better presented". In view of his own demands it is interesting to read what followed: "Is India ready for what she wants? Or does she ask like a child for food she has not stomach for? . . ." From that standpoint I do consider the idea of the conference for devising a scheme of full Swaraj premature. India has not yet incontestably proved her strength.

This showed up in a very remarkable way his refusal to work with other men. Here were two hundred of India's leading men. Many of them were personal friends of his and with whom he was in considerable sympathy up to a point. Suddenly in the midst of a conference, which might have useful results, he nullifies the whole by the despatch of an ultimatum which the Viceroy could probably hardly fail to connect with the other members of the conference as well as himself. To me the action seems unpardonable, but I realize that it is one of those matters where the question of the code in which one was brought up comes in. I do not think any Englishman, be he from board school or public school, could have so failed in playing the game.

The Government answered Gandhi's ultimatum in a Communique, stating that the question was one of Lawlessness

or the Maintenance of Law and Order, to which Gandhi replied that the alternative was mass civil disobedience or Lawless Repression. He insisted on the right to enlist volunteers and to hold public meetings and that "the first thing for the people to do is to secure a reversal of this mad repression and then to concentrate upon more complete organization and more construction." It would seem to be the greatest pity that Gandhi could not for some time in his life, even the shortest period, have been placed in executive charge of some administrative unit, civil or military, composed of ordinary human beings, so as to have learnt from practical experience that however admirable his theories of government are in theory and for people of his own ways of thought, they will not work for the general population.

Gandhi had been expecting arrest ever since the riots in November—in fact, one of the indictments against him was for an article published by him earlier, in September, 1921, and from February he knew that it was coming from a speech in the House of Commons by Mr. Montagu. His whole attitude at this time is summed up in this extract from an article in *Young India* :

"For I deliberately oppose the Government to the extent of trying to put its very existence in jeopardy. For my supporters therefore it must be a moment of joy when I am imprisoned. It means the beginning of success if only the supporters continue the policy for which I stand."

In February, 1922, he again launched the civil disobedience campaign, and stopped it within twenty-four hours when news of the tragedy of Chauri Chaura, where his volunteers, sworn to non-violence, committed the horrible outrage of killing or wounding twenty-two Indian policemen in the conduct of their duty, and of throwing their bodies, some still alive, into the flames of their burning station. It convinced Gandhi that his people were not yet ready for non-violent non-co-operation. Here is his own account of the tragedy. "The self-imprisoned constables had to come out for dear life and as they did so, they were hacked to pieces and the mangled remains were thrown into the raging flames. No provocation can possibly justify the brutal murder of men

who had been rendered defenceless and who had virtually thrown themselves on the mercy of the mob. And when India claims to be non-violent and hopes to mount the throne of liberty through non-violent means, mob-violence, even in answer to grave provocation, is a bad augury."

"But what about your manifesto to the Viceroy and your rejoinder to his reply?" spoke the voice of Satan. It was the bitterest cup of humiliation to drink. "Surely it is cowardly to withdraw the next day after pompous threat to the Government and promises to the people of Bardoli."

He went on to say two days later: "God has been abundantly kind to me. He warned me the third time that there is not as yet in India that truthful and non-violent atmosphere which and which alone can justify mass disobedience. . . . He warned me in 1919 when the Rowlatt Act agitation was started. . . . I retraced my steps, called it a Himalayan miscalculation, humbled myself before God and man, and stopped not merely mass civil disobedience but even my own which I knew was intended to be civil and non-violent." He commented on the imperfection of Congress organization in these words: "As it is the Congress organization is still imperfect and its instructions are still perfunctorily carried out. We have not probably more than one crore (ten million) of members on the roll. We are in the middle of February, yet not many have paid the annual four annas subscription for the current year. Volunteers are indifferently enrolled. They do not conform to all the conditions of their pledge. They do not even wear hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar." . . . "I am in the unhappy position of a surgeon proved skillless to deal with an admittedly dangerous case," and two years later he wrote of this period: "I saw then as clearly as possible that many members, if not indeed the majority, did not believe in non-violence and truth as an integral part of the Congress creed. They would not allow that 'peaceful' meant 'non-violent', and that 'legitimate' meant 'truthful'."

The All India Congress Committee met at Delhi on the 25th of February to consider Gandhi's stoppage of the civil disobedience. They were annoyed and angry, and refused to endorse Gandhi's decision entirely, reversing it to the extent that local bodies might decide, if they considered their districts were in every way prepared to carry it out with non-

violence, to do so. Gandhi wrote bitterly of the meeting: "There is so much undercurrent of violence, both conscious and unconscious, that I was actually and literally praying for a disastrous defeat. I have always been in a minority. The reader does not know that in South Africa I started with practical unanimity, reached a minority of sixty-four and even sixteen and went up again to a huge majority. The best and the most solid work was done in the wilderness of minority.

"I know that the only thing the Government dread is this huge majority I seem to command. They little know that I dread it even more than they. I have become literally sick of the adoration of the unthinking multitude. I would feel certain of my ground if I were spat upon by them. Then there would be no need of confession of Himalayan and other miscalculations, no retracing, no rearranging."

In March he was arrested, tried, and sentenced to six years' simple imprisonment. It was, perhaps, the politest trial ever staged—something more in the style of a Gilbert and Sullivan opera than real life. Judge and prisoner complimented each other, the former consulting the latter about his sentence, the prisoner asking for the heaviest that could be imposed. He of course pleaded guilty to the three counts of articles published by him in September and December, 1921, and February, 1922. He asked to be allowed to make a statement, and in it he said: "I would like to state that I entirely endorse the learned Advocate General's remarks in connection with myself. I think that he was entirely fair to me in all the statements that he has made, because it is very true, and I have no desire whatsoever to conceal from this Court the fact that to preach disaffection has become almost a passion with me. . . . Thinking over these things deeply, and sleeping over them night after night and examining my heart I have come to the conclusion that it is impossible for me to dissociate myself from the diabolical crimes of Chauri Chaura or the mad outrages of Bombay. He is quite right when he says that as a man of responsibility, a man having received a fair share of education, having had a fair share of experience of this world, I should know the consequences of every one of my acts. I knew them. I knew that I was playing with fire. I ran the risk, and if I was set free I would still do the same. I would be failing in my duty if I did not do so. . . . I know

that my people have sometimes gone mad. I am deeply sorry for it ; and I am therefore here, to submit not to a light penalty but to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a deliberate crime and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen."

His inability to realize the difficulties and problems of the ordinary administrator, and his views of the wide tolerance which should be shown to those who preached disaffection towards the Government was shown in the passage of his statement : "My experience of political cases in India leads me to the conclusion that in nine out of every ten the condemned men were totally innocent. Their crimes consisted in love of their country. In ninety-nine cases out of every hundred, justice has been denied to Indians as against Europeans in the Courts of India. . . . If one has no affection for a person or thing one should be free to give the fullest expression to his disaffection so long as he did not contemplate, promote or incite to violence. . . . But I hold it to be a virtue to be disaffected towards a Government which in its totality has done more harm to India than any previous system."

He concluded by saying : "So far as the sentence itself is concerned I certainly consider that it is as light as any judge would inflict on me and so far as the whole proceedings are concerned I must say that I could not have expected greater courtesy." And so to prison he went, where, as he wrote, he was as happy as a bird.

CHAPTER VIII

PRISON AND AFTER, 1922-1928

GANDHI spent two years in prison, being unconditionally released on account of his health after an operation for appendicitis in February, 1924. That his time in gaol was a happy one cannot fail to gather from his writings. It was release from responsibility and worry. We get most valuable information from his first quarterly letter, written to Hakim Ajinal Khan, one of his most devoted adherents. It is dated the 14th April, 1922. These are extracts from it :

"So far as I have had the opportunity for observation, physical needs are well looked after in this prison. I found both the superintendent and the head warder tactful and friendly. The first days are of no account. My relations with these two officials are as cordial as is possible between a prisoner and his warders", and regarding Shankar Lal Banker, who was sentenced with him, he says that he was allowed to visit him every day for half an hour to teach him carding cotton. About his books he says: "I had to use all my ingenuity to get leave to keep seven books, five of a purely religious character, an old dictionary which I value greatly, and an Urdu manual. . . . I do not know what means the superintendent had to use in order finally to persuade the higher authorities to let me keep the books.

"I am in solitary confinement and may not speak to anyone." He goes on to complain that, though there are several well-known political prisoners in the same gaol, he is not allowed to see them, although if they were all allowed to meet, "we would do the Government the greatest favour." Does this not show the very curious inability of the man to get not only I think the Western point of view, but that of any governing authority? I do not fancy any Oriental ruler would allow political prisoners to hobnob. He is quite happy he says. "What I said about my isolation is not intended as a complaint. I feel happy. My nature likes loneliness. I love quietness. And now I have an opportunity of engaging

in studies, that I had to neglect in the outside world. . . . I rise at four o'clock to pray. The inhabitants of the Satyagraha-Ashram will, I am sure, be glad to know that I have not ceased to say the morning prayers and sing some of the hymns which I know by heart. At six-thirty I begin my studies. I am not allowed a light. But as soon as it is light enough for reading I start work. At seven in the evening, when it is too dark to read, I finish my day's work. At eight o'clock I betake myself to rest after the usual Ashram prayer. My studies include the Koran, the Ramayana of Tulsidas, books about Christianity I got from Standing, exercises in Urdu and much else. I spend six hours on these literary efforts. Four hours I devote to handspinning and carding. To begin with, when I had only a little cotton at my disposal, I could only spin for thirty minutes. But now the administration has placed sufficient cotton at my disposal, very dirty to be sure—perhaps very good practice for a beginner. . . . Spinning becomes more and more an inner need with me. Every day I come nearer to the poorest of the poor, and in them to God. The four hours I devote to this work are more important to me than all the others. The fruits of my labour lie before my eyes. Not one impure thought haunts me in those four hours. While I read the Gita, the Koran, or the Ramayana, my thoughts fly far away. . . . In order to divide the day better I take only two meals a day instead of three. I feel quite well on it. With regard to food the prison superintendent is most accommodating. For the last three days he has let me have goats' milk and butter, and I hope in a few days to be able to make my own chapatis (unleavened bread). . . .

“ . . . Besides two new warm blankets, a coco-nut mat and two sheets have been placed at my disposal. And a pillow has also arrived since. I could really do without it. Up till now I have used my books or my spare clothes as a pillow. . . . So my friends need not be at all anxious about me. I am as happy as a bird, and I do not feel that I am accomplishing less here than outside. . . . Please try to convince my wife that it is better not to visit me. Devandas (his second son) made a scene when he was here. He could not bear to see me standing in the superintendent's presence. The proud and sensitive boy burst into tears, and I had difficulty in calming him.”

On the 1st May, 1923, we find him writing to the governor of the gaol, asking that his name should be struck off the list of prisoners granted certain privileges, as certain other prisoners there were not allowed the same, and in November of the same year he asks that the food privileges he has been allowed should be withdrawn as certain fellow prisoners are no longer to be allowed the same privileges. He concludes by saying: "I do not need to assure you that there is no question of dissension. It is only for the sake of my own inner peace that I propose you should restrict my diet, and I beg for your understanding and approval."

In the outside world the whole non-co-operation movement was toppling. In the Congress a struggle developed between no-changers and pro-changers, the latter wishing to enter the Councils. It seemed too hard to many that after all their struggles all those years for Swaraj, that now when some of the fruits of it were within their reach, in the shape of well paid ministerial posts in the reformed governments, they could not have them by reason of a policy in which they did not believe. The controversy was a sharp one and continued over some years. But the elections at the end of 1923 were contested by the pro-changers party of the Congress, who came to be recognized as the Swarajists, or the Council section of the Congress.

It was this matter of the spoils of office which has been such a cause of division within the ranks of Indians during the years following the introduction of the reforms. Not only was it particularly virulent as between Hindus and Moslems, as I point out in a later chapter, but also between the various bodies among the Hindus. We must realize that caste and family involves such strong loyalty in the East that nepotism, which with us is a crime, there is a virtue. Hence any government post usually meant not only wealth for the individual but often means of enriching many of his caste and family as well.

Gandhi himself put down the failure of the movement to the fact that there was no real belief in non-violence, and that where it was practised, it was the non-violence of helplessness rather than that of strength, and that far more energy was displayed towards their own countrymen who did co-operate, than against the Government. In a letter to Hakim Ajmal Khan in March, 1922, he said: "Co-operators are estranged from us; they fear us. They say that we are

establishing a bureaucracy worse than the existing one. We must remove every cause for such anxiety by going out of our way to win them to our side." He notes that national schools failed because they had set before themselves political objects and enlisted pupils only for a year, within which they had hoped to gain Swaraj, instead of making education their object.

It was not till April, 1924, two months after his release, that he was fit enough to take up public work again, which he did at first mainly in the conduct of his two papers. He notes that *Young India* had fallen from a circulation of twenty-one thousand five hundred to three thousand, and was being run at a loss. He states that while in 1920-21 the movement was destructive, it was now to be constructive, by building up national schools and panchayats. These last are an excellent Indian idea by which disputes are settled by each party appointing two arbitrators, and the four choosing a fifth, the five then settling the matter. The British have been accused of destroying the system, but as a matter of fact it had largely disappeared under the Moguls and was only slightly in evidence in Southern India in the eighteenth century.

In June came the struggle in which Gandhi found that he could no longer carry the Congress, which once had appointed him dictator, with him. Rajendra Prasad, speaking of a meeting of the Congress Committee which met at the end of June to consider Gandhi's proposals for a constructive programme, writes in his introduction to the collection of Gandhi's articles from *Young India* for the years 1924-26: "The meeting ended in gloom and Mahatma Gandhi was pained beyond measure to see the disruption of the great movement which he had led—a disruption which had been brought about as much by those who had thrown out his programme during his absence as by the inactivity, disorganization, and demoralization of those who yet professed to follow him."

Prasad goes on to mention how the change in attitude of his followers from his idea of non-violence had altered. It came in the discussion regarding a resolution condemning the murder of an Englishman, a Mr. Day, in Calcutta, which though eventually passed, showed considerable sympathy for a policy of such violence. So disgusted was Gandhi with

this that he soon afterwards expressed a desire to leave the Congress and work independently of it, but eventually decided to remain in and to leave the political side alone. His article early next month was entitled "Defeated and Humbled". He had broken down utterly in his final speech at this meeting. "It was the saddest speech I ever made," he said of it.

Gandhi was successful over his resolution of only having on the Congress executive extreme non-co-operators. But this led to a heated Press controversy, showing that he no longer had a united country behind him. The anonymous author, of strongly nationalist tendencies, of "The Congress and the National Movement", says, "The Mahatma on his release found that his triple boycott had disappeared almost completely, that the interest in *khaddar* had become only nominal, and that the leaders had lost touch with the masses. The touch once established between the classes and the masses was being used mainly in promoting intercommunal discord. By July, 1924, intercommunal feeling had become so violent that no hope remained of any successful non-co-operation propaganda", and it soon became evident that he would have to surrender the leadership of the party.

The Hindu-Moslem tension was rising everywhere and it reached a climax at Kohat, in the Frontier Province. A pamphlet containing "some highly insulting verses"—the description is Gandhi's—by a Hindu writer led to an attack by the Mahomedans on the Hindus, resulting in considerable loss of life and property, and the flight in terror of the whole Hindu population out of the town, mainly a Mahomedan one. A Hindu-Moslem Unity Conference was summoned at Delhi and Gandhi undertook a twenty-one day fast as a vicarious penance. The Conference passed a number of very admirable resolutions, but as the Rajendra Prasad already alluded to says, "But alas! the wave of recollection which the memorable fast had caused was short-lived and India becomes once again the playground of conflicting gusts of communal passions which resulted in numerous riots all over the country. To-day (August, 1927) one feels as if walking upon a powder magazine, and no place can be said to be safe from the risks of a communal upheaval. The worst passions have been roused by the preachings and propaganda of a class of unscrupulous men."

One sees, of course, in the foregoing what has always occurred everywhere that revolution has been preached. Tell people to non-co-operate or revolt against laws, and show them that they can do so to a certain extent with impunity, for in any mass civil disobedience it is only a few who can be punished, and they will speedily learn to use it in quarrels which are much nearer their hearts than the political, and far away, objects of their leaders.

The Labour Government had come into power in May this year, and the extremists had hoped much from them, but were gravely disappointed, and found that more severe repression was put into force against them than under the Conservatives. In January, Ramsay MacDonald, in a message to India, had declared that Britain would not be cowed into granting concessions, which should have prepared them for the fact that there would not be a great change of policy.

There was much revolutionary activity in Bengal this year. The Swarajists, who had entered the Legislative Councils there in sufficient numbers to obtain a majority, managed to obstruct the government to such an extent that the Governor had to resume autocratic control, and he had to revive, by ordinance, the powers of the Rowlatt Act to deport or arrest revolutionaries against whom evidence could not be obtained on account of terrorism. One also notes that non-co-operation was being used by the untouchables in the native state of Travancore in the South of India to secure the cancellation of restrictions. It is a struggle which lasts for two years and meets with lively sympathy and much help from Gandhi and his followers.

By October Gandhi realized that he would have to come to an arrangement with the Pro-Changers, and the Calcutta Pact was arranged, which was in effect a complete surrender to them, all non-co-operation being suspended excepting only the boycott of foreign cloth. Some months later he admitted that he was unprepared for the way in which the Swarajists managed to carry the day by a majority of votes. Hand-spinning and the wearing of *khaddar* are made compulsory for Congress members as a sop to Gandhi. In November, 1924, he notes that there are but seven thousand men and women spinning voluntarily in India, and next year we find him calculating that the membership of Congress is only about fifteen thousand—a very considerable drop from the

ten million which he—I fancy very erroneously—calculated it to be in February, 1922.

In the same month he expresses approval of the repudiation of India's debts which had been brought forward at the Congress of 1922 while he was in prison, and of which he had only just become aware. Here again he shows his grave lack of political sense. He did not expect to attain to his ideal state of Swaraj at one fell swoop, and has in several places acknowledged it must come by degrees, yet he will not connect this with the fact that the destruction of India's credit and the inflation of her currency must inevitably plunge the country into utter confusion.

Again, conducting a great revolutionary movement in India, one would have thought he would naturally have acquainted himself closely with Bolshevism in a country which had so much in common in its characteristics with India. Yet in December, 1924, we find him saying that he is ignorant of what it is. "But I do know that in so far as it is based on violence and denial of God it repels me."

Many of his most devoted followers among the No-Changers complained very bitterly at Gandhi's surrender to the Pro-Changers, and of these the students, who had suffered most by giving up the more or less efficient Government schools and colleges for the rather unorganized nationalist ones, were undoubtedly the hardest hit. *Young India* in these days is filled with bitter complaints of all this, and Gandhi has hard work to defend his change of front.

The Congress met at Belgaum, at the end of the year, as usual, with Gandhi in the chair. He hesitated long before deciding to take it. The chief resolution was the reaffirmation of the Calcutta Pact and meant his virtual resignation from the leadership of the party, since he still maintained his own personal adherence to his full programme of non-cooperation. He had recognized how deep the gulf between him and the intelligentsia was when he wrote in November: "I am to preside at a time when a gulf seems to be yawning between educated India and myself with some notable exceptions, and save for a few educated Indians of little fame, the intellect of the country seems to be ranged against my ways of thought and action."

In political matters he showed himself to be in favour of a redistribution of provinces on a linguistic basis, and that

"full guarantees should be given for all vested rights justly acquired" with regard to monopolies which had been granted to foreigners, and of a full guarantee of their status to Indian chiefs.

In May, 1925, we find him bitterly disappointed over his programme in favour of *khaddar* (hand-spun cloth). At Nagpur "everywhere there are provoking black foreign caps on almost every head." When he asks for them only a hundred are thrown in, four by others than their owners. They are promptly claimed and returned. "The discarding of *khaddar* is most noticeable," he writes, but "My faith in *khaddar* rises as I find this indifference to, if not a revolt against, *khaddar*." Here in the Central Provinces with a population of nine million, he found a Congress membership of only one hundred and thirty-two in April, '25, while of the five Congress Committee members only one spun himself, one purchased the yarn he should have spun himself, whilst the other three paid no attention to the matter. The whole incident is an exceedingly enlightening one of the way in which Indians regard such an institution as the Congress. They are very ready to attend its meetings, show the wildest enthusiasm in supporting resolutions and cheering leaders, but when it comes down to paying membership fees or performing membership obligations the enthusiasm vanishes almost entirely. Gandhi notes that the Tilak College, started in 1921 with a thousand students and forty teachers, had fallen in April, 1925, to forty-five students and eight teachers. "The story of the *vidya laya* (seat of science) is about the story of almost every other national school in the country."

1925 sees the turning point of the Swarajists from obstruction to opposition. C. R. Das, who had been leader of the party, was on the point of arranging a truce with the Governor of Bengal, who, as I have mentioned, had found it necessary to resume executive powers on account of the obstruction of the Swarajists, when he unfortunately died. He was a great man and died young. He would doubtless have lived to attain greater heights, and might have saved the Congress from the rashness of its independence policy. Like Gandhi, he was always considering India from the standpoint of the peasant and was as keenly out for his interests. But he had far greater insight than Gandhi into the objects of his fellow nationalists, realizing that the majority of them were out mainly for power

and position for themselves rather than the country's good, and he would have been more skilful than Gandhi in foiling them. Gandhi spends five days in Darjiling, in the Eastern Himalayas, with him, shortly before his death. Gandhi mentions Das as approving of Lord Birkenhead, then Secretary of State for India. "I expect big things from Lord Birkenhead," he said. "He is a strong man and I like strong men. He is not as bad as he speaks," Gandhi goes on to report.

In July Birkenhead in the House of Lords spoke of the situation in India in a manner which did not please Gandhi or Indian nationalists, for he quite correctly condemned their lack of co-operation or the actual hostility shown by so many of them in the working of the Reforms. So strongly did Gandhi feel that he felt it necessary to call a meeting of the Committee in October to consider the matter of altering the franchise, abolishing the spinning qualification, which in effect transferred control of the Congress entirely to the Congress Party. The difference, Gandhi pointed out, was that before this the Swaraj party worked its programme in the Councils in the name of the Congress—now the Congress worked it through the Swaraj party, and the latter became known as the Congress Party.

In December this year we find him again carrying out a seven day fast as vicarious penance for misdeeds at his Ashram. "I discovered errors among the boys and somewhat among the girls," he writes. The Congress is held at Cawnpur at the end of the year under the presidency of Sarojini Naidu, the Indian poetess and the first Indian woman to preside. Gandhi seems to have been entirely in the background. It is true that a mild ultimatum to resume civil disobedience in the following March was threatened if the "National Demand", a scheme for a constitution for India, more in accordance with their claims for independence of control than the existing one, was not granted. He was very busy at this time, and for some months to come, over an attempt then being made in South Africa to abrogate the terms of the settlement come to between him and Smuts in 1914. He had sent Andrews to South Africa to see what he could do in the matter, and was glad to find that in April, 1926, the Indian Government was able to get the Union Government to suspend action pending a conference in the matter.

In 1926 the Imperial Conference held in England profoundly

altered the whole basis of the British Empire in that the right of the Dominions to maintain armies and navies, and to conduct their own diplomatic relations with foreign countries was recognized, and these rights were held to imply full freedom to leave the Empire at will. It, of course, at once altered the position of the future of India. The Declaration of 20th August, 1917, had never contemplated a Dominion status with such powers, nor had the King's speech at the opening of the Imperial Legislative Assembly, and naturally those declarations would have to be reconsidered in the light of this new decision. It is curious how what was really a tremendous revolution—a splitting up of the British Empire into a number of allies, took place with hardly the raising of a voice or an eyebrow.

These years, 1926 to 1928, see little political activity on Gandhi's part. He had determined to devote himself to his great programme of Hindu-Moslem unity, the *charka* or spinning-wheel, and the removal of untouchability. How far he really felt the loss of political power it is hard to say. He did seem quite rightly to have recognized that India must build herself up from within, and that the three articles of his programme were the surest means of her doing so. He did, however, in April, 1926, arrange the Sabarmati Pact to heal the split between the two wings of the party*, but this soon broke down, and this year was chiefly remarkable for a number of new groupings and of the growth of a moderate party by defections from the Swarajists. It is in November, 1927, that we get a very characteristic picture of Gandhi. He is summoned to Simla by the Viceroy with several other Indian leaders of political thought, all agog over rumours of the Simon Commission and thinking they are to be asked to sit on it. Ranga Iyer, a nationalist writer, in his book "India: Peace or War", says: "The Mahatma was not interested in the Councils. He had nothing to do with the Reforms except that he once tried to boycott them. He thought his presence was needed to discuss the communal question over which he was at one time very unhappy. In any case he was glad he had the opportunity to impress on the Viceroy the economic value of his *charka*," and he is said to have brought with him samples of hand-spun and woven *khaddar* to show the Viceroy.

* Now divided on the question of accepting office.

Another ominous cloud on the Indian political horizon during this period was the question of Kenya. Indian settlers there outnumbered British by three to one and there was considerable feeling in India that as Indian troops had won the country they should at least receive equal treatment with Europeans. Further, the country was directly under Britain : it was not a self-governing dominion. Yet the British settlers were able to bring sufficient pressure on the home government to obtain for themselves a favoured position as against Indians, and this had very considerably added to the feeling against the English. Gandhi, of course, through his long struggle in South Africa on behalf of Indians brought all the force of his sympathy with the cause of oversea Indians into the question.

Hindu-Moslem feeling had begun to increase again greatly after a comparative lull in 1925, and speaking in August, 1927, Lord Irwin said that the casualties during the past eighteen months had amounted to between two hundred and fifty and three hundred killed and many times that number of injured. In 1927 an aggravating cause was the publication of a scurrilous Hindu pamphlet attacking the Prophet in which the writer escaped punishment by a legal quibble. This led to a similar attack later on, which, however, had a result more pleasing to the Mahomedans, but both did much to acerbate the communal tension. A very dastardly assassination of a great Hindu saint in December, 1926, made Hindus wild, and led to the formation of the Shuddhi and Sangathan societies, aimed at bringing Hindus, who had been converted to Islam, back to Hinduism and to improving the physical prowess of Hindus so as better to be able to stand up to Mahomedans. As a convert who reverts to his original faith was, and is still, regarded as guilty of a capital crime in many Mahomedan countries, this new move on the part of the Hindus had a very irritating effect.

CHAPTER IX

1928-1931

THE Simon Commission united India, and Hindus and Mahomedans, into a joint "hate" as nothing else could have done, and it was aided strongly by a feeling against the whole Western world owing to the endorsement it had apparently given to Katharine Mayo's book. The Kenya question also operated in the same direction. The feeling arose that India did not want to be even an equal partner in an Empire where Indians were despised and regarded as beings of a lower order, as was obviously the case in Africa. Reports also came from America that the colour bar feeling seemed to be growing against them, and in England itself there had been noted, since the War, a much stronger feeling against colour than ever existed previous to it.

Jawahir Lal Nehru, son of Pundit Motilal Nehru, had spent some time in Russia and become considerably imbued with Bolshevism. He had returned to India determined on independence, and began working for the leadership of the extreme section of the Congress which desired independence and would have none of Dominion status. The older and wiser heads of the party felt that only Gandhi's great position could heal the breach and they therefore called him in again to take charge of things. The Congress met at Calcutta at the end of December, 1928, and the meeting was perhaps the most momentous in its forty-four years. Gandhi opposed the motion for independence and it was lost by thirteen hundred and fifty votes to nine hundred and seventy-three. We must remember that the whole body represents only the extremist element of Indian political thought, and while it is probably the most important of the various political bodies in India, it is hard to say exactly how large a fraction of the whole it represents. It reckoned its membership at this time to be just over half a million, or less than a fifth of one per cent. of the population of British India. But as the most extreme, it is also, as everywhere else in the world, the most

noisy and the most spectacular. I have some interesting extracts from speeches and comments made at this Congress which I give below.

The chairman of the Reception Committee and Mayor of Calcutta, Mr. Sen Gupta, who figured rather prominently later on when imprisoned for sedition, said during the course of his address: "Slavish worship of the past, communal dissensions, the caste, the purdah, polygamy, early marriage and other cankers of the body politic are responsible for our failures. We live a life divided into compartments: our patriotism is communal; our unity amounts to mere juxtaposition. Steeped in the prejudices of a medieval age with half the nation losing their vitality behind the purdah, and in its turn devitalizing the other half: disintegrated by warring castes and creeds which condemn a population more than that of the United Kingdom or Japan as untouchables, whose shadow it is even pollution to tread; can we ever expect that we shall be able to bear upon Britain the necessary pressure? You cannot with impunity paralyse half the nation and by its dead weight handicap the other half. Is it not national *hari kari* to impair the vitality of the race by screening half its number behind the purdah and accelerate the process by the horrible custom of immature parenthood? . . . Lastly what can we expect from a people with a polygamous habit? A people so pleasure-seeking, so devoid of self-control, cannot show the self-abnegation which is so very necessary in a soldier of liberty. The entire social fabric requires a thorough overhauling and has to be revolutionized."

Gandhi's own estimate of the value of the Congress is most interesting. "Our Congress roll to-day is nothing but a bogus affair. Let us face facts. It is worth nothing. We want a living register of the Congress." And later on he said: "In the present state of the country when we cannot trust our brothers and sisters, our parents and party leaders, or anybody else; when we have no sense of honour and when we cannot even allow our words to remain unaltered for twenty-four hours, do not talk of independence. But if you will develop calm courage and honesty of purpose and that determination that will refuse to accept 'no' for an answer to your demand, then I promise you what the tallest among us can possibly desire."

He had considerable difficulty in holding them to abide by

the report of the All-Parties Conference, which the President of the Congress, Motilal Nehru, claimed represented everybody of note or standing in India, but which many others have strongly denounced as having been a very partisan affair. This had with difficulty been induced to adopt the Nehru Report, as it was called, and which was to all intents and purposes a repetition of the National Demand Constitution of 1925. Originally the demand was that the British Parliament should adopt this within two years, but Gandhi was persuaded to give way and agree to a period of one year. One period was as futile as the other and yet I believe the little man such is his invincible optimism and his supreme lack of imagination, did actually believe that there was a chance of there being such a change of heart in the British Government that his demands would be conceded.

In his closing speech to the Congress, Gandhi spoke as follows: "It cut me to the quick when I heard that delegates' tickets passed hands and were sold like bills of exchange and that the rates increased as the days went on. It is discreditable to the Congress, and I tell you that you are not going to get independence by these methods. On the other hand you are forging your own shackles from which there will be no escape."

In the *Indian Review*, a nationalist monthly review of moderate tendencies, there occurred the following passage in an article by Hemendra Prasad Ghose in January, 1929: "But in no previous session had blind imitation of everything British so offensively obtruded itself," and again: "Excepting Mr. Gandhi, whose sincere desire was to bring about an honourable compromise with a view to avoiding a split in the Congress, most of the speakers reminded one of the 'Successful politician' who has his ears always to the ground to catch the direction of the march of the million-footed and who then goes forward to the conflict with his big drum and his breezy war-cries, sure of his big battalions." . . . "But it seems these young enthusiasts have lost faith in him and in his policy. That was what the Calcutta Congress demonstrated."

Another Indian review of nationalist views, the *Forward* of Calcutta, said: "A casual glance at the programme which Mahatma Gandhi has chalked out for our acceptance is enough to convince all members of the Congress that it is no more than a revised edition of the much-talked-about

constructive programme of 1922, which practically put a brake on the fighting support of the nation. Removal of untouchability, popularization of *khaddar*, village reorganization, prohibition of intoxicating drugs and liquors, enlistment of Congress members and collection of funds are all excellent things in their way, but these are items which figured prominently in the Congress programme not many years ago, and before the Congress tries to revive the dead past, it would be worth while to inquire why they failed to capture the imagination or convince the intellect."

We must bear in mind all the time that this body is the extremist body of political India; if its opinions and decrees are not more denounced than they are by the moderate bodies, we must always remember that in such a country as India, just as it was in Ireland, the expression of moderate opinions is very easily cried down as treason and lack of patriotism. There is no room for reason or moderation in such cases; only the extremists can mount the platform. That they do not represent the country's real or general opinion is very practically demonstrated by the lack of support when they attempt to give battle, and this has been demonstrated on every occasion so far.

During the summer the Working Committee of Congress, Gandhi and Motilal Nehru being the chief members of it, decided to call out all Congress members of the Legislative Assembly and Provincial Councils. They seemed so very unwilling to comply, realizing how very much they had remained out in the cold before, that the Committee decided wisely to withdraw the order rather than risk disobedience.

On the 31st October, 1929, the Viceroy made his famous "Dominion Status" pronouncement which led to such strong criticism in England itself. The goal of dominion status was, of course, implied in Montagu's pronouncement of August, 1917, in the House of Commons, and again in the Duke of Connaught's opening speech of the Legislative Assembly in 1921, but in 1926 the whole definition of "Dominion" had been changed, as I mentioned. Dominion had by now become nothing more than a voluntary association, breakable at pleasure, and to all intents and purposes meant independence. That there was anything to be gained by boggling at the fact that some day India is fairly sure to be in a position to claim such independence is doubtful, and the uproar in England

only heavily underlined the declaration which might otherwise have passed as unnoticed as did that of the Duke of Connaught.

The Congress of 1929 was pure revolution. The young firebrand, Jawahir Lal Nehru, sympathizer with Bolshevism, was President, and arrived in magnificent state in spite of his republican views. A huge mob of Sikhs, some ten thousand strong, angry that the Congress had refused to pay much attention to their demands, tried to break up the Congress, but with that curious devotion to fair play which the British have, was gently persuaded to desist by some three English officials. Affairs at the Congress were not very well organized. The best seats which had been reserved and paid for by delegates, were rushed by Punjabi peasants. The young President became enraged and could be heard shouting, "Shut up! shut up!" The Subjects Committee rejected a resolution for immediate independence by one hundred and fourteen votes to seventy-seven. The meeting however passed a resolution on the repudiation of debts incurred by the British Government on India's behalf for all purposes which might be considered as not properly debitable to India—a resolution which had done very serious injury to Indian credit, as was shown in May, 1931, when a loan of ten million pounds at six per cent. which the Government of India tried to place on the London market was only subscribed to the extent of thirty-eight per cent., while an attempt to float an internal loan at six and a half per cent. in August, 1931, appears to have been equally unsuccessful. At the time it had the effect of causing Indian three and a half per cent. loan to fall from sixty-five in October, 1929, to fifty-eight in January, 1930. This seems good evidence to show that Indian capitalists are investing their money out of India in increasingly large quantities and this process is likely to continue until something can be done to correct the stupidity of those Congress resolutions.

Speaking of this Congress Sir Stanley Reed, for many years editor of the very temperate *Times of India* of Bombay, wrote: "Nothing which has occurred in my connection with India has caused such widespread uneasiness as the Lahore Congress and the attitude of the authorities thereto. It was not so much that the Congress emerged as a definitely revolutionary body: for it had long been so in essence, if not in fact. It was the contemptuous assertion of its revolutionary

purposes ; it was the insulting trampling of the Union Jack , it was the Bolshevik spirit which permeated the whole, even to the Soviet policy of the repudiation of the national debt."

On the 23rd December there had been an attempt on the Viceroy's life, his train being bombed as he was coming to Delhi. The Congress passed a resolution condemning the attempt by only nine hundred and thirty-five votes to eight hundred and ninety-five, giving ample evidence to what extent it was divided on the question of non-violence.

Though this Congress voted for independence, appointing a Committee to order mass civil disobedience wherever and whenever it thought fit, and fixed 26th January as Independence Day, to be observed all over India, it passed off quietly enough except for the killing of a couple of Indian children by a bomb meant for an Englishman. Though Gandhi concurred in it, he is reported to have said : "How can you talk of running a parallel Government when the Congress flag does not fly in even a thousand villages" (there are seven hundred thousand villages in India), "when the Congress has not enough men to run the machine of Government, when there is so much indiscipline in its ranks with such ugly quarrels of the kind witnessed at Lahore during the last three or four days, such perpetual wrangles for leadership and so much divided counsel? Bombs and the creeds of non-violence cannot run side by side."

Yakub Husain, a prominent Mahomedan leader, appealing to his fellow Moslems, spoke in a somewhat similar strain to the *Times of India*. "Had he (Gandhi) advised the Congress to stay its hands till the conclusion of the Round Table Conference he would have had the whole country at his back in spite of those advocating independence ; and if he had also, as appealed to by me, brought about Hindu-Moslem understanding about India's future constitution, he, as the undisputed head of united India, would have been in a position to dictate terms to the Round Table Conference. It is India's great misfortune that Gandhiji has failed here again for the third time—the other occasions being, first, when a Round Table Conference was practically offered to him by Lord Reading in December, 1921, and, second, when he suspended the non-payment of tax campaign at Bardoli in 1922. Past events have proved that Mahatmaji can only organize great political campaigns, but when the psychological moment

arrives and success is within reach, he misreads the signs and makes fatal mistakes. The most potent reason why Dominion Status is the only possible form of national Government for India is this: that common allegiance to a non-Indian king can alone keep Hindus and Mussulmans from aggression and encroachment upon one another's rights, and the British king alone can, in case of emergency, compel India's parliament to respect the national constitution."

The *Times of India*, always noted for its very moderate tone, commented on Gandhi's decision as follows: "That a leader who was capable of making this appeal so admirably, holding up the creed of non-violence, truth, and love of all mankind, speaking so passionately of the importance of discipline, so warmly championing the Viceroy (Lord Irwin then) knowing full well that such championship would be resented within the ranks of the Congress, and making such honest confessions, should seek to lead his followers back on the path of non-co-operation with its attendant dangers, instead of welcoming with open arms the offer to go to London and thrash out . . . the essentials of a new Constitution for India will generally be regarded as the country's misfortune."

1929 we must remember was the year in which the great world slump, which started in the United States about September, began. It had, of course, its repercussions in India, and the boycott of European goods and of drink had depressing effects on the customs and excise revenues. The slump continuing through 1930 and affecting the raw materials, jute and cotton and wheat, which comprise well over half of India's exports, naturally caused economic distress and assisted the agitation. So, in March, 1930, started Gandhi's mad campaign, again leading thousands to prison, and this time doing grave damage to the revenues of the country and its finances, burdens which must in the last instance fall on the poor. If Gandhi had any knowledge of political economy he should have known this. The particular form of civil disobedience he decided on was breaking of the Government salt tax monopoly.

Salt all over the world has been from the earliest times one of the most general and favourite vehicles of taxation. Being produced either by evaporation over fairly considerable periods of time—two to three months for a pan is fairly usual—or out

of a very few and widely scattered salt mines (they only occur in one locality in India), it is a product very easy to control at its source. In India the tax has all the sanction of long tradition in a land where civilization stretches back for nearly three thousand years, and where tradition is enormously strong. The tax used to be levied with considerable harshness in olden times, and varied all over the sub-continent up to 1878.

In that year Lord Lytton's government undertook the revision of the whole question. There existed at that time a wonderful customs barrier, thirteen hundred miles long, of stone walls and thorny hedges which were impassable except at definite posts, and guarded by some eight thousand men, from Attock on the Indus, right up in the north-western corner of India, down to the Berars in Central India, besides various other boundaries in the other provinces. These barriers were designed to keep out the salt manufactured in the Native States from British India. This barrier is historically comparable only with the Great Wall of China, and seems a curiously absurd anomaly for the nineteenth century.

In that year the tax was equalized for the whole of India at Rs. 2 per maund of 82 $\frac{2}{7}$ lbs, or about a third of a penny per pound. Some years later it was raised to Rs. 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ and remained at that figure till 1903, when the benefit of the financial reforms, begun under Lord Elgin and completed by Lord Curzon, enabled successive reductions in the tax to Re 1 (or a fifth of a penny per pound) in 1907. In 1916 the War caused an increase of 25 per cent. in the tax, and in 1923—a very difficult financial year—the Viceroy had to use his powers of over-riding the vote of the Legislative Assembly to double the tax, bringing it to a fraction over a halfpenny per pound. Next year saw its reduction to the old figure of Re 1 $\frac{1}{4}$, or a farthing per pound, at which it has since remained.

In 1928-29 the tax produced just over £5,000,000, which is about what it has produced since 1916, the doubled tax in 1923-4 only having produced about £1 $\frac{1}{2}$ millions more. The above figure divided among the two hundred and seventy millions of British India shows a tax of fivepence per head, or one and eightpence per family of five. About half of the salt consumed is, however, used for animals or commerce, so that the actual tax is only tenpence per family per year—a figure

which is confirmed if we look at it from a personal point of view.

The army ration of salt—about the inadequacy of which there have never been complaints—is half an ounce per day, or $11\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. per year. Assuming that the wife and three other members of the family consume $2\frac{1}{2}$ times as much again, we get a total consumption for the family of about forty pounds a year, or half a maund, equivalent to a tax of just under elevenpence a year. Statistics, again, tell us (unfortunately without disclosing whether the figures stand for human beings alone or whether they include the family cow) that the per capita consumption of salt in India varies from seven pounds per head in Rajputana in Northern India to sixteen pounds per head in Southern India.

Now India is, of course, a vastly poorer country than our own. The minimum wage there, comparable to the fourteen or eleven shillings a week which used to be paid to the poorest class of agricultural labourers in England in very recent years, is about Rs. 4 (=6s.) per month, or roughly one-tenth of the English minimum. The Indian, however, in such circumstances, usually owns his hut and a small plot of ground, while the hotter climate imposes a very much lower standard of food and clothes. In any case it can be seen that the tax of a penny a month per family is difficult to construe into the iniquitous persecution of an oppressed people that the more purple passages from the speeches of the Extremists would suggest.

Thus Gandhi's personal campaign to set this tax at naught can be seen as unlikely to have had any but a purely spectacular effect. He counted on the general ignorance of the facts which I have set forth above, and quite possibly is himself ignorant of them in part. With but the most cursory knowledge of the geography of India, the distribution of her population, 90 per cent. of which is agricultural, in some 700,000 towns and villages, of the fact that all the railways are state owned, and of the elementary facts of salt production, anyone can see that the results likely to be produced by even several thousand very practical and determined men could hardly effect anything. A small party of armed police could probably confiscate all the salt produced after each evaporation period, if it were considered worth the expense and trouble of sending them to do so, since the producers would probably find it difficult to dispose of their produce without rail transport. A

good analogy, in fact, would be to imagine our own Mr. Maxton going off in a huff with Mr. MacDonald, were the latter to put a small tax on coal, with a number of his henchmen to hew coal for himself and his friends in some disused shaft. Lord Irwin probably heaved a deep sigh of relief at Gandhi being for the time as usefully and harmlessly employed as Mr. Maxton would have been.

Vallabhai Patel, one of Gandhi's chief lieutenants, was one of the first to be arrested. After this heads began to fall thick and fast. Gandhi himself is not arrested till 4th May, and one after another of the heads appointed to succeed him, including poetess Sarojini Naidu, were arrested also in May. This was a bad month all round, with severe rioting in several places in Bombay while communal riots occurred in Dacca and labour riots at Rangoon.

In June and July the Simon Commission Report was at last issued in two parts. The delay in its issue had greatly strained the patience of all; on the other hand there was a general feeling that Sir John Simon had been badly treated by the Dominion Status declaration and by the notice of a Round Table Conference being given out before the Report. Though Indians had professed to take no interest in its proceedings, it was bought up in such numbers that the Government printing presses in India could scarce keep pace with the demand. As was expected, it advocated autonomy within the Provinces and the abolition of Dyarchy, but with the Central Government still irremovable and controlled by the British Parliament. Perhaps its chief defect was that it seemed to take such little notice of the nationalist movement, treating it as if it hardly existed, and Gandhi as an interesting but not really important exhibit. As C. F. Andrews said of it, it seemed to view India through the spectacles of thirty years ago.

The issue of the Report rallied the Mahomedans to the side of law and order. Shaukat Ali, the elder of the two famous Ali Brothers, declared himself ready to support the Round Table Conference and asked all concerned to suspend civil disobedience. This begins the cleavage of the more extreme Mahomedans from the Hindus, and from now on the Congress party may be said to contain only a very few Moslems, who were attached to Gandhi by loyalty for his support for the Khilafat movement.

In November, 1930, the Round Table Conference opened in London and concluded in January, 1931. The great and rather unexpected result of the Conference, was the agreement of the more important of the Native States to throw in their lot with a federal government of India. This and the question of Hindu-Moslem unity had all along been looked on as the two chief obstacles in the way of self-government, that of untouchability, which once ranked with them, having of late years been recognized to be one which might be left for Indians themselves to settle. That the Conference should have achieved so much led to considerable hopes for further success, and the result was the proclamation of a general amnesty for all the political prisoners of the previous year excepting those who had been guilty of violence. Gandhi, of course, obtained his release, and pourparlers were presently entered into which resulted in his meeting the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, just about to end his term of office, on the 7th March, and an agreement which has become known as the Irwin-Gandhi Pact was announced. It was in effect a truce, an agreement on the Government side to stop its special repressive measures if the Congress would stop their civil disobedience.

The Congress having been declared an illegal organization soon after the civil disobedience campaign began in March, 1930, its usual December session had not been held. Now that it was again free, its meeting was arranged for the end of March at Karachi. It broke up without laying down any very definite instructions for its delegates to the Round Table Conference which was summoned to meet again in London in September. Gandhi and Motilal Nehru were to represent it. Gandhi on arrival was attacked by a number of youths belonging to an extremist pro-violence section for his truce with the Viceroy, and was only just saved from receiving severe injuries. Gandhi himself mentions a very typical incident, probably possible only in India. "A half-cracked man like me," he begins his article with naïveté, and goes on to say that the man had enlisted a number of hooligans in Gandhi's name and then gone round the town terrorizing the merchants and others to employ them at the absurd rate of Rs. 2 (=3/-) a day, about four to six times the ordinary rate for casual labour.

We also get an insight into what he had to put up with in travelling about India. He was asked to attend the Sikh

Congress at Amritsar. On his rail journey there the crowds at each station all through the night insisted on awakening him and seeing him to obtain *darshan*, or religious sight, and no amount of protestations on the part of his companions that he was tired to death and utterly fatigued would stop them. They only got angry and demanded that he should give up his leadership, and threatened to lie on the railway lines and refused to allow the train to proceed till he complied. This is the report given by one of his staff in *Young India* in an effort to try and make Indians realize what the Mahatma had to endure.

In April an indignant correspondent wrote to Gandhi denouncing his pact with the Viceroy, saying that it did not even represent the *status que ante bellum*. Gandhi admits the charge but says that conditions have been changed by the declaration of British policy amounting to tantamount acceptance of Dominion status, though he admits this is hedged in with innumerable safeguards.

In March, 1931, occurred the dreadful outbreak at Cawnpore when some two hundred lives were officially announced as lost, though most observers are inclined to put the figure far higher. That trouble came about over the Mahomedans refusing to observe a *hartal* or general strike, in honour of the execution of a Sikh who had murdered a European. The Hindus accordingly fell on the Mahomedans, and for once, for the casualties have usually been the other way round, the Mahomedans suffered most severely. This was a dreadful blow to Gandhi, putting a final seal on the tension of the past seven years. For some time he felt, and announced, that it was no use his attending the Round Table Conference if these communal troubles in India could not be settled before he left. In May we find his former faithful ally, Shaukat Ali, deserting him, and publicly declaring, "I am after him"—him being the Mahatma.

There were further complications in the peasants in certain districts who had, in accordance with the civil disobedience campaign of the previous year, refused to pay their taxes, representing to him that they were being unduly oppressed, and up to the end of August, 1931, almost, he was making the failure of the Government to settle these matters an excuse for his not attending the Conference. The politicians of the Congress had, as a matter of fact, tried

to proceed on the assumption that the Irwin-Gandhi Pact was a truce between two equal governments, and that the Pact tacitly admitted the existence of the parallel government of the Congress. This, of course, it in no wise did, and the Government of India have, under the firm rule of Lord Willingdon, stoutly rebutted the claim. The Congress method was to demand that all complaints should be jointly inquired into by Government and Congress officials !

CHAPTER X

GANDHI'S COUNTRY AND PEOPLE

It is a point that cannot be too often and too strongly insisted on that India is not a country but a continent: a continent every bit as much as Europe is one, and for some reasons, more. Both are but parts of Asia, with the difference that the barriers between Asia and Europe are far slighter and less difficult to pass than those between Asia and India. In area and population Europe is bigger by the area and population of Russia—but the population of India seems to be increasing at a far greater rate than that of Europe, and in another few decades may soon pass her even with Russia included: in any case, her three hundred and fifty millions constitute a population greater than that of America, Africa or Australia.

As regards homogeneity of the population, the balance is all in Europe's favour. Here we have but one race—the Aryan or Caucasian, with a very slight admixture of Mongolian. In India whilst most of the blood is probably Dravidian we get a very big block of Aryan, a bigger one of Dravidian, and a still larger one of the mixed stock. In Bengal and in Himalayan districts there is also a very strong admixture of Mongolian stock, much more than we find in Europe.

As regards languages we have far greater variety, and again we find them falling into two considerable groups—Aryan and Dravidian, as against our single group, Indo-European, and not only do we have more languages but matters are complicated by utterly different scripts, the Arabic in the north and wherever Hindustani, or Urdu, is spoken, as well as for Sindhi and Pushtu, the Devangari, with its very considerable variations of Bengali, Marathi and Gujerati, and the Dravidian scripts of Tamil and Telugu. These are infinitely greater than the differences we find in Europe in German, Russian and Greek.

Lastly we find in place of our single Christian culture two very widely divergent cultures of Hinduism and Islam, of

which I speak further in a later chapter. I think I have said enough to convince the reader that India is in every way much more of a continent than Europe. It is only the unifying influence of our rule during the past hundred and seventy years that has made a "country" of it to the extent that it is so regarded by the unthinking world.

We have given it a common *lingua franca* in English for the upper educated classes; we have given it a common system of railways, posts, and telegraphs, looked at from the point of view of the continent as a whole. We have prevented all customs barriers, and by ensuring internal peace, have given it the smallest and cheapest defence it has ever had in all its history, in spite of all the charges made by nationalists to the contrary. They conveniently forget that both Asoka and Akbar maintained armies of six hundred thousand where ours is but a third of that size, and that besides those forces there were in all probability others in the parts of India not wholly under their control, which amounted to anything up to half as many again.

INDIA'S WEALTH

It is unfortunate that few of those who interest themselves in international affairs, including those who write on them, do not pay more attention to the question of economics. It is especially important in the case of India because there is so much misconception regarding the question of her wealth or her poverty. At one time, only a few centuries back, she stood for a synonym of wealth: "All the wealth of the Indies" was then a very common phrase. Now we only hear of her poverty. Is it true that British rule has brought about the change from immense wealth to degrading poverty? What is the real state of affairs?

In the first place we must realize that the growth in the wealth of Europe has been phenomenal during the past two or three centuries, but especially so during the last one. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when we first began to come into close contact with India, there was little to choose between the wealth and income per head in Europe and India, with the advantage all in favour of India, since her hotter climate rendered less necessary in the way of food and clothing. The reputation she gained for enormous wealth was a pardonable exaggeration, due to the fact that her

rulers, being far more autocratic than those of Europe then were, and being unhampered by the restraint even of oligarchies, were able to accumulate and display with greater profusion the wealth of the country in the few centres and capitals which foreign travellers were likely to visit. Writers like Tavernier and others who travelled in the interior and saw the villages, draw pictures of their utter poverty and misery which show that India to-day is in a far happier condition than she then was. It is true that she has probably only increased her wealth since then by some twenty or thirty per cent. while we in Europe have increased it three hundred to five hundred per cent. or more, but it does not necessarily follow that that has been all to our advantage. Wealth does not necessarily bring happiness.

Therefore comparisons now are all in favour of Europe, whereas four centuries ago they were in favour of India. But India none the less is growing richer, if we are to judge by the growth of simple luxuries, which all economists agree show an increase of wealth. People when poor do not spend more and more money on travelling, nor do they start drinking mineral waters and tea, and not only tea, but tea with milk and sugar—at any rate, in Gandhi's country, for during the civil resistance in Bardoli in 1928 it was put forward as one of their hardships that they had to do without milk in their tea. Cigarette smoking, too, is on the increase—which is also a recognized sign of prosperity.

The usual method of calculating national wealth and income is recognized to be as yet far from accurate, and estimates in most civilized countries are apt to vary a good deal. In India data are far harder to arrive at and estimates vary much more, but there seems to be a fair amount of agreement that the figure of national income is somewhere about Rs. 80 to 120 per head or say Rs. 100 at $1/6 = \text{£}7$ 10s. It, of course, looks very low against our eighty to ninety pounds in England or nearly double that figure in America, but there are certain items which are lost sight of in a primitive country like India which should be taken into account. In Europe rent is a fairly heavy item in the ordinary family budget, often running to as much as a fifth or so of the income. In India, for the eighty-nine per cent. of the population which is rural, it does not exist, for their houses are of mud and they build them themselves. So, too, fuel, which costs

us a good deal in Europe, is generally gathered free in the East, and when these items are brought into account, and the fact that the warmer climate renders necessary less food and slighter and simpler clothing, the gap between the figures narrows considerably.

Gandhi and many others have claimed over and over again that it is the satanic British Government which is responsible for the poverty of the land. Yet Gandhi himself has endorsed with his approval a book which has recently been translated into all the major languages of India, called "Socrates in an Indian village". It is a dialogue version of Mr. F. Brayne's book "Village Uplift in India". Mr. Brayne is an Indian Civil Service officer and apparently did wonderful work in the Gurgaon District near Delhi. His book shows more clearly than perhaps anything else could how much of India's poverty is due to her own negligence and carelessness and how easily her wealth could be doubled or trebled by a simple change of habits. At present there is waste everywhere. Long hours are spent in the filthy work of converting valuable cow-dung manure, which would fertilize the land, into cheap fuel. Valuable land which might be planted up with fodder crops for cattle is left as waste while the people have more than half the year on their hands as spare time.

Again, the indictment is often brought against us that by restricting encroachments on the forests we were depriving the poor of India of fuel and grazing for their cattle. The latter could easily be remedied, as Mr. Brayne and many others have shown, by planting fodder crops on the village common grazing grounds or by rotating fodder crops with food crops, and thus increasing the yield of the latter. This is done in Italy on land of much the same quality and with much the same rainfall and it gives not only larger food crops per acre but generous fodder crops for the two years out of four, or three years out of five during which they are planted. But as regards our forest restrictions, there we have but stepped in just in time, in the eighteen-sixties, to stop the deforestation of the land. Had we not done so India might have become another Persia. Lord Curzon, who made a careful study of this latter country, calculates that in the early seventeenth century, when the French traveller Tavernier visited it, it had a population of some two hundred

million. Now it has about eight, and the cause can be nothing else than the deforestation of the land.

HIS PEOPLE

I have dedicated this book to the several Indians I have known who were in every way fit, in my opinion, for self-government. They were of various nationalities—Punjabi and Madrassi officers and men who served under me in a mountain battery and a mule corps—Punjabi, Bengali, Parsi, Gujarati and Madrassi friends—a Madrassi servant who served me faithfully for thirteen years, and a Pathan who did likewise for a shorter period but equally well. The numbers I have personally come across made me believe there must be a very large number. The trouble is, however, that the Indian system of society is not such at present to allow those classes to come to the top. Those who know other countries well which have not as ordered a government as our own, have probably also found in them men, and women, of as high a character as our own who, if the government were in their hands, would conduct it as well as the English or French or German. For some reason or another these men and women are prevented from coming to the top, or if a few of them do so, they find they are obliged to conform to a far lower standard than they would do if quite free in the matter.

The explanation lies, I think, in the fact that while each of us has his own code of conduct inclined, let us say, a little out of the true north, or Perfection, and from which we deviate, mostly away from that true north, there is also a National Code which may deviate more or less than our own and will have the effect of dragging us either closer to or farther away from the true north, according as it lies closer than or farther from that direction than our own line.

We may even carry the analogy farther by taking the lines to be axes of a globe instead of a circle, and so we may get numbers of lines, instead of only two, equally close to the true north and yet different—one pointing to Spitzbergen, another to Iceland, a fourth to Greenland and so on. Thus we may have English and German and Indian and American codes differing and yet equal.

The Indian peasant, as I have seen him and as hundreds of others have seen him, would seem to be not much better

and not much worse than the average in the world. He is illiterate and therefore very ignorant of conditions outside his own village. I have shown Gandhi remarking this in 1918. He is in fact very much in the state of the European peasant of the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries A.D., when men like Peter the Hermit and St. Francis of Assisi obtained the great followings they did. Those men would never have found a following in Europe a century or two later; there was more general knowledge of the world. So in India we find the peasants blindly worshipping the Mahatma, ready to follow him in thousands if he would but ask them to do some hard thing like going a thousand miles to fight, but not at all anxious to do an easy thing like spinning for half an hour daily—just as Peter the Hermit's Crusaders would probably have refused to do this for him, though they might have continued to cheer for him and to worship him.

But the vast majority of India really does not matter at present. So long as they get good monsoons and good harvests, and agitators do not go round telling them they are oppressed and should not pay taxes, they are on the whole as happy as any other peasant in the world. They are poor, but I go into that elsewhere. The point is that, politically, they hardly count. They are beginning to do so and will undoubtedly do so more and more, and possibly at a rapidly increasing rate, but there is no question that at present probably as many as eighty to ninety per cent. of the small number of seven million who have the franchise have no understanding whatever of political matters, and vote on purely personal grounds.

There is another point, however, to note in the difference between the peoples of Europe and those of India as well as the stage of their advance in civilization, and that is the fact that the whole social structure is on a different basis. In Europe the units of society are the nation and the individual, except in a few parts where the clan takes the place of the nation. In India the two units are the caste, and the family, the first smaller, the second larger. It is the latter unit which really makes the big difference. In Europe we reckon that a family averages five to a house, hut, tenement or whatever it may be. In India there is the joint family system, and the family will average twenty to thirty. All incomes go into the common purse and it is share and share alike. The system encourages the drone and the incapable; it is a fatal drag

on the capable and ambitious. Mr. Garratt has said: "It is impossible to understand the attitude of the average educated Indian of to-day without realizing that somewhere in the background of his life there are nearly always several hungry nephews and cousins continually drifting into and out of badly-paid clerkships and for whose support he feels himself to be as responsible as an average English pater-familias would feel himself to be for his own non-adult children."

On the other hand, the fact that one may not marry or eat with others outside one's caste, limits loyalty very strictly in the higher direction, and so it comes about that it is very hard, if not impossible to prevent nepotism in India—and nepotism speedily converts any system of government, whatever it starts out to be, into an oligarchy.

I have noted down from Gandhi's own writings, amongst copious other notes, a number of things he has said to the detriment of his own people. Too much must not be made of these statements of his. He is a reformer trying to reform his people. To weigh them properly one must consider someone of like character amongst our own countrymen condemning features of national life he disapproved of. One does not find among them any condemnation of drunkenness, for instance, which is almost unknown, while in Europe it is unfortunately very common. There is, however, at least one strong condemnation of Gandhi's of prostitution that I have thought it unnecessary to put in. The point I would make is, to what extent are people, whom he accuses of these things, as yet fit for Swaraj?—seeing that he himself considered them unfit in December, 1928. I have put the dates, where I have been able to, in brackets after the statements. They will be found in his various collections of writings and speeches under those dates.

"I feel and have felt during the whole of my public life, that what we need, what any nation needs, but we perhaps of all the nations of the world need just now is nothing else and nothing less than character-building." (16th February, 1916)

"Our country to-day is a country of idlers and dreamers. I refer not to the dumb millions who are groaning under poverty and slavery, but to ourselves—the so-called intel-

ligentsia, the talkers. How can I engage all these in some kind of intelligent work except through the spinning wheel?" (31st November, 1924)

"There is still (November, 1924) at our meetings an unconscious lack of self-restraint. . . . It is indispensable for meetings, public or private, that those who attend them do not all talk at once nor whisper to one another, but that they listen to what is being said."

"In the case of the husband he has no scruples. He does not consider himself under any obligation to consult his partner's wishes. He regards his wife as his property." (21st November, 1926)

"But to-day it is all a story of unmitigated cowardice. They would throw stones and run away, murder and run away, go to court, put up false witnesses and cite false evidence. What a woeful record. How am I to make them brave?" (23rd November, 1924)

"It sounds very pleasant and exciting to talk of the descendants of Shivaji, Ranjit, Partap, and Govind Singh. But is it true? Are we all descendants of those heroes in the sense in which the writer understands it? We are their countrymen, but their descendants are the military classes." (9th April, 1925)

In an article headed "Low Moral Tone?" he publishes a letter from a Brahmin Correspondent and does not controvert his statements in this next paragraph.

"The Ahimsa doctrine has made us sneaking, snivelling cowards. A Hindu never plays fair with a Hindu; a Mahomedan plays fair with a Mahomedan and so does a Christian with a Christian. A Hindu is tolerant of other customs outside the Hindu fold—another instance of downright cowardice—a Mahomedan is never tolerant and a Christian seldom." (19th November, 1925)

"There is a considerable lack of tolerance, courtesy and forbearance amongst non-co-operators and it is my firm belief that is the sole reason why our victory is delayed." (March, 1922)

"And it can certainly be fairly added that where they (Mahomedans) were manifestly weak and Hindus strong, as in Katarpur and Arrah years ago, they were mercilessly treated by their Hindu neighbours. The fact is that when blood boils, prejudice reigns supreme: man, whether he labels

himself Hindu, Mahomedan, Christian or what not, becomes a beast and acts as such." (29th May, 1924)

"Nowhere is the cow so feeble and her yield so little as in India. Nowhere is she so badly treated as she is to-day in India by the Hindus. I am saying this not to excite you. I am stating the barest truth without the slightest exaggeration." (7th May, 1925)

"In no part of the world perhaps are cattle worse treated than in India. I have wept to see Hindu drivers goading their jaded oxen with the iron points of their cruel sticks. The half-starved condition of the majority of our cattle are a disgrace to us. The cows find their necks under the butcher's knife because Hindus sell them." (29th May, 1924)

"The newspaper man has become a walking plague. He spreads the contagion of lies, of calumnies. He exhausts the foul vocabulary of his dialect and injects his virus into the unsuspecting and often receptive minds of his readers. Leaders intoxicated with the exuberance of their own language have not known how to put a curb upon their tongues or pens . . . It is therefore we, the educated and semi-educated class, that are responsible for the hot fever which possessed Abdul Rashid" (murderer of Swami Shraddanand).

"A portion of the Punjab press is simply scurrilous. It is at times even filthy. I have gone through the torture of reading many extracts. These sheets are conducted by Arya Samajists or Hindus and Mahomedan writers. Each vies with the other in using abusive language and reviling the religion of the opponent. These papers have, I understand, a fairly large circulation. They find place even in respectable reading rooms." (29th May, 1924)

"Swaraj does not lie that way. India does not want Bolshevism. The people are too peaceful to stand anarchy. They will bow the knee to anyone who restores so-called order. Let us recognize the Indian psychology. We need not stop to inquire whether such hankering after peace is a virtue or a vice. The average Muslim of India is quite different from the average Muslim of the other parts of the world. His Indian associations have made him more docile than his co-religionists outside India. . . . The Hindu is, proverbially, almost contemptibly mild." (24th December, 1921)

"But we who claim to be their (villagers') leaders refuse to go to the villages and live in their midst and deliver

the life-sustaining message of the *charka*." (14th August, 1928)

"I had the knowledge before me that during my extensive travels in India, hundreds of people were found who as readily broke their promises as they made them." (27th March, 1918)

"And so, in spite of our personal cleanliness, a portion of our houses remains the dirtiest in the world, with the result that we are brought up in an atmosphere which is laden with disease germs." (3rd November, 1917)

"Our doctors and physicians have practically done nothing. I am sure that half a dozen men of the front rank dedicating their lives to the work of eradicating the triple curse would succeed where Englishmen have failed" (plague—malaria—cholera). (3rd November, 1917)

"We, the educated classes . . . want to represent the masses but we fail. They recognize us no more than they recognize the English officers. Their hearts are an open book to neither. Their aspirations are not ours. Hence there is a break." (At the Gurukula anniversary, 1916.)

"I entirely agree with the president of the Congress that before we talk of self-government we shall have to do the necessary plodding. In every city there are two divisions, the cantonment* and the city proper. The city mostly is a stinking den. . . . It is not comforting to think that people walk about the streets of Indian Bombay under the perpetual fear of dwellers in the storeyed buildings spitting upon them. . . . We do not know the elementary laws of cleanliness. We spit anywhere on the carriage floor, irrespective of the thought that it is often used as sleeping space." (4th February, 1916)

"We have thus succeeded in isolating ourselves from the masses: we have been westernized. We have failed these thirty-five years to utilize our education in order to permeate the masses. We have sat upon the pedestal and from there delivered harangues to them in a language they do not understand, and we see to-day that we are unable to conduct large gatherings in a disciplined manner. And discipline is the essence of success. Here is therefore one reason why I have introduced the word "progressive" in the non-co-operation Resolution. Without any impertinence I may say that I

* Where troops live and under military supervision.

understand the mass mind better than anyone amongst the educated Indians." (Freedom's Battle)

Lastly, there is one characteristic which we must never lose sight of when dealing with the East. Gandhi himself, I believe, is free from it. He says, indeed: "When I was hardly twenty-five years old I was taught to believe that if we wished to be satisfied with four annas we must ask for sixteen annas in order to get the four annas. I never learned that lesson because I believed in asking for just what I needed and fighting for it. But I have not failed to observe that there was a great deal of truth in the very practical advice." This bargaining is really a characteristic of all peoples until they reach such a stage of civilization that they begin to realize the value of time. In the East and wherever life is easier and lazier than in our hurried Western world, much of the spice and joy of life comes from bargaining. Both buyer and seller enjoy the haggling, perhaps for fifteen minutes, perhaps for an hour or two. Neither would give up the joy of that sharpening of the wits, even were they offered the thing or the price at a greater profit to themselves than they ever hoped to get. An Indian would rather refuse to make a good profit on a sale, for instance, than sell it to an Englishman from whom he hoped and expected to get more; he would cheerfully sell it to an Indian for much less than a fair profit. The shop with marked prices in India is unknown. Some day, when she begins to realize the value of time and has found things of greater intrinsic value to interest her than bargaining, she will appreciate them. But at present one must always discount demands from the East by anything from twenty-five to seventy-five per cent.

CHAPTER XI

INFLUENCES

THE influences which have shaped Gandhi seem principally to have been those in print. Tolstoi and the New Testament have been by far the most important of these, and to be more specific, Tolstoi's "The Kingdom of God is within You" "overwhelmed" him, and the Sermon on the Mount has shaped his policy of non-violence. These two seem to be the supreme influences on his life in giving him the end to be worked for and the method. But besides these he seems to have read all he could get hold of Tolstoi's works, and he corresponded with the great Russian, who answered, admiring his work in South Africa. It was Tolstoi's teaching which furnished the motives for his Phoenix Settlement in Natal and Tolstoi Farm in the Transvaal. He himself says that he does not agree with Tolstoi's political ideas, by which he probably means Tolstoi's belief in entire non-co-operation in every way with government, yet it is exactly what he has done and taught in India.

Tolstoi's very one-pointed vision and driving energy towards a single goal seems to have appealed tremendously to Gandhi, owing to his passion for microscopic study. After all it is far easier to concentrate on a single peak in a range of distant hills, taking all and every obstacle in one's path, no matter how difficult they be, than to make for the range, choosing the easiest and quickest road by using careful judgment and applying all one's intelligence. But Tolstoi was an iconoclast. He taught the evils of riches and government but could give no remedy. One had to plunge in like Columbus and find out. Which is exactly what Gandhi has done. It is magnificent, but it is not war.

Gandhi himself has said : "Three moderns have left a deep impression on my life and captivated me : Raychandbhai by his living contact ; Tolstoi by his book, "The Kingdom of God is within You", and Ruskin by his "Unto This Last". Raychandbhai is the jeweller-poet-philosopher mentioned at Bombay in Chapter II. Besides this he seems to have been

deeply influenced by all religions. During his time in gaol, 1922-4, he said that he read "rapturously" the Lives of the Companions of the Prophet (Mahomed). Other religious writings have also appealed to him including those of the New Thought. Romain Rolland gives Plato, Thoreau, Edward Carpenter, and Mazzini as the authors who have influenced him most deeply in addition to those mentioned above.

In his early days Gandhi confesses to have been deeply stirred by a play about one Shravanna who was shown carrying both his blind parents on his shoulders on a pilgrimage, whilst by another play he was tremendously struck by the idea of sincerity. "Why should not all be truthful like Harishchandra?" haunted his boyhood, he says.

Although Tolstoi seems to have given him the general idea of his Golden Age, it would seem to have been Ruskin's "Unto This Last", hurriedly thrust into his hands as he was hurrying down to Durban in 1904, which appears to have been the trigger which fired the Phoenix Settlement and his later experiments on the same lines.

Although it seems very clear that books have shaped him far more than men, yet personal influences also did much. His early life, among Jains and priests and in a generally pious yet tolerant atmosphere, probably set his mind towards philosophic religion, and his father's own life set him a very abiding example. The report of a speech to some students in 1924 shows this. "Mr. Gandhi said, giving his own instance, that but for the love he bore for his father he might not have come to pledge himself to truth. It became an instinct with him to speak the truth, not because he realized the significance of truth, but because he felt he must do so for the love of his father. But for his intensive love for mother similarly, he would not have escaped meat-eating and unchaste life. Vows he regarded as aids to one's attempt to secure freedom from slavery to one's own lusts."

Rolland states that Dadabhai Maoroji, the "Grand Old Man" of India, taught him to conquer evil with love, but to me it seems this was borne on him more by the Sermon on the Mount, reinforcing his father's example and the teaching of Hinduism.

Gokhale's example of selfless work and his constant thought for his country was another great influence. He writes of him: "My mother was not more solicitous about me than Gokhale. There was, so far as I am aware, no reserve between us. . . .

He seemed to me all I wanted as a political worker—pure as crystal, gentle as a lamb, brave as a lion and chivalrous to a fault. . . . It was enough for me that I could discover no fault in him to cavil at. . . . He frankly differed from me in my extreme views on non-violence, and again Mr. Gokhale taught me that the dream of every Indian who claims to love his country should be not to glorify but to spiritualize the political life of the country. . . . He inspired my life and is still inspiring.”

The personal example of Jains must have had much to do in setting the young Gandhi's mind on the road to non-violence. This sect, little more than a million strong now, is mainly concentrated in Kathiawar, Gujerat and Rajputana. They broke away from Hinduism at the same time as the Buddha did, in that century of very great men, the sixth before Christ. They are often regarded as Hindus but are no more so than Buddhists. Their care for all life, even animal to the lowest degree, seems to the outsider to be their most distinguishing characteristic. One sees them walking about with gauze over their mouths and nostrils to prevent the accidental breathing in or swallowing of minute flying insects, and carrying packets of flour and sugar which they pour out before ant-heaps. It is even said they will care for vermin on their own bodies, should this chance to occur, though, as they are very clean, it is seldom likely to do so.

Naturally his own experiences have shaped him. I think that one, to which he himself and others do not seem to have paid much attention, is his rebuff at Rajkot in 1892 which he himself says changed the whole course of his life, and has given him the very evident bias he now has against the abstract Englishman, although he never appears to bear this against individual Englishmen, and seems to have impressed most of those who have come into contact with him by his evident desire to be friends with us. It would be very interesting, I fancy, if he would have himself psycho-analysed. I could not help thinking that a psycho-analyst would find that incident, perhaps added to a much slighter one, of the then political agent at Rajkot having refused to grant him a scholarship to help him go home to England before he had taken a degree, are at the root of the canker which has made him pull in the opposite direction to us these last twelve years, thus hampering the advance of his people to a far greater extent than he has helped.

CHAPTER XII

HIS VIEWS

OF his views on life, probably the most interesting to many will be those on philosophy and religion. He claims himself to be a Sanatana or orthodox Hindu, but places his own interpretation on the phrase, which will probably cause ninety-nine per cent. of ordinary Hindus to deny its application, or rather they would if he was not a Mahatma. The chief of these reservations is that he refuses to accept anything in the Hindu Scriptures which his reason would reject, and as his reason usually (except as regards the "Satanic British Government") works exceedingly clearly, one gets a singularly fine religious philosophy. He summarizes the four main points—a belief in the Vedas (oldest Hindu Scriptures) and all that goes by that name, the institution and order of the caste system, the protection of the cow, enlarged to embrace all life, human and animal, and he does "not disbelieve in idol worship". As regards castes—and he has in several places mentioned by this he means the four original orders, or colours, and not the present three thousand castes—he has said: "These classes define duties, they confer no privileges", and his fight for the untouchables more than confirms this. He once wrote: "I can no more describe my feeling for Hinduism than for my own wife. She moves me as no other woman in the world can. Not that she has no faults. I dare say she has many more than I see myself. But the feeling of an indissoluble bond is there. Even so I feel for and about Hinduism with all its faults and limitations. Nothing elates me so much as the music of the 'Gita' or the 'Ramayana' by Tulsidas, the only two books in Hinduism I may be said to know. . . . I know the vice that is going on to-day in all the great Hindu shrines, but I love them in spite of their unspeakable failings. . . ." (12th October, 1921.)

Gandhi has elsewhere proclaimed his belief in rebirth, but his belief seems a mere lip-statement. He does not seem

in the least to have a working belief in it. Yet it is this very belief which has so profoundly influenced the history of India. Let me give the idea of it, as I hold it myself and have had it as coming from a Hindu source. It conceives of the soul of each man after passing through an evolution as the soul of minerals, of vegetables and of animals, eventually starting on its human career in the lowest of savages. It usually has to pass through some seven hundred and seventy lives before it obtains release from the necessity to reincarnate again as a human being, and becomes a superhuman, becoming active in the higher worlds in one of several different directions. This is roughly the theory: it is by no means rigid as to the number of lives, intervals between lives, and so on. If one combines with it the companion doctrine of Karma, which most Hindus equally hold, which is merely the Law of Action and Reaction in the moral and mental worlds, it tends for the ready acceptance of conditions as they are found, and there is no rebellious spirit. One's condition to-day is because of what one has done before and of one's age in lives. It tends to inaction and inertia for the lower classes, and for political reasons cannot be regarded as good from a national point of view, as judged by Western standards. If Gandhi held this view he would equally realize that he could not hurry on the wheels of Fate or give democratic government to masses who are in all probability—even as he in many places has recognized, and as I show in quotations of his—quite unready for it.

Here are some of his *obiter dicta* on Hinduism.

“I would rather be torn to pieces than disown my brothers of the suppressed classes. . . . I do not want to be reborn, but if I have to be reborn, I should be ‘untouchable’ so that I may share their sorrow, sufferings, and affronts levelled at them in order that I may endeavour to free them from their miserable condition.”

“I would not make a fetish of religion and condone evil in its sacred name.”

“My belief in the Hindu Scripture does not require me to accept every word and every verse as divinely inspired. I decline to be bound by any interpretation, however learned it may be, if it is repugnant to reason or moral sense.”

“I do not believe in the exclusive divinity of the Vedas.

I believe the Bible, the Koran, and the Zend-avesta to be as divinely inspired as the Vedas."

"I would urge the modern generation not to regard fasting and prayer with scepticism or distrust. . . . And I suggest that on this day of fast there are no processions, no meetings. People should remain indoors and devote themselves entirely to prayer."

"To-day I regard the 'Ramayana' of Tulsidas as the greatest book in all devotional literature."

"I believe in the Hindu theory of Guru and his importance in spiritual religion. I think there is a great deal of truth in the doctrine that true knowledge is impossible without a Guru."

"A man may not believe even in God and still call himself a Hindu."

"But religion which takes no count of practical affairs and does not help to solve them, is no religion."

"I cannot conceive any higher way of worshipping God than by doing for the poor, in His name, the work they themselves do."

"For me Hinduism is all-sufficing. Every variety of belief finds protection under its ample fold. . . . Our civilization tells us with daring certainty that a proper and perfect cultivation of the quality of *Ahimsa*, which in its active form means purest love and pity, brings the whole world to our feet. . . . Examine its result in the political life. There is no gift so valued by our Shastra, as the gift of life. Consider what our relations with our rulers would be if we gave absolute security of life to them. If they could but feel that no matter what we might feel about their acts, we would hold their bodies as sacred as our own, there would immediately spring up an atmosphere of mutual trust."

Of the Bhagavad Gita: "The last nineteen verses of the second chapter have since been inscribed on the tablet of my heart. They contain for me all knowledge. The truths they teach are the eternal verities. There is reasoning in them but they represent realized knowledge."

He was very near accepting Christianity for several years and only decided against it in 1901. As already mentioned, much in Christianity had made a powerful appeal to him and it is interesting to note that his trial in 1922 was widely

compared all over India in the vernacular Press to that of Jesus, and this largely owing to the fact that he himself had frequently, and always very reverently, referred to the Christ. How far this has been responsible for the very remarkable increase in the number of Christians, from four and a half to six millions, during the decade 1921-1931, would be interesting to know. In the decade 1901-1911 there was the same increase of thirty-three per cent. but otherwise it has been at a much lower rate.

The following opinions of his on revolution and swaraj show some inconsistency with his ideas of non-violence as well as with each other.

"Revolutionary activity is suicidal at this stage of the country's life at any rate, if not for all time in a country so vast, so hopelessly divided and with the masses so deeply sunk in pauperism and so fearfully terror-struck."

"The millions will be just as badly off as they are to-day, if someone made it possible to kill off every Englishman to-morrow. The responsibility is more ours than that of the English for the present state of things. The English will be powerless to do evil if we will but do good. Hence my incessant emphasis on reform from within."

"I am of opinion that the French people have secured no special benefits by their Revolution. This was what Mazzini thought too."

"I must admit, as my correspondents will have me to, that British people think that they have a duty to perform in India, but I may be permitted to add that we Indians think that their duty is not to *impose* peace upon us when we are longing to war against one another, but to lift their oppressive weight from over our heads."

He had this to say on toleration: "Nor do I pat myself on the back for my 'liberal' practice as against the others' 'narrowness'. I may be narrow and selfish in spite of my applying liberal practice and my friend may be liberal and unselfish notwithstanding his apparently narrow practice. Merit or demerit lies in the motive."

"I have repeatedly observed that no school of thought can claim a monopoly of right judgment. We are all liable to err and are often obliged to revise our judgments."

That he is not unpractical, even in his views of the taking

of life, was shown at the end of 1926 when he had approved of the destruction of a mad dog at Ahmedabad. Every year an average of over a thousand cases of mad dog bites were admitted to hospital in the town, many of course ending in the awful death of hydrophobia, yet he was most vigorously assailed for weeks and there were eight long articles in *Young India* at this time in which he was vigorously attacked for having approved the destruction in question. It is a very strong reflection on the people of India that public opinion puts up with fanatics such as these.

Gandhi's views on art are interesting. He has often been assailed for apparently giving so little attention to it. He says on the subject: "Life is greater and must be greater than all art. I would go even further and declare that the man whose life came nearest to perfection is the greatest artist; for what is art without the sure foundation and framework of a noble life?"

"How could I reject music since I cannot even imagine a religious development of India without it?"

"Does India not recognize in the beauty of Nature the truth and splendour of the Creator? Could the sun or the starry heaven be beautiful if they did not arouse the feeling of the beholder to the truth of God?"

"All that is true is in supreme degree beautiful, not only true ideas, but genuine faces, genuine pictures, and genuine songs."

He considered that the writings of Oscar Wilde were a useless form of art.

"All true Art must help the Soul to realize its inner self. In my own case I find that I can do entirely without external forms in my soul's realization. I can claim, therefore, that there is truly sufficient art in my life though you might not see what you call works of Art about me."

"I would reverse the order. I see and find beauty in Truth or through Truth."

His views on modern civilization are contained in his "Indian Home Rule". It is by far the dullest of all his writings, being in the form of question and answer by a rather foolish questioner and a pedantic editor. I have indicated throughout this book his views on the subjects, and can find nothing of interest in my notes worth transcription. He has carried very few with him, either in his own country

or abroad, in his extreme views against railways, modern medicine, machinery and the like. Diseases, for instance, he holds, should be allowed to run their course, so as to punish the individual for his wrong indulgence which brought them about. His idea of the treatment of burglars, if generally published, should cause that brotherhood to set him up as their chief patron in temple of Ananias and the Two Thieves. He shows how the thief will repent if "you keep your things in a manner most accessible to him. The robber comes again, and is confused, as all this is new to him; nevertheless he takes away your things. But his mind is agitated. He inquires about you in the village, he comes to learn about your broad and loving heart, he repents, he begs your pardon, returns you your things, and leaves off the stealing habit." He has elsewhere shown how very easy the defence of the N.W. Frontier problem really is. One does not want troops at all. One practises the above precepts, and also carries on an active propaganda of the spinning wheel. The fierce mountaineer will therefore repent, and take to spinning, at a daily wage of a penny halfpenny for eight hours, and forget his joyous raiding life which would bring him in a day as much as the spinning wheel would in six months or a year.

Here is a mixed bag of Gandhi's views.

"I very much liked the company of children, and the habit of playing and joking with them has stayed with me till to-day. I have ever since thought that I should make a good teacher of children."

". . . and even in those days (1901-02) I was sternly opposed to giving alms to sturdy beggars."

"I hold that the more helpless a creature, the more entitled it is to protection by man from the cruelty of man."

"I understood the Gita teaching of non-possession to mean that those who desired Salvation should act like the trustee, who though having control over great possessions, regards not an iota of it as his own."

"Hate the sin and not the sinner is a precept which, though easy enough to understand, is rarely practised, and that is why the poison of hatred spreads in the world."

"I feel that I represent the mass mind, however inadequately it may be as against others who represent educated India in the Congress. . . . So long as the masses do not

think for themselves and are likely to be swayed by those who, for the time being, exercise influence on them, it will be wrong to use their votes."

"I believe that a public man may not give up his trust so long as he believes in it. He must be relieved of it. I must cease to be popular before I could retire in spite of confidence in my message."

"I would prefer any day anarchy and chaos in India to an armed peace brought about by the bayonet between the Hindus and the Moslems."

"I hold that even hooliganism may be better than the present unnatural and dishonest position."

"I would rather see India freed by violence than enchained like a slave to her foreign oppressors." But he qualifies this at once by saying it is an impossible supposition as violence can never free India.

"If India made violence her creed I would not care to live in India. She would cease to evoke any pride in me."

"If national life became so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation is necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal state, therefore, there is no political power because there is no State. But the ideal is never fully realized in life. Hence the classical statement of Thoreau that that State is best which governs least."

"I am of opinion that all exclusive intimacies are to be avoided; for man far more readily takes in vice than virtue, and he who would be friends with God must remain alone, or make the whole world his friend. I may be wrong, but my effort to cultivate an intimate friendship proved a failure."

"There is some truth in the correspondent's reasoning. But he is wholly wrong in imputing all evil to the Government. After all, is there not a great deal of truth in the saying that a people get the Government they deserve?"

"Is it right for us who know the situation to bring forth children? We only multiply slaves and weaklings, if we continue the process of procreation whilst we feel and remain helpless. . . . Not till India has become a free nation, able to withstand avoidable starvation, well able to feed

herself in times of famine, and possessing the knowledge to deal with epidemics, have we the right to bring forth progeny."

"I am quite conscious that blind surrender to love is often more mischievous than a forced surrender to the lash of the tyrant. There is hope for the slave of the brute, none for that of love."

"It is not possible for the educated classes to claim the credit for this event." (Sepoys' lives given in the Great War.) "It is not patriotism that had prompted those sepoyes to go to the battlefield. . . . They had gone to demonstrate that they are faithful to the salt they eat. In asking for Swaraj I feel that it is not possible for us to bring into account their services. . . . That we have been loyal at a time of stress is no test of fitness for Swaraj. Loyalty is no merit. It is a necessity of citizenship the world over."

"One sometimes hears it said: 'Let us get the government of India in our own hands and everything will be all right.' There could be no greater superstition than that."

"Capital and labour need not be antagonistic to each other. I cannot picture to myself a time when no man shall be richer than another. But I do picture to myself a time when the rich will spurn to enrich themselves at the expense of the poor and the poor will cease to envy the rich."

Gandhi is far from being free from bias and exaggeration as the following show :

"In this connection I remind you that it is the British flag which is waving in Japan, and not the Japanese. The English have a treaty with the Japanese for the sake of their commerce."

"In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, justice has been denied to Indians as against Europeans in the Courts of India."

"If we are such brutes as to desire the blood of innocent women and children we deserve to be blotted out from the face of the earth." Yet he must know of Cawnpore in 1857, and of the English woman done to death at Amritsar in April, 1919.

"After twenty years' experience of hundreds of men who had dealings with banks in South Africa, the opinion I had so often heard expressed has become firmly rooted in me, that the greater the rascal the greater the credit he enjoys with his banks."

CHAPTER XIII

GANDHI'S PROBLEM

THE problem Gandhi has set for himself is a return to the ideal state of things which existed in the India of five thousand years ago. He became a convert, as I have said, to the Tolstoyan idea of the simple life, and having tried it out himself with his family and a number of devoted adherents in South Africa, is satisfied that it will work equally well for all mankind. That is his end, though he has said, in an often quoted statement: "The end we do not know, for me it is enough to know the means. Means and end are convertible terms in my philosophy of Life." So he has adopted the spinning wheel as the main article of his constructive programme. But he also realizes that union is essential, and so these other two planks of Hindu-Moslem unity and the removal of untouchability have been brought in to secure peace between the two chief faiths in India, and to cure the canker that has been eating at the vitals of the major faith of Hinduism.

THE SPINNING WHEEL

That a great political leader should adopt a spinning wheel as the main article of his programme for independence sounds at first as though he were mad, and probably many have turned away not caring to hear any more. Without endorsing the policy, I have come to see more in it the more I have read of his writings on the subject, and if I were not at variance with Gandhi's ideal of a return to a problematical Golden Age of five thousand years ago, might be still more enthusiastic. It is a policy on which he has been attacked by even his closest friends and most devoted admirers; but he has always been able to meet them with sound and clearly reasoned replies.

There is a two-fold idea behind the *charka* or spinning wheel, the physical one of relieving India's poverty, and a moral one of unifying, disciplining, and elevating her

"Wherever *khaddar* has gained a footing the whole process and purification has begun," he said in one argument when it was suggested he could better apply himself to a campaign for the prohibition of drink. *Khaddar* or *Khadi* is hand-woven cotton cloth, and is used alternatively with *charka* to denote the whole movement. Rabindranath Tagore is said to have suggested to him that in place of the old hand *charka* he should advocate a more modern machine, which could still be used in the home, but which would double or treble the out-turn. To this he is reported to have said that then the people would have that much extra time on their hands again. I have not personally come across that argument, but somewhere else I have seen him say that the very reason he advocates the *charka* is that such work cannot bring the inducement of wealth. That this is so he shows very conclusively elsewhere in figures he gives for the value of the labour; it works out at one and a half annas (which is the same number of pence) per day of eight hours. In another place he works out that half an hour a day will produce Re 1-11-0 (=2/6) a year—"not bad addition . . . for a starving person", he comments with perfect simplicity.

There is a very real need to find part time employment for India's great rural population. Owing to the smallness of the holdings through growth of the population—there seems little doubt that it has more than doubled and even trebled since we ensured peace through the land and began to tackle the famines and pestilences which also helped to keep it down—it is calculated that the peasant is only employed for four to six months of the year, and sits idle for the rest of the time. Any money-making employment for those empty six to eight months, even at 1½d. a day, must therefore be welcomed. Hand cotton spinning and weaving, which was once common throughout the land and could easily be revived owing to its simplicity, has very much to recommend it, even though it is so miserably paid.

It would for one thing make India industrious and energetic, and cure that fatal laziness and carelessness for the morrow that so many of her own leaders have condemned time and again. It would give men the self-respect that honest toil always brings. It would render them independent as regards clothing, and most villages almost self-support-

ing, for their food is practically always raised *in toto* in the surrounding country. It would have a great unifying force in that it is "the lowest common measure on which all the different divisions could meet".

"In recommending spinning my sole idea has been to place before the country a programme which would easily appeal to the common mind and also be a unifying force. It excludes nothing," he said.

Then there would be its effect on the intelligentsia, whom in 1924 he calls "idlers and dreamers", and it is probably the idea of disciplining these, the leaders, as much as the masses, that he insisted on its being brought in as a necessary qualification for the Congress franchise. Gandhi never saw a hand spinning wheel till 1915, when the idea of reviving it first began to stir in his mind, and it was not till 1917 that he discovered, through the offices of an Indian widow who undertook the search, a village where the process was still known and carried on. There were many difficulties in the way of getting the movement started, and he notes that *khadi* then cost seventeen annas to make, against about a third of that, or less, for mill-made cloth. I do not know whether better looking material is now being turned out, but up to 1924 it was and looked coarse and heavy, though it probably wore very well. By 1926 the cost had fallen to eleven annas a yard—still much above the price of mill-made cloth.

It was noted in the 1921 Census that hand-spinning had decreased in the decade 1911-21, but Gandhi, of course, only began to get the movement under weigh in 1917 or thereabout. Unfortunately, figures for the last Census are not yet generally available. They should be interesting. One notes that Indian and Japanese mills have begun to turn out imitation *khadi*, naturally far cheaper than the hand woven stuff, and by this means are enabled to get rid of their inferior cotton, for the hand spun yarn naturally contains many irregularities while still being, I believe, much stronger and better than the regular and even machine spun thread. Another interesting point is made in the letter of an Indian friend to Mr. Andrews, one of Gandhi's English friends. He said he had given up wearing *khadi* because of the cheap popularity he found it brought him. This illustrates my earlier point that one finds among Indians many who have

as high ideals and standards of conduct as are to be found in Europe or America.

Gandhi hopes that eventually *khadi* will oust even Indian mill cloth, and it is possible that this has led to smaller support for him from Industrialists of late years. He has said: "The workers in the mills of Bombay have become slaves. The condition of the women in the mills is shocking. It may be considered a heresy to say so, but I am bound to say that it were better for us to send money to Manchester for flimsy Manchester cloth than to multiply mills in India." There is, however, the other reason that since India obtained fiscal autonomy with the reforms in 1921, and can now impose duties on foreign cloths, mill owners and other manufacturers have not the same reason for supporting agitation against foreign goods. Strong objections have been made to Gandhi applying the terms religiously pure and religiously impure to *khadi* and mill-made cloth so as further to popularize his pet idea. His bonfire of foreign cloth at Bombay in 1921 was strongly condemned by Tagore and Andrews and a host of others. He defended it himself, but stopped the practice. The reason he gave out publicly only some months later. He said that he noticed at the bonfire individuals who themselves were wearing foreign clothing snatching the same off others to give to the flames! Early in 1931, in *Young India*, he publishes a letter from a friend in Sind who says that everyone there "has put away their *khadi* for the next boycott weather", and he comments on it: "There is not in the cities, at least, that real change of taste, such that people will not touch foreign cloth."

Gandhi says that he considers "*Khaddar* as indispensable for Swaraj for two reasons. The first is that Swaraj I hold to be an impossibility without *Khaddar* becoming universal in our country. Secondly it is the most efficient aid to mass discipline, without which mass civil disobedience is impossible." He also notes with approval a story about a Chinese gardener who refused to use a machine for lessening his work, for if he did use it he would get into the way of doing all his work with machinery and thus would get a machine-like heart.

Fülöp-Miller notes that another German writer has compared Gandhi's movement in condemnation of machinery to that of the Luddites in England in 1811. It seems a great pity that Gandhi has never studied Henry Ford's ideas,

especially his latest of providing part time work for farm workers, by installing machinery in villages and even in their farms for them, with which they can turn out parts for him, while he gains by not having to provide factory space, etc.

THE HINDU-MOSLEM PROBLEM

Hindu-Moslem unity, of course, is essential if there is not to be anarchy directly British control is removed. This problem is the greatest in the way of self-government in India. It is a dark and heavy cloud and it seems impossible to say when it will lift. Twelve years ago there seemed to be great chances of its doing so, when Hindus and Mahomedans united on the Khilafat question and the Punjab wrongs. To-day it seems denser and blacker than ever.

I believe there is no parallel for a similar state of affairs in history such as exists in India to-day. One can only try to imagine Red Indians as having invaded China ten centuries ago, and having been joined and augmented as time went on by the more adventurous and ambitious among the Chinese to form the ruling caste. Then, to quell a temporary state of anarchy, a European power stepped in for a century and a half and kept the peace, and more or less maintained the *status quo*. That is really the state of India now. The differences between the Hindus and Moslems are not the differences between the Catholics and Protestants but between two utterly different cultures, one of which has drained from the other most of its adventurous and ambitious spirits, and left behind the careful, the business-like, the philosophical. It is a difference of temperaments and characters, not of faiths such as we know.

I am aware that, as a matter of fact, climate and national character have had a good deal to say regarding the adoption of Protestantism by the peoples of Europe. It was the northern races, living in cold and rigorous climes, who took to the severer form of religion, but they took to them largely *en bloc*.

In the middle regions of Germany and France we got the religious wars of the sixteenth century which finally settled matters there. The differences were not really very deep: the culture behind the two faiths was the same—a mixture of Greek, Roman, and Hebrew interpreted according to the New Testament.

But Hinduism and Islam differ in their very vitals. Hinduism is a religion of the forest, full of its richness and infinite variety, catholic, embracing all varieties of belief and philosophy, subtle and tolerant. Islam is the faith of the desert, severe and simple, laying down one God and one Prophet, giving men an easy doctrine and dogma, yet insisting on close adherence. The faiths are poles apart. Hinduism, with its divisions of castes and sub-castes, is the essence of aristocracy. Islam, with its every member "his own soldier and priest", is essentially democratic. Between those two may be said to lie all the other religions of the world.

An Indian writer, of strong nationalist views, Prithwis Chandra Ray, recently wrote: "In India a common culture is unthinkable with nearly ninety per cent. of the population steeped in absolute ignorance, divided by more than a hundred languages and a thousand castes, and all drawing their intellectual nourishment from intolerant dogmas preached by fanatical pundits and mad mullas."

In the past, before we came to India as rulers, the problem did not exist, for when the sword is half out of the scabbard one does not argue. Those who wanted power and adventure became Mahomedans: those who did not, and preferred peace, even at a certain price, remained in their ancient faith. So the two religions do not mean only a difference of religion, as these things go in Europe, they mean a difference of temperament and character—something far deeper and harder to cure or bridge over than a difference of opinions.

This difference of temperament has also brought about economic differences. Islam forbids usury, and so everywhere in India Mahomedans have to borrow from Hindus, since the numbers of the other faiths are insignificant. Hindus, from a matter of temperament also, fall more into the class of landlords than Moslems, and Gandhi himself gives as one of the causes of the Moplah rising in 1921 the feeling against Hindu landlords. In the towns we find Hindus as traders and shopkeepers and employers, and Mahomedans as craftsmen: it is our own problem of capital and labour again, with a good deal of the unscrupulousness of the moneyed classes in Europe of the early nineteenth century repeated. We can also see a repetition of the feeling of

Christians against Jews some centuries ago, when usury was unfashionable for the former.

For seven centuries, from A.D. 1000 to 1700, there was no problem, for the scales were weighted too heavily against the Hindus. For the next fifty years things were fairly even, and anarchy reigned. The Mahrattas could easily have taken over the empire of India had they had the statesmanship to do so. All they cared for, however, was lucre. They rode north and south conquering: they demanded *chauth*—a fourth part of the revenue—and so long as it was paid they would trouble no more. They did not want empire: for that reason, and because there was none among the Mahomedans strong enough to seize it, India fell to us. For the next hundred and seventy years, until to-day, we have held the scales even, and there was no Hindu-Moslem problem until the question of home rule appeared on the horizon at the end of last century. The Moslems were content enough under our rule. They got as fair a measure of justice as any people could desire. But they would not trust their Hindu fellow-countrymen to give them the same measure, and they realized that the day of the sword was probably over. Here, then, is the whole problem: a ruling caste and a very much larger ruled one have been forced by circumstances to live in equality and amity for a century and a half, without the pride of the former ever having been lowered by the latter: now, without a struggle, the ruling caste is asked quietly to accept the rôle of the ruled under those whom they once ruled. The Moslems have accepted the lower economic status which the *Pax Britannica* has forced upon them. Of old they equalized things whenever the Hindus got too rich by taking their wealth from them. They had, however, the memory and glory of being the ruling caste. Now they feel they are to lose even that.

It was about 1905 that the Pan-Islam movement arose. Everywhere Mahomedans saw the once great empire of the Caliphs shrinking through absorption by European powers. All Africa went after the Balkan wars of 1911-13, and Turkey itself was still further shorn of its once large European possessions. But 1905 had demonstrated in the clearest fashion that Asia *could* be a match for Europe. Japan had thrashed Russia, and all India knew that for fifty years we had feared Russia more than we feared anything else in the

East. That shook the faith of Indians in the invincibility of Europeans and of the British. If little Japan with sixty millions could defeat big Russia with twice her population, why should not the three hundred millions of India defeat the forty-five millions of Britain? So the Moslems saw home rule approaching not only by the road of British benevolence, but also by the more certain road, as they thought, of India's force. With their foreign culture—and many Hindus do regard Islam as absolutely foreign to India—they could only look to their fellow Moslems, once united in the mighty Caliphate, for help. That is why they took up the Khilafat question with such keenness in 1920-21, and having no leader of their own ready for the occasion, followed Gandhi.

Disillusionment was a very bitter pill for them. Bryant, who wrote a fairly impartial book on "Gandhi and the Indian Empire", says that he heard on good authority that the Mahomedan leader Maulana Hazrat Mohani, at one time a fervent follower of Gandhi, quarrelled with him and the Hindus generally on learning by statistics that ninety-five out of every hundred who had gone to prison, and that ninety-nine and a half per cent. of those who had resigned their government posts, had been Mahomedans. Then the casting out of the Caliph by Turkey completed their discomfiture. There was to be no help from outside: the sword, or its substitute in these days of the Arms Act, the heavy, iron-shod *lathi*, or staff, would have to be their refuge.

From the casting out of the Caliphate, temporal and then spiritual, from Turkey, till the present day, tension between Hindus and Moslems seems to have grown. There have been lulls. The opposition to the Simon Commission all through 1928-9 gave both sides a fresh object for their hate, and Miss Mayo's "Mother India", although it attacked the Hindus mainly, united India against the white man generally. Gandhi's civil disobedience campaign of 1930 provided the necessary excitement for that year, but the Round Table Conference at its end showed that a fresh instalment of home rule was well on its way, and 1931 saw a definite cleavage of Hindus and Moslems. Even Shaukat Ali, once Gandhi's most trusted Mahomedan lieutenant and an earnest seeker after Hindu-Moslem unity, has defected and in May, 1931, on a public platform, declared: "I am after him", "him"

being the Mahatma. Cawnpore in March, with its official roll of 200 killed, and an unofficial and general belief that the casualties were far higher, showed that things were as bad as ever. The great majority of the losses fell on the Mahomedans, and it is very doubtful if they will let matters rest there. The losses have usually fallen in the other direction and there are no doubt taunts from many sides now that they have been worsted. One of the troubles is that there is a party among those nationalists who do believe in violence, who do not look with unmixed regret on these dissensions. They see in them excellent practice for the day when both sides will unite to break British heads: till then they may as well break each other's. It will not hurt the leaders, who will probably remain in safety urging on others to fight.

In April, 1924, Gandhi wrote the following in *Young India*: "At the present moment there seems to be a wilful attempt being made to widen the gulf between Hindus and Mahomedans. Some newspapers, both Hindu and Moslem, are leaving no stone unturned to inflame passions and unfortunately they do not hesitate to resort to exaggeration and even misrepresentation. When they are not themselves consciously guilty of such methods, they recklessly copy without verification everything in the nature of a sensation that appears in any other newspaper. . . . It would not have been so very sad if the papers alone were to blame because they are neither important nor well-known. But the misfortune is that the spirit of animosity is swaying almost all the vernacular papers—Hindu and Moslem in Northern India," and he also prints the following passage from a letter from Dr. Ansari, one of his most faithful Mahomedan lieutenants, in answer to a letter of his—"nor are the incidents referred to by you the only ones in reporting which the papers have betrayed such a deplorable and narrow-minded bigotry. Blind fanaticism and a reprehensible desire to run the other community down by every means have to-day become an essential part of the life of a vernacular paper of Northern India."

UNTOUCHABILITY

The problem of untouchability is only slightly material; it is in its moral aspects, the superiority complex it imposes on

the higher caste Hindus, and the inferiority complex it imposes on the outcastes, that renders it so big a problem. Gandhi has rightly shown that while it remains, Hindus cannot object to the same attitude being taken towards them generally as they, the upper castes, show towards the untouchables. "In the history of the world religions, there is perhaps nothing like our treatment of the suppressed classes," he wrote in 1924.

For a hundred years now Hindu reformers have laboured to remove this curse. Ram Mohan Roy, often looked on as the father of Indian social reform, and who died about 1830, began the movement, which has been pursued by both the Brahmo and the Arya Samaj, two Hinduism reformist bodies, and a host of Indians have devoted themselves to the question, many Brahmins doing very fine work in a silent and unobtrusive manner. Gandhi has given a very great impetus to the whole movement by his own splendid example. He has time and again done sweeper and latrine work and induced other high caste Hindus to do likewise. At village or other gatherings he will sit among the untouchables, as I have noted earlier, and he has adopted as a daughter an orphan girl from this caste. Gandhi himself has said: "We are all guilty of having oppressed our brothers. We made them crawl on their bellies before us and rub their noses on the ground. With eyes red with rage we push them out of railway carriages. Has the English Government ever inflicted anything worse on us? Indeed, there is no charge the pariah cannot fling in our faces which we do not fling in the face of Englishmen."

Untouchability has no authorization from the earliest and original Hindu Scriptures, and only arose in later years, as did also the rules of endogamy and the ban on eating outside the sub caste. The term caste, it should be noted, is not properly applicable to the four main orders, or "colours" as the Sanskrit term for them is properly translated, but applies to the three thousand odd castes within those orders. Besides the unsociability these bans make for, there is also the physical deterioration which must come about from the interbreeding which is inevitable when even in small villages of a few hundred inhabitants there may be a dozen or more castes which may not intermarry.

The caste system, bringing with it intense loyalty to the

caste, also breaks up society, and makes India as a nation, and even the different parts of it which can with greater correctness be looked upon as nations, such as Bengal, Bihar, Gujerat, etc., very easily assailable. Invaders, so long as they have not touched the castes, have been able to play one off against the other. We have been accused of dividing to reign in India, but the divisions are there and have been there all the time ; there is not the slightest need to create them with the three thousand existing castes. They have hampered us in government far more than they have helped, and have hampered the advance of self-government even more. Gandhi is trying to break down these artificial barriers—and they are falling, and should do so as rapidly as untouchability—and is doing excellent work for India and can receive our whole-hearted support and sympathy.

CHAPTER XIV

HIS CHARACTER AND HOME LIFE

IF sincerity, courage and generosity be the measure of an aristocrat, as Mr. Wells has laid down in that finest of his many fine books, "The Research Magnificent", with courtesy thrown in for good measure, then I would place Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi very high in that order. Like Wells' hero he was not born with courage, either moral or physical. He had to cultivate it, the latter against the handicap of slight physique. He succeeded magnificently in both directions. His possession of the other attributes is equally great, above all, his utter unselfishness, an unselfishness which very deservedly has caused him to be ranked as a saint and a reincarnation of their deities by his own people.

It is a very unfortunate thing that men resent imputations on their morality far more than upon their intelligence. Personally it is all the other way with me, and I have known a few to think likewise. It can only be for this reason that I find so many among my fellow-countrymen who refuse to believe any good of Gandhi. They seem convinced that he is the wily and scheming old politician that certain periodicals and writers make him out to be. They seem to be unable to imagine a man of very high moral character and yet fairly mediocre intelligence—mediocre, at any rate, for the exalted position in the estimation of his fellows which he occupies. Yet that is the whole key to Gandhi's character—a saint with a second-rate mentality.

The Rev. C. F. Andrews, for long years one of Gandhi's most devoted friends, yet one who does not fail to criticize him at times, says "*Ahimsa* (non-violence) is the key to all higher existence. It is the divine life itself. . . . A second intellectual conviction is the paramount use of religious vows in the building up of the spiritual life." That view does rather well express two of his main ideals, but there is also his utter pity for and sympathy with the poor and helpless and his desire to better their lot. I think it was his meeting with a

number of famine victims about the year 1918 or so who were so appallingly miserable as to desire neither work nor food which has sent him headlong on his path of the spinning wheel and non-co-operation in the hope of improving their lot thereby.

He is a very humble little man. There are many perhaps who will refuse to believe that. A sentence taken out of its context, another quoted without reference to the qualifications with which he has said it before may have condemned him to be considered otherwise in the minds of many. But as he has said often, there is only one thing he is sure of, that is his passion and search for the truth. Time and again in his writings and speeches he shows this real humility of his. He has said once or twice that he has ambition. Once he has specified it as ambition to do work beyond his capacity. He may, of course, be so clever as to conceal his cleverness and his real aims, but if that were so he would have been clever enough not to have lost control of the Congress as he did in 1924. No, I am convinced that my estimate of him is correct—a man perfect in every direction but in the quality of his intelligence. Even that warm admirer of his, Romain Rolland, says of him: "And herein lies his narrowness; not in his heart, which is as large as that of a Christ, but in his spirit of intellectual asceticism and renunciation. . . . Gandhi is an universalist of the middle ages. While venerating him, we understand and approve Tagore."

He seems to believe that the rights of public meetings, free speech, and a free press are elementary human rights. Surely not. Elementary human beings are not far removed from brutes; some are not so well developed. One does not allow the right of free association in the Zoo. Such rights only come to be conceded when people have learnt sufficient self-control not to abuse such privileges. Read what he has said on journalism—and I have given only one or two of several such ratings from him. Had the Chauri Chaura mob an elementary human right to assemble and cast twenty-two of their fellows into the flames?

How little he really knows of human nature. I have shown in the quotations given on his views of burglars and the defence of the North-Western Frontier. Such things would be possible in a world of Gandhis, but his unwisdom lies in refusing to see that the world is not composed of

Gandhis, but of a vast majority of quite ordinary human beings and a small but dangerous minority of hooligans who would soon create anarchy if they could get the majority to adopt Gandhi-ism.

There is a very practical side to his nature, as has been shown in his management of the various funds and institutions he has had to administer and on which I have commented earlier. Other proofs stand out in some of the sayings quoted in an earlier chapter. When his pet views do not obscure his vision he can usually be expected to add up two and two as correctly as anyone on earth.

He has very little desire for the adulation of the mob. He has had painful experience of how selfish it often is, in forcing *darshan*—religious sight—on him in spite of his utter weariness. He loathes to be thought infallible, and we saw him fearing the majority which followed him far more than the Government did. I started my study of the man from a purely historical point of view, though with probably a good deal of bias against him for the trouble he had caused. I have come gradually, the more I have read of his writings, to recognize in him every desirable quality save that of intelligence and a certain anti-British bias, which in view of the defects of his intelligence and his rather unfortunate experiences, are perfectly understandable, and one can only be grateful that it is not much greater than it is.

Of one thing those having to deal with Gandhi should beware, lest they fall into the same trap as did Bismark's opponents. It has been claimed that he won many of his most notable diplomatic triumphs through his adversaries thinking he was lying and laying all their plans on this assumption when he was telling the truth. Gandhi is utterly truthful. And he does not, like other Indians, ask for more than he wants or expects to get in the hope of getting just what he does want. He is ready to compromise and take less at times, but he does ask for exactly what he wants. If it seems absurd, it is because he is, as he often states, an invincible optimist.

While Gandhi confesses to, and has shown, a very laudable ability to compromise, he has never shown an ability to work with others. He is extraordinarily strong on non-co-operation, very weak on co-operation. This is not only

CHAPTER XV

THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

THE Indian National Congress has probably the most curious genesis of any revolutionary body in the world. Lala Lajpat Rai, an Indian nationalist who was deported from India once, and was always looked on with dark suspicion by the Government, spoke thus of it :

“There is no parallel to this in the history of the world. Who ever heard of a movement for political liberty being initiated by a despotic government which is foreign in its agency and foreign in its methods ?”

Yet this is exactly what did happen, though the facts only became generally known some thirty years after its birth in 1885. It was Lord Dufferin, then Viceroy of India, who sanctioned and unofficially aided its start. Without official approval there is no question that such a concern could never have got under weigh or have lasted more than the briefest period of time. The Viceroy was even anxious that Lord Reay, then Governor of Bombay, should preside at its first session which was to be held in that city at the end of December, 1885.

A. O. Hume, a retired Indian civilian, who had held high office at Simla, was the principal organizer. The story goes that some years before he had been shown details for a wonderfully organized revolt in India, providing for reporters in thirty thousand separate districts, and he was so struck with it that he felt there should be some safety valve for the political thought of India such as the Congress might provide. It should be noted that India did not settle down to a blissful state of loyalty after the mutiny. There was a very strong aftermath of rebellion left over from the failure of the mutiny, which was much more than a mutiny, if not a full-blooded rebellion. Indians themselves now have got into the way of looking at it as a war for independence—as it would have been had it been successful. University education had been started in India just after the Mutiny, and the first graduates

the while. She had two small charcoal stoves built of fire-brick against the wall and a small movable stove in front of her. She sits upon a board with her store cupboard behind her so that she can reach the things she wants without moving. Her cooking utensils are all of brass, tin-lined and beautifully kept. She never rises during the cooking of a meal, and anything which is not within her reach is brought to her by her grand-daughter, the child of her eldest son. When necessary she supplements her fireplaces by using a primus stove." To each person is given a large brass tray with small vessels of the same metal containing the various vegetarian dishes eaten with rice and chapatties. The food here is not like the ordinary Indian curry dishes, highly seasoned with chillies, so that we have been able to eat and enjoy all that has been served to us. Dall or lentil soup of some kind is served every day and is always of the most lovely golden yellow colour; next to it is always a dish of tomatoes and when the weather is not too cold we have creamy curds to end up with. We shall never see a more interesting or unique sight whilst we are in India than this charming little lady and first-class housekeeper as she sits in her snow-white garments catering to the needs of the inner man."

Of the great man himself they gave this description: "We found him sitting on the floor before his desk in his own room. Upon the floor was spread a lovely blue *khaddar* cloth, and as the rising sun lighted up the whole place Mahatmaji looked a wonderful figure in these unique yet characteristic surroundings. The room is absolutely devoid of all ornament; a few bookshelves, a low desk, one deck chair which remains folded against the wall; a couple of *charkas* and a low bench constitute its furniture."

They conclude with this passage: "What has struck us most about the Ashram is the music which accompanies all the activities, the rhythmical sound of the carding bow, the humming of the spinning wheel, the music of the *tambura* and the *sitar* in the class-rooms, wherever we turn there is harmony and joy, discipline and devotion."

with us, the British, but also with his own people. He is always referring to this inability on his part, not in so many words, but in noting that he finds himself in total disagreement with the other leaders of Indian thought, and so on. He will come to a compromise with them at the end of a stage of the journey, but he refuses to engage in team work with them on the road. He insists on ploughing his furrow alone, and then stopping at the end of the field and trying to arrange with others how to cultivate the patches he and they have left unploughed.

I have described a good deal of Gandhi's private life already. Here it is interesting to give a pleasant picture of life at the Satyagraha Ashram on the Sabarmati river and conveniently near the Sabarmati Central Prison, some four miles from the big city of Ahmedabad. Two Englishwomen, Theosophists, came from Madras for a month's instruction in hand-spinning. The extracts were from the diaries of these ladies which were published by Gandhi in *Young India* with the qualification: "The references to the Ashram are not wholly true. All is not so rosy as it has appeared to these friends. The Ashram has its jars, it has its trials and difficulties, it has to wear away many a rough edge. But it does try to live up to its name."

I condense a certain amount into my own words, and give the more picturesque passages as originally printed.

There were about one hundred and thirty members. They rose before four a.m. and had prayers at four, then breakfast. Then work, with perhaps a walk between seven to eight, till ten-thirty, when all adjourned for the midday meal. Work again till six o'clock, which was dinner time. Prayers were at six-thirty. "There are three rectangular spaces of sand surrounded by low walls and on these carpets are spread upon which we all sit down. The scene is one which never fails to enchant us, the white-robed figures of men and women in attitudes of reverent prayer, the stars overhead, the young boys around the musician who leads the singing and expounds the reading, the twittering of the last late birds in the trees, all go to make a scene of entrancing beauty steeped in the devotional atmosphere which makes for peace and happiness."

Of the evening meal it is written: "At six o'clock we had dinner in Mrs. Gandhi's kitchen, she sitting cooking chapatties

of those days were now approaching the forties, when men expect to see power and position close ahead, and these graduates found that there was nothing for them as compared with Englishmen with like university attainments. It was in 1878 that Lord Lytton had to institute a Press Law to gag the vernacular Press, which was beginning to grow too seditious, showing that there was a good deal of quite open sedition at this time.

Hume was ably seconded in his efforts by Sir William Wedderburn, another Indian civilian who had been on the executive council in Bombay, and both these Englishmen spent money and effort on the Congress to an extent that was equalled by very few of the early Indian promoters, and passed by none.

The Congress has always met at the end of the year so as to take advantage of the Christmas holidays, and the session lasts from two to five days, the first day or two being given to the Subjects Committee which decides what resolutions shall be brought up in the main conference. In only two years of the forty-five of its life has there been any break in this continuity: in 1930 when the Congress had been declared an illegal organization and could not therefore meet, and in 1907 when the meeting had to be adjourned after developing into a beautiful fight, free for all, before it could get under weigh.

This was the occasion when the Extremists first tried to capture the Congress. Up till then the Congress had pursued a fairly placid path of petitioning the Government and passing resolutions for an extension of representation of Indians in the councils, reduction of taxes and army expenditure, larger grants for education, cancelling the Arms Act of 1878, and so on. Several of these used to be put together in an "omnibus" resolution when it was wished to devote most of the time available to some special grievance of the day.

Official sunshine on the movement did not last long, though we find the Governor of Madras welcoming the delegates in 1887; the Viceroy had done the same thing at a reception in its second session at Calcutta. In 1888 it fell foul of the Government, and after having been affectionately dubbed "Her Majesty's Permanent Opposition in India", became successively "a jump into the Unknown", and, in a

phrase which has since been continually and angrily repeated all over India : "A microscopic minority of the Indian people". However nothing ever occurred to warrant its being suppressed altogether, and indeed the official displeasure in 1888 caused that session to be a particularly largely attended one. Lord Curzon did not love it, nor did it love him.

It was the Bengal Partition of 1905 that may be said to have fired the shot which started the present revolution in India into flames. Before that it had been smouldering, and might have gone on doing so but for the Partition coming on top of what was to Asia, and all the coloured folk on earth, a world-shaking event: the defeat of big Russia by tiny Japan. In India its effect was more marked than elsewhere, for it had been made patent there how much we feared Russia by our constant anxiety about the frontier and Afghanistan, and so much of our policy having been mainly coloured by openly expressed fears of a Russian invasion.

Hence at the 1906 session at Calcutta, where, owing to the curious system of representation, some half of the delegates were Bengalis, as well as most of the visitors (and often there has been nothing to prevent these voting too), the extremists managed to carry some resolutions which greatly alarmed the more moderate members who had been conducting the Congress's affairs till then. The next session was to have been held at Nagpur in the Central Provinces, but the Moderates decided it would be better to have it further away, at Surat on the west coast, where it could not be packed by Bengali Extremists. It was this which made the Extremists so angry that they refused to obey the chairman's rulings for order, and tried to say what they wished with chairs. Henry Nevinson, one of those fortunate mortals who somehow manage to find themselves present at every first-class row there is, gives a very graphic description of what occurred on this occasion in his "More Changes, More Chances."

The Moderates called a meeting of delegates who would subscribe to a creed of the attainment of self-government within the British Empire by strictly constitutional means, and this was laid down as an essential formula for membership, whereby the Extremists were excluded till a truce was patched up in 1915-16. In 1918 the Extremists captured the Congress, and the Moderates seceded to form the National Liberal Federation, which has functioned regularly ever since

as the organization of the wiser and more serious of Indian politicians.

The election of delegates to the Congress has always been a matter of extraordinary looseness. The following shows what the state of affairs is at present. I have met a good deal to hint at this always having been the case ; nothing ever to contradict it.

A correspondent writes to *Young India* in May, 1931, complaining that delegates are bringing in new, i.e., original voters, paying their Congress fees for them (the fee is only 4½d. for the year), sending conveyances for them, and giving feasts to influence them. He does not think it is right, either being a genuine reformer or not having the means to compete in the same way. Gandhi in his comment on the letter agrees, and condemns the practices as "very reprehensible," and regrets that under the Congress Constitution nothing can be done about it, nor does he indicate that he means to do anything about it. In the same issue of his paper—the 31st of May—he gives a very emphatic "no" as to whether a voter otherwise qualified had the right to vote if he did not wear *khaddar* !

One can see, therefore, that the Congress is a purely partisan body which has never represented any but those who were in more or less entire agreement with its ideas and policy. The Extremists, who never had the ability to organize their own body, managed to steal it from the Moderates who, with Englishmen, had formed it, and obtained with it the reputation of the oldest political body in India, and that of being a representative one—a reputation which was fairly true up to about 1906, but not after the free fight of 1907, except for perhaps the two or three years from 1915-18. Mahomedans have never joined it in any appreciable numbers except during the Khilafat agitation of 1919 to 1922. Shortly after its inception in 1885, Sir Syed Ahmad, then the leading Mahomedan in India, had strongly advised his co-religionists to have nothing to do with it, and from 1905 they had their own organization in the All India Moslem Congress. There have always been a few Mahomedans in it, and it would seem they have often been pushed to the front to "dress the window", but even in Khilafat years Gandhi notes that Mahomedans take very little interest in the Congress and that they do not care for Swaraj, which has become its main objective.

During its early years the Congress was an excellent training ground for the budding politician and publicist. Promises were easy to make, since there was never the least chance for the makers being called on to fulfil them. It was a wonderful opportunity, too, thanks to the tolerance of the "oppressive" and "satanic" Government, to obtain wide popularity and a cheap reputation for courage by flouting that same Government. It did on the other hand serve men who really had the good of their country very deeply at heart like Gokhale, Surendranath Bannerji, Sir Pherozeshaw Mehta, Mohan Madan Malaviya, and others. If they did not always show themselves to be entirely above criticism, one must realize that a state of continual opposition is not one best calculated to develop a character evenly. It is only after holding administrative office for a time and learning that one cannot drive men beyond their powers that comes the wisdom which teaches us to give more praise than blame.

The Government probably took more notice of Congress proceedings than appeared on the surface, and one finds a number of the things petitioned for being gradually conceded. Also, at times, it probably retarded reforms. Lord Curzon most strongly disliked being dictated to, and I should not wonder if he took an impish delight in foiling his critics in the Congress.

From 1920 the Congress quite definitely changed its rôle from being a petitioning body and became a constructive revolutionary organization, pledged at first to obtain Swaraj within the empire by all legitimate and peaceful means, and of late to independence, but still by the same means, thanks partly to Gandhi's influence, but also by the certainty that it would be suppressed if it adopted a stronger "creed", as this formula of its objective has always been termed since 1907. At the same time its real value to the country as a mouthpiece dropped very considerably owing to the Legislative Assembly and Provincial Councils, which came into being at the beginning of 1921, absorbing all the best men who were really keen on constructive work for their country. Those who could not settle to tame work of this kind, and saw that the councils would not furnish the same platform for the making of empty promises, have preferred to continue with the Congress, whose work really was done with the institution of the reforms.

From the foregoing it can be readily seen that the Congress is not a body which really carries any weight except such as comes from the purely personal following of a great religious personality like Gandhi, and him the people would follow if he changed his policy every week, providing he would give them something definite and exciting to do. Had the Congress not managed to capture Gandhi at the end of the War there is little doubt but that the body would have died out. Except for this very adventitious membership, it may now be said to represent nothing besides that portion of the educated middle class which is either incapable of making its way in the world through lack of normal efficiency, or has had the bad luck to be excluded by reasons of lack of caste or family influence from profitable employment under the Government.

CHAPTER XVI

CONCLUSION

AFTER getting them to study the geography of India, I have found that I can best convey to students of Indian history a picture of the present state of that country by asking them to imagine an invasion of Chinese into Europe in 1757, and a gradual taking over of the continent by them from then on, thanks to an organization and superiority of character as much greater on their part as we may consider has been the reason of our success in India. Let us suppose them to have introduced Chinese education and culture, to have unified and pacified the land as we have ensured peace in India, and to have delayed the grant of self-government to Europe as we have delayed it in India. Such a picture, I think, conveys a very accurate picture of India now. All Europe, with a culture entirely different to that of the Chinese, might earnestly wish for them to go, but if the Chinese had forcibly kept us all in leash, preventing various wars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which we have seen in Europe, might not one of our reasons for freedom be but the desire to fly at each other's throats? Possibly not, but no one, I think, would say that it would be safe to free such a Europe all of a sudden. There would have to be safeguards of various kinds to prevent German and Englishman, Frenchman and Italian, Serb and Bulgar flying at each other directly the Chinese control was lifted.

The Chinese might be very ready to get out of a continent where they had found as much trouble as we have in India, but with any sense of duty they could not do so. If you, the reader, had chanced into a very rowdy school and found small children being mercilessly bullied by bigger, and, because of the propinquity of your own property, grave danger to it from such children, you might have found yourself obliged to take charge, nor could you leave it until you felt your property to be safe and that the small children would be safe

from bullying. Gandhi himself has said that Swaraj is very much a matter of security being assured. If every Englishman in India could feel that life was safe, especially for the women and children of his race, Swaraj at once would be in sight. I think that is perfectly true. It is because we still see the spirit that animated the massacre of Cawnpore in 1857 abroad in the land in the murder of Englishwomen and Englishmen that we feel we cannot safely surrender control.

The Reforms, brought in ten years ago, in 1921, made a totally new experiment in government. It was called Dyarchy, and meant that certain subjects were transferred to popular control, under Indian ministers, while certain subjects, i.e., law and order, defence, finance, were reserved and still administered as of old, autocratically. It was a horizontal division of authority, and the strongest argument against it was that there was no real responsibility for the transferred subjects because financial control was lacking. There are many—and I agree with them—who think it would have been far better to have introduced complete self-control in the smallest units—all villages, say, and in a certain number of selected districts, and to have extended self-control gradually upwards. There are also strong arguments against this, but at least it would have been in accordance with the old system of India. The next instalment of reforms, likely to be brought in as soon as the present Round Table Conferences have come to an end and agreed on a scheme, is an extension of full self-government to the various Provinces, with certain safeguards in the way of veto on the part of the Governor, and intervention on the part of the Central Government, which is still to remain, in essence, autocratic, though strongly tempered by the winds of public opinion and the criticism of the central legislature.

There is one great mistake of which the British Government in India has been guilty, and that is in failing to realize the enormous importance at a juncture such as exists between the end of autocracy and the coming in of democracy, for propaganda and publicity. An autocratic government is sufficiently hampered already by the fact that it has to stick to the truth while the vernacular Press, except in rare and honourable instances, such as Gandhi's own two papers, and in one or two others—I believe C. R. Das always tried to keep his organ free from lies and exaggeration—has always

allowed itself the freest play. I refer to Gandhi's own indictment of the Indian Press; there are several others of his equally strong for which I had no room.

Even in the Legislatures and the Councils itself the Government has been strongly criticized for failing to treat opposition in the same serious manner as it would be treated in England. With the safeguards they had in the way of being able to certify necessary legislation which the members of those bodies refused to pass, they would not resort to the powers of persuasion and of showing up the weaknesses in the opposition arguments. Those arguments have often been pitifully weak, and opposition was more often indulged in not for any real objections, but because it was a cheap and easy way of showing the country how diligent they were about their business. As the Government failed to show them up, there has been nothing to make the country believe otherwise. Now and again there has been a bright gleam to the contrary, as when an honourable member got up and drew a harrowing picture of Indian babies dying by the score through the export of milch cattle, which he was endeavouring to stop. I believe some of the members were shedding tears over his speech. The Government official responsible for the matter then rose and showed that the number of cattle exported was twelve thousand, of which, at the most, not more than half, and probably many less, were milch cattle. Six thousand milch cattle meant less than one cow per hundred villages, or per fifty thousand of the population and, say, per ten thousand of the number of milch cattle in the land. He might easily have gone on to show how the Indians themselves by their neglect and cruelty lost a hundred times that number annually, how they could with but a very slight effort double or treble the out-turn of milk. The argument, however, was more than enough to crush the helpless orator.

It seems a million pities that Gandhi has that kink which prevents him from seeing that his goal and ours is really the same, only he prefers hacking his through what is in all probability an impenetrable forest concealing a host of dangers, while ours, if apparently a slightly longer one, will in the end be far quicker, and with his great power and influence with the masses, might be made very much quicker. He could not carry the bulk of the educated classes with

him, of course. They are looking only for the spoils of office which they hope Swaraj will bring them.

He has not feared to find himself in a minority of one before, however, and has even enjoyed it. Can he have the courage to do this again? As one grows older, and after a life of strife such as he has had, I realize that one does not like to make ventures such as one would joyfully undertake when young. Yet he has said: "Behind my non-co-operation there is always the keenest desire to co-operate on the slightest pretext even with the worst of opponents." Has he never allowed himself to be exploited? Rolland reports him as saying so, "I have begun to wonder if I am not unconsciously allowing myself to be exploited. . . . The only tyrant I accept in the world is the still small voice within."

Andrews says that Gandhi's main indictment against us can be summed up in accusing us of oppressing the poor. Here it is the very deficient knowledge of history that is to blame. Had he given a tenth of the time to the study of the history of his own land that I have—and I do not claim that this has been much—he could not fail to have come to the conclusion that we have raised the lot of the Indian peasant. It is true, abundantly true, that we might have done much more—but that can be said of almost any similar problem there has ever been. I think no impartial inquirer can doubt that India's lot to-day is a far happier lot than it would have been had we never come to it. It is an opinion which has been held by many of India's greatest sons, Gokhale, perhaps the greatest, among them. It is only the smaller men, those who have given no study to the matter, or who have been seeking a cheap popularity, who have denied it.

Gandhi, strong and great in many things, is weak in the estimation of his own wisdom. He does not believe himself to be clever, and I think his present trouble is that he has lost confidence in himself. He has refused offers to go to America saying he has no confidence in having a message to deliver. For long years he held the belief that the British Government was the best government to live under. In his sober moments he must be very fully aware that his own countrymen will not develop his ideal any more quickly than we will, and most probably would put it farther off. He has failed time and again to get any real support for the objects nearest his heart from his own countrymen. He has claimed

his readiness to compromise. The British have made enormous advances during the past twelve years—advances which would have surprised Gokhale and Tilak and the giants of the early years of the century. Must he, like Oliver Twist, always be asking for more, instead of digesting what is already inside him?

He is really a very pathetic figure, this little man, far from sure of his ground, which ever way he looks. He has jumped into a chariot charging down hill, and he is not at all sure whether he wants to go up hill or down hill or to the right or to the left. He would much rather have stayed still, developing the spinning wheel and working for Hindu-Moslem unity and the removal of untouchability. He knows nothing of politics or history; he knows much of social reform, and his social reform work would be, as he himself has often recognized, the quickest way to freedom. He is a great saint and a very great man, but a poor politician and a worse statesman.

FINIS