NON-CO-OPERATION.

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The following letters have been written to a friend in England concerning Non-co-operation. It appeared to me, that they would be of interest to Indian readers, and I am venturing to publish them in India.

I

My dear,

You have asked me, from your home in England, to explain to you the meaning of this new and very ugly word, that is being used in India,—Non-co-operation. You criticise it at first sight, and you have every reason to do so from your distant view of the situation. I grant you at once, that the word has an ugly sound. It seems to imply the very opposite of what every Christian has been taught to aim at, namely, to be a fellow-

worker and a fellow-helper. You are right also in saying, that there is nothing that the world needs so much today as brotherhood. Humanity is crying out for co-operation to heal the wounds of the War. I need hardly tell you, that I have weighed well, over and over again, the force of all this argument. And yet, it has not convinced me. I have lain awake, night after night, brooding over the problem. And yet I am, in principle, today a strong believer in non-co-operation. Need I say to you, who are a Christian, that I am a Christian also,—a believer in love, as the final remedy for all the evils of the world. We are, both of us, taught by Christ to love even our enemies. We are taught, that the whole commandment of life is contained in two words,—to love God with all our heart, and our neighbour as our own self. We have, both of us, learnt the golden rule of Christ,—"Whatsoever ye would that man should do unto you, even so do unto them; for this is the law and the prophets."

And yet,—and yet,—I am resolutely going to defend this principle of Non-Co-operation from a certain standpoint. I would add? one

word further. I would say, that Christ himself was the example, for all time, of the *principle* involved in it. For he unflichingly refused to compromise with evil. He declared, that it profited a man nothing, if he gained the whole world and lost his own soul. The soul of India was being lost in the mechanical civilisation of the modern world which has invaded both East and West alike. But now she has been called by a prophetic voice of one of her noblest children to a pathway of self-purification. India was rapidly losing her own individuality. She was forfeiting that supremely delicate and beautiful nature and character, which had been God's handiwork in her history all down the centuries. She was rapidly taking in its stead, without true assimilation, the barren nature of a foreign culture. Now she is realising that to go forward any further along that course, is to follow the path of suicide and destruction. Therefore she is definitely making the Great Refusal, which is called Non-Cooperation. Even if England offer her wealth, plenty, peace, protection, prosperity, within the Spacious British Empire' and, as the price of it,

this compromise with her own inner nature, India will refuse. She will refuse to co-operate on such a basis. She knows, in her heart of hearts, that she has compromised far too long, and now that she has an inspiring personality to give her unity and spiritual strength, she is determined to compromise no longer.

We, Englishmen, have gradually got into the way of thinking, that every country can be made, at one and the same time, more profitable to ourselves, and more happy in its own internal life, by coming under our protection. I happen to have been, during my travels to all kinds of places, and nothing has impressed me so much as the discontent, which is now existing among those indigenous peoples, who are being moulded into new shapes and forms by this protection of the British Government. The legend is kept up in England (for home-consumption) that every one is happy and contented under such protection. But this is not the truth. Whether it is a younger generation in Burma, or in South Africa, in Uganda or in Fiji—I have had heart talks with the young leaders in all these countries, and I can only say

that the discontent is profound. If I had gone to Egypt or Mesopotamia or Palestine, or Ireland, it would have been the same story. My dear man, let us, who are Christians, put to ourselves a plain and simple question. Would *we* like to be continually ruled by foreigner for our own so called benefit? Don't you think it would make us perfectly miserable? Then, if that is the case, why do we not apply the rule of Christ, and love the Indian, the Burmese, the Baganda, the Egyptian, the Irish, as our own self? Why do we not do to others that which we should wish them to do to us? If we would not like to be ruled by foreigners, why do we insist on keeping up a foreign rule? If we ourselves wish to be independent, why do we not wish them to be independent? As a Christian, it seems to me, there is no other way to meet that interrogation, except to desire earnestly and to strive all we can for the independence of every foreign part of what is called the British Empire. Don't you think that this follows from Christ's teaching?

I know full well, that there is no greater need in the whole world today than a full

mutual understanding between the East and the West. The future of the human race depends on such a mutual understanding being reached. But the very first requisite for such a mutual understanding is mutual respect. The respect of the wolf for the lamb, in AEsop's fable, is not a model for humanity to follow in the Twentieth Century. Yet the past treatment of Asia and Africa by Europe has been of the same predatory nature, and this predatory habits are not unlearnt in a single day. I have seen a map of Africa in 1880, before the great plunder began. After a few years the whole map of Africa was cut up into pieces, each of which denoted the extent of the loot. Then, after that, Asia was being gradually divided up in the same way. Before the great War, as you know, China and Persia only by a narrow margin escaped the fate of Africa. I am sure that you, came into the Great War, as volunteer, in order to prevent the spoilation of Belgium, are not one of those who can look on the spoilation of the East with equanimity. Would you not rather, in principle, stand up on behalf of every country

that has already been subjected, and claim that it shall be set free. Does not the thought of a 'Declaration of Independence' for India or for Egypt; or for Korea; or for China, stir your heart as the Independence of Belgium did? You, who fought for Belgian freedom,—cannot you fight, in spirit and principle, for India's freedom? We are not asking for a battle of violence and bloodshed. Rather, we are asking for a battle of suffering and endurance,—a battle of the Cross.

Does not that thought move you, as a Christian? I will tell you, one thing, which I witnessed with my own eyes. It was the sight of twelve delicate Hindu ladies coming out of the prison in South Africa, where they had suffered more than words can relate. Yet their faces were full of joy. They spoke gently of their persecutors. They told me all the kind things they could about their jailors. They had gone to prison not for any wrong doing (they were incapable of worng) but to uphold their country's honour and freedom. That war of passive resistance in South Africa was won without striking a blow. Believe me, it was one of the most Christian thing I ever

saw in my life. I cannot possibly forget it.

This Non-Co-operation movement in India is really being worked out on the same principles by Mahatma Gandhi, as those which I saw practised in South Africa. It is only called by another name, in its essence it implies the resistance of evil, by forbearance, not by violence; by endurance, not by force; by suffering, not by slaughter. It regards the domination and subjection of India by a foreign country, such as England, with abhorrence, as an evil thing. It is determined not to co-operate with the evil and make it permanent.

If you say to me in reply,—"We, English, are not dominating and subjecting India by force. As fast as we can, we are actually giving India freedom within our British Empire." Well, I shall deal with that last clause "within our British Empire" later. At this point, my answer to your assertion, "we are actually giving freedom to India," would be in a rhyming couplet,—

Freedom is not a mendicant's dole.
To be thrust in a beggar's begging bowl,

Freedom is a gift of the soul, to be won by self-purification and self-sacrifice. If England

really wishes India to be free, then she must stand aside, she must insist, that India shall have the dole of this so-called freedom, which England herself is patronisingly prepared to concede. This is the whole crux of the Egyptian and the Irish struggle,—not merely of the Indian struggle for liberty. We are told by Christ, as I have said, to love our neighbour as ourself; to do to others what we should wish them to do to us. Should *we*, English people, like to be bound hand and foot by conditions at the very time 'freedom' was being offered us? Should we be satisfied with all sorts of stipulations and regulations and provisions and precautions? Should we not do what our forefathers did in America—made a Declaration of Independence? Or again, I ask you, should we, Englishmen, be satisfied with mere boons and patronising doles of freedom? Read Wordsworth's sonnets; read Milton's Areopagitica; read Shakespeare's description of England in King Henry IV; read Burke on American Independence. English literature, from one end to the other, is crammed full of answer to the contrary. Then why not follow the law of Christ, and do to others what we should wish

them to do to us? For if England insists on giving India what English politicians today are pleased to call 'freedom',—in English politicians' own way, at the English politicians' own time, and at the English politicians' own discretion,—then, all I can say is, that it is no *freedom* at all.

II

You see, the trouble after all is this. Our British people at home have been drugged into a stupid satisfaction with the comfortable thought, that a sub-continent, such as India, with three hundered and twenty million people, and all sorts of Rajahs and Maharajahs can be marked red on the map as a 'British Possession', and can be quoted in history and geography lessons to every British child as an example of what the British Empire can accomplish in its rule in the East. The British are a kindly sentimental folk, on ordinary occasions, and they are prepared to go a long way in passing patronising legislation of a good-natured type, as long as the ultimate, solid, material fact of India, as a 'British Possession', does not elude their grasp. But when you come to think it over, this

attitude of 'Possession' is quite hopelessly out of keeping with any true, frank and sincere friendship. How can you be a *friend* of the man who insists on always keeping you in a semi-inferior position.' You may flatter such a man: you may pretend to be very devoted to him; you may fawn upon him for favours; but you cannot be his friend.

I know, at once, what you are eagerly seeking to answer. "Yes," you would say to me, "I grant all that, But times have changed. We are in a different age altogether. The great Reform Act of December, 1919, has been passed. Now such vital subjects as Education, Sanitation, etc., are in the hands of Indians themselves.—We have all about it in the House of Commons Debates.—Only such necessary public affairs, as Revenue and Police and the Army, are reserved subjects."

If that is your real answer, it is a poor one. In the west, it is a recognised principle of all true Government, that there should be no taxation without representation; that the man who pays the piper has a right to call the tune. But here, in the East, the very reverse

has happened. The non-official Indians Minister of Health, or Education, is faced with bankruptcy at once, if he tries any new schemes in his Department. The reserved subjects, which are not under popular control, have the first demand upon the national income. The Military Expenditure alone runs away with half the revenue. Then comes the Civil Expenditure, which provides for ever increasing official salaries. Then follows the Police Expenditure. These are all continually augmenting their budget demands. Only after their needs are satisfied, can any funds be granted for Education, Sanitation etc. which are popular subjects.

Let me give you an interesting example, which shows that extraordinary little vital change has been made even in the provincial governments. I have just seen through a most painful experience at Chandpur in East Bengal. Some thousands of poor, famished refugee labourers, from the Tea gardens of Assam, had fled from the gardens, and had become crowded in a congested area, on the river bank, where the railway meets the steamer. Cholera had broken out among them in a virulent form.

At such a time two things were done by the Administration which excited great public indignation. First of all, Gurkha soldiers were turned out, in the middle of the night, in order to drive these miserable people from the third class passenger shed at the railway station, where they had taken refuge. These weak and famished refugees were forced by blows to remove themselves to a bare shelterless football ground, with the monsoon rains already threatening. The attack was made upon them with the butt-ends of rifles. Numbers were wounded, among whom were feeble women and little children, too week and ill to escape the Gurkha's blows. I was on the spot and saw those wounded people almost immediately after the occurrence. The sight would have made your blood boil as it did mine. Yet the whole disgraceful incident was glozed over in the usual official manner without any apology; and the limit was reached when Mr. Montagu got up in the House of Commons and declared that Government of Bengal had acted with "great humanity" in the matter.

The second chapter of this story was even more significant. At the instigation of

the Tea Planters Association, (whose representative suddenly appeared on the scene at Chandpur) it was decided by the Bengal Government to do nothing to help forward these people out of the cholera stricken town, for fear of a further exodus from the gardens. There was a deadlock and the people were furious. At this point, I was asked to come in and act if possible as a mediator. My proposal was a very simple one. If Government would provide a subscription of five thousand rupees, as a mark of sympathy, then the charitably disposed public would subscribe the rest. But the Government (which was strongly under the influence of the Tea Planters at this time, and living in the Planters' strong-hold at Darjeeling) refused to give anything at all to help the refugees forward. I went up personally to Darjeeling in order to meet the Government authorities. And whom do you think I was asked to see? Not the Minister of Health, who was an Indian; not any Indian at all; but three Englishmen,—the Governor, the Home Minister, and the Chief Secretary. We discussed the whole matter at length; I had come direct from the scene of action and

spoke hot words. The officials were as cold as ice. Believe me, in spite of Reform Councils, the autocracy is as wooden, as impervious, as obstinate as ever it was before. It is incapable of change.

That very day in Darjeeling I met some of the Indian Councillers. They told me in words as burning as my own, how furious they were at the Gurkha outrage. But at the Legislative Council, all they have been able to do in their helplessness have been to ask a few conventional questions receive official answers and pass a very timid resolution. And Mr. Montagu's statement in the House of Commons remains unchallenged. "The Government of Bengal," he said, "has acted with great humanity in the matter."

Just think of it! Just picture it to yourself! Only picture it! To turn Gurkha soldiers out at dead of night on poor, helpless, utterly miserable and emaciated men, women and children! To drive these wretched human beings, who were sickening with cholera, on to a bare shelterless football ground, hitting children and women over the heads with the butt-ends of their riflles! Picture it

man! Do picture it! Why, we shouldn't treat cattle like that in England! I saw on my arrival a little girl, with her cheek all cut and bruised by a savage blow, which only just missed the eye-ball itself. And yet Mr. Montagu is primed up with official despatches to say in the House of Commons that the Government of Bengal has acted with great humanity in the matter?

Pardon me, if I have become bitter and cynical. The Duke of Connaught came out all the way from England and asked us to forget and to forgive Amritsar. No sooner has he gone away, than the same weapon of brute force is employed over again on helpless people, with all the old wicked callousness and inhumanity. Once more public sentiment is outraged. Once more, the people of India from one end to the other have cried shame upon the cowardly act. But the Government of Bengal on the mountain top at Darjeeling takes no notice. Just as in the case of the Punjab and Amritsar, it assumes on its own side the gesture of non-co-operation. It says, in so many words,—"We will not bend to the will of the people." Do you wonder at

all if the people take up the challenge and say, in return,—"You absolutely refuse to co-operate with us. You do not regard our opinion in the least. You hold icily aloof. The only course left open to us is to cease to cooperate with you. We shall go our own way. You can go yours. We don't seek either your help, or your money, or your favour." Here is one of the main causes underlying the non-co-operation movement—the utter aloofness of the Government from the people. Can't you understand it?

Do you remember, sometime ago, what an outcry there was in England about a certain troop train from Karachi, wherein through gross mismanagement, some British soldiers died of heat-apoplexy? Do you remember, also the Mesoptamian scandal? These caused a sensation in England, because Englishmen were involved. But the same gross mismanagement is going on everywhere among Indians themselves, because Government is so completely aloof and occupied night and day with its files and out of touch with the people; and Government agents, of the subordinate type are all the while taking advantage

of that aloofness, to serve their own ends. The truth is, the Government is not a people's government at all.

You have to understand how sick at heart the very sanest and most sober-minded Indians are about these perpetual and grandiloquent promises of "Reform", which end in empty words. It is now sixty three years since the Queen's Proclamation of 1853, which promised racial equality in India. Yet we all know (except, it would appear to our new Viceroy) that racial inequality is still rampant. It would be as easy as possible to give you a dozen glaring instances from my own experience; and Indians themselves, who naturally know far more than I do where the shoe pinches could give hundreds.

I remember so well Lord Morley's Reforms, in 1908—1909. We were told, that at last Indians were to have a full share in their own administration. Again, there was utter discontent and disappointment. The autocaracy of Government was not shaken.

Now we have before us these additional Chelmsford "Reforms". We have a Dyarchy, which no one believes in. The best that can

be said of it is, that it is so bad and unworkable, that it must be changed. It is immpossible to go back. So things will have to go forward. That is its sole recommendation put before me by a Government official. I think you will see, from what I have told you, that all the glowing accounts you are receiving in England about "Parliamentry" Government in India must be taken with a grain of salt. I doubt if any real and solid power has escaped from the hands of the bureaucracy even now. At last what has been made up in other ways.

Do you remember, in Christ's times, how the Scribes and Pharisees were prepared for outward changes and outward embellishments of their own system, so long as these did not touch the heart? The Scribes and Pharisees, so Christ said, made clean outside of the cup and platter. They did outward homage to noble sentiments; they talked unctuous platitudes in order to show that they were on the side of the good and the great, but they clung to power, all the same, with a tenacity that never relaxed its hold. Christ said of them, with terrible irony,—"Ye build the tombs of

the Prophets, *and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous.*

I do not imply that the present Government of India is consciously hypocritical. The Scribes and Pharisees were good religious men according to the standard of their times. And the Government of India is perhaps the most hardworking and conscientious in the world. But the *system* of Government, as I have said, has almost utterly lost touch with the sentiments and ideals of the people. It has appallingly misjudged the vital movements of the times, and in nearly every instance set itself in opposition to them,—just as it is doing today, in a panic striken manner, with regard to non-co-operation.

There is another picture, which Christ gives, that is perhaps more appropriate for what I am wishing to bring home to you in England. Christ spoke, in his own generation, of the uselessness of patch-work reforms. "Men do not," he said, "put new wine into old bottles . . . . Neither do men put a new piece of cloth on an old garment, because the new piece teareth away the old cloth and the rent is made worse. But new wine must be put into new bottles."

The new wine today in India is this new religious, social and political movement whose fountain head is Mahatma Gandhi. This movement has spread throughout length and breadth of the land. Politically it has become known in England by that ugly name, which you criticise,—"Non-Co-operation."

To my mind as I have seen events developing on the spot, it would have been altogether useless to have put this new wine into the old bottles of these patch-work Reform Councils. The rent would only have been made worse. The popular verdict—the verdict of the unsophisticated common people—is often the final verdict after all. They have recognised in Mahatma Gandhi a true deliverer from oppression. They have seen in him a true healer of India's festering wounds. And they have been quite clear in their determination to stand apart from the present unpopular Government: to work out their own salvation.

Cannot you then, understand a little more clearly, from this second letter, the meaning in India of the word Non-Co-operation? Cannot you see that there comes a time, when

if the Government persistently refuses to cooperate with the people, the people in their turn will refuse to cooperate with the Government? This, it appears to me, is what happened in India today.

III

We, who are the members of the Anglo Saxon race, have gradually dropped into the perverse way of thinking, that we are the word's policemen. Here is one of our mistakes in India. We have got a false impression of our duty of protecing India from all possible dangers, internal and external; and in consequence we cannot leave things alone, or let any new movement of independence develop. They appear to us to be contrary to our British sovereign right of interference and control.

It goes without saying, that we do not undertake all these protective duties for nothing, though no tax is levied directly, the indirect gain to England from Indian trade is great. There is a well-known British maxim, which says, that 'Trade follows the flag', And

England has not been slow to take commercial advantage of imperial conquests in India, as well as in other countries. We are, what Napoleon called us, 'a nation of shopkeepers' after all! I think it may be also said of the Anglo-Saxon people that there is in them the one saving grace of an uneasy moral conscience. We don't like being caught out doing an act, which is sordid, or mean, or base, and we try desperately to defend ourselves against these imputations,—not always with success.

The result is, that in our dealings with others, we, Englishmen, are frequently double-minded. We strive to serve both God and Mammon. We have an uncomfortable feeling while doing so, that this is contrary to the Sermon on the mount. But we dismiss the Sermen on the Mount as 'unpractical'. Yet even when we have dismissed it, we are not satisfied. We have a vague suspicion that Chirst may be right after all. It was S.R. Gardiner the historian, who said, that Cromwell, and not Shakespeare, was the typical Englishman,—Cromwell, who was commerical and sentimental, practical and idealist, roligious and material-minded, at one

and the same time. Was it Cromwell, or some one later, who uttered, that typically English sentence,—"Soldiers, trust in God, but keep your powder dry."

The truth is, this word 'practical' has become a kind of fetish with the British people. We, Englishmen do not ask first, if a thing is true, but whether is practical. And so in this British Empire, where it has been built up by conquest, there has been framed a wholly illogical, but solidly practical theory, that every added subject country was twice blessed, —blessed in the trade profits it gives to Great Britain, and blessed also in the protection it takes at a high market value. I fancy that, even in our school days, this seemed to us too much like a slim deal or a hard bargain. And as we have grown older, we have both of us learnt what an altogether sordid thing Imperialism by conquest really is,—base in its origin, and base in its development as a system. If you had not already reached this point of view, I should not be writing these letters. No! we both agree, do we not, that it is difficult, if not impossible, to be Imperialist and Christians at the same

time. The words of Christ are really true, however much we may try to get round them—"Ye *cannot* serve God and Mammon".

All that I have just written has direct reference to the situation in India. The disturbing conviction is constantly present, that our conquest had no moral justification. As Sir Frank Beaman has put it very bluntly,—"We stole India". In our heart of hearts we all know that this is true; and we have had, what I have called an 'uneasy moral conscience' ever since. This has left its mark upon all our British administration. It has continually had to justify itself for its original theft by exercising a peculiarly paternal protection. I would almost call it, if the word were permissible, 'grand-paternal'. For such a grand-motherly government has rarely been seen on this planet before. No weapon of violence has been allowed in the average citizen's hands,—not, of course, lest they should use them against us (that would be too shocking even to think of!), but lest they should injure one another! Every department had to be entrusted to an Englishman; for nothing must be allowed to go wrong under British patronage. If, in spite

of every precaution, anything did go wrong, then an English official must come in at once to the rescue. All initiative had to proceed from Englishmen. Education must be given through an English medium and by means of English books. Indians were to be treated, year after year, as though they did not know the needs of their own country as well as their beneficent English rulers.

I know what you are burning to answer at this point of my argument, and I can say it for you. You want to say again to me, "But all that has changed!"

Has it?

It seems to me that, in those two words, which I have italicised, we are brought up dead against the ultimate issue. Personally I have tried to show you, by examples, how sceptical, I am about the change. I have seen indeed outward changes in abundance, but not yet an inward change of heart. Dyarchy, with its fundamental refusal to entrust into Indian hands such subjects as the Police, seems to me even more patronising and more paternal, and perhaps in the long run more grand-motherly, than what has gone before.

It looks like one of those cautions, half-and-half moves forward, which are sometimes worse than no change at all. I may be mistaken, but as far as I can see at present, this Dyarchy will not give to Indians the opportunity they need of doing things entirely by themselves, or of governing themselves entirely in their own way. Believe me, in this matter, it may not be true, that "Half a loaf is better than no bread." For half a loaf means still the fatal policy of distrust,

Let me give you two very interesting examples, which will show you on what grounds my impressions are based. Some time ago now, I was present at a Committee meeting, that was being held up-country about a vital Indian question, with which Englishmen were only remotely and indirectly concerned. There was a little group of Englishmen there, and the rest were Indians. The great majority of the Indians said nothing at all, because the chairman, an Englishman, conducted the whole meeting in English. There was one Indian gentleman, who knew far more about the subject than almost anyone else in the room. He spoke English fluently,

but happened to be what I might call, for want of a better name, 'vernacular minded.' That is to say, he thought with his own Indian mind, in an original manner, and not always with an English tendency. There were there, on the Committee also, two or three Indians, who were 'English minded.' I mean, they had dropped to a great extent their Indian mode of life and Indian way of thinking, and had become so cut off from their own people as to think on these Indian questions in an English manner. The bulk of this Committee were almost entirely ignored because they did not speak English. Only now and then certain points were translated to them. It was quite noticeable, how it was possible for the Englishmen present to 'cooperate' with the 'English-minded' Indians. But they could not 'cooperate' with the 'Vernacular-minded' Indian, who spoke English, because they could not follow his train of thought. Nay, something further happened,—try as we would to prevent it, discussion always drifted back into the hands of the little group of the Englishmen, and in the end we decided everything.

Why;—Why of course, because the only medium was English. We, Englishmen, to all intent and purpose were 'non-co-operating' with our Indian colleagues, who had not made themselves into Englishmen. We were trying to force them to come over to our side. We were not ready to come over to theirs. If we had agreed that the conversation should be only in the vernacular, then how very quickly we, Englishmen, would have fallen into our proper place; as guests in India' not masters; as helpers, not tyrants; as people who had come to India for service, not for domination!

One more incident, that was typical. In the cholera camp, at Chandpur, about which I have already written, we had succeeded, with the greatest difficulty, in getting the young national volunteers to cooperate with the Government medical officers, for the sake of the cholera patients. But every hour of the day, the national volunteers would be blaming the Government officials; and every hour of the day, the Government officials would be blaming the national volunteers. To attempt to mix these two parties together was like

putting new wine into old bottles with a vengeance! The bottles were cracked to bursting.

A rupture took place. From what I saw of it all, I blamed the Government officials most. They were so wooden, so obstinated They insisted on ruling. They were not ready to serve. On the volunteers' side, there were the natural faults of impatience and hot blood. But when another person, in high position, came down to work among them,—the Bishop of Assam,—and was ready to *serve*, not to rule, they worked with him happily up to the very end. But he was in his proper place,—a servant of the public, not a lord and master. I saw illustrated there, the very words of Christ,—"The king of the Gentiles exercised lordship over them, and they that exerecised lordship are called 'benefactors.' But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you let him be as the younger, and he that is chief, as he that doth serve."

What was the result, do you ask? Did the national volunteers all go to pieces, when Government officials were withdrawn? Not a bit of it. They did uncommonly well, and the

work went on better, because with less friction. I learnt from the lips of this Government official himself, in an unguarded moment, the actual truth,—which is as true for the whole of India today as it was for the cholera camp at Chandpur. "*This Dyarchy*," he said, "is *impossible*."

Let me, in concluding this letter, give you a simple and homely analogy. Suppose some one is desirous of learning to swim. But an officious pedagogue, of the policeman type, insists on holding him back. This goes on for some time. At last, the youth, who is eager to swim grows desperate. He 'non-cooperates.' He frees himself from the pedagogue who would hinder him. He jumps into deep water. He struggles with all his might to keep up afloat, using his arms and legs. And he succeeds. He swims.

There, in that picture, is the analogy I wanted for Indian non-co-operation with Government at the persent time. We in England fully appreciate that spirit ourselves. Independence runs in our very blood. We encourage our own children from baby-hood to be self-reliant, courageous, manly, hardy

enduring,—to do things for themselves. But we here, in India, we, Englishmen, have got almost to dread that spirit of independence in Indians. As I have said, a fatal habit of mind has made us act like glorified policemen, bent always upon the custodian's duty. We are quite certain, that Indians cannot and will not manage their own affairs and that we must manage everything for them. And so the old habits of patronage, on the one hand, and servility, on the other, linger. No half-way house of Dyarchy will cure them.

There is just one word further, that has to be written, though you in England may resent it; for you believe intensely that England's trusteeship in India has been well-performed; and I would not shake your faith, for on the whole I believe it is not misplaced. In certain ways, the British rule has succeeded; otherwise, it would never have lasted for over 160 years.

But as I have said, there is another side of Anglo-Saxon character, which is by no means so pleasing. If we had been entirely disinterested and single-minded in our rule, we should have welcomed this new national

movement of Mahatma Gandhi's with open arms,—or rather it would have taken an entirely different form. But this lower side of English nature,—the material, commercial and profiteering side,—came in and tempted us with monetary advantages. It is on that account, that the conflict has taken place. We Englishmen can only meet the movement fairly and squarely by our own self-purification. We must be prepared to give up our ill-gotten gains. We must cease to serve God and Mammon.

IV

As you know very well, the greater part of my own life has been given up to the study of educational and labour problems. I have never been what is called a 'politician', and I have always profoundly distrusted 'politics', because of the incessant opportunism involved and the juggling with human lives. At the same time, I am perfectly aware, that we can never shut up ourselves in water-tight compartments and eschew politics altogether,—especially in this modern civilisation of ours, which is three parts mechanical, and only one part human. What I do hate so much is the way politicians exploit the poor and the weak and the defenceless for their own ends; and I think that the time has come, when all who love humanity should make a determined stand against this.

It is because Mahatma Gandhi is essentially more than 'politician' (in this narrow,

technical sense of the word) that I have faith in the movement which he has founded. He would never, for a moment, make the poor a 'pawn in the game.' His whole soul would revolt at even the suggestion of such a thing. Rather he would always make the poor and the helpless the very heart and centre of all his thoughts and purposes, before whose interest every other consideration must give way, because they are in a very special manner God's friends, God's chosen, God's beloved. Ever since the great change came over his life when he was in Johannesburg, in South Africa, earning a large income and keeping open house for rich and poor alike,—ever since the time, when he renounced all his wealth and accepted poverty as his bride, in a truly Fransiscan manner, he has been out and out on the side of the poor, living as a poor man among the poor, suffering with their sufferings and never sparing himself in the very least. The fact that he has had this most intimate experience of poverty in all its phases has made his ideas concerning the welfare of the poor extraordinarily stimulating. He is so original, because he has emptied

himself of conventions and sophistications about the poor owing to his first hand experience. Certain books in English have struck his attention more than others,—such as Thoreau, Tolstoy, Ruskin, Edward Carpenter. But by far the greatest influence in his life from his English reading has been the Sermon on the Mount. It would not be too much to say that this has been with him throughout his life one of his most cherished sacred scriptures. He has found it truly to be in conformity with the scriptures of the East that he was taught when a boy,—with the great ideals of Jainism, Buddhism, and Vaishnava Hinduism which he has so deeply explored. Like Rousseau, before the French Revolution (though with a strength of moral character that Rousseau himself did not possess) he has turned away from the modern tyranny of civilisation to the freedom of a life lived close to Nature. The picture of the past in India has always been to him the picture of a time in human history when the pure in heart saw God. They lived in their forest Ashramas simply and serenely; therefore their lives were beautiful and

healthy and good. But modern civilisation, he would say, is neither simple, nor serene. It is impure in heart. Therefore men cannot see God today. So we must go back to the simplicity of nature, and live a life as far as possible apart from modern civilisation, if we would see God. We must again seek to be simple and serene in our lives, and pure in heart, we must no longer attempt to serve both God and Mammon.

I have tried very crudely to put down some of his ideas. I can hardly tell you what a power they have been in fashioning my own life, as they have come to me, tinged with his own personality. My mind always reacts to them with a shock of surprise and often of opposition. At every turn, I find, he hits me hard : my own conventions crumble. But there is a pure joy in it all—first, the joy of conflict ; and then the greater joy of frequently being defeated and seeing where the mistake was all the time. Do you remember those young sophists who used to come to Socrates who used to knock them down so tenderly, but unerringly, with some searching question, and then pick them up

again and show them exactly where they went wrong? I often find myself like one of them. There comes one sudden question from this Socrates of ours in the East,—and my house of cards goes tumbling down to the ground. Furthermore,—shall I say it with all reverence—sometimes the thought goes far beyond and far deeper than Socrates. It reminds me of the thoughts of Christ.

Let me give you one single illustration, which is as vivid to me, as if it had only happened yesterday. We had walked out together a distant place, outside Pretoria, where the Municipality had built, what they were pleased to call a 'Kaffir Location'. On the way back we sat in the shade of an overhanging tree beside a brook and talked together about many things. I had, for some time past, adopted vegetarianism as a diet, but I had done so, rather out of regard for other people's feelings than from any conviction of my own. The subject turned to the question of meat eating, and I somewhat perversely argued with Mahatma Gandhi, that in nature herself the lower life was sacrificed to the higher, and on that ground the taking of

animal life for food by human beings was justifiable. In a moment, his eyes were aflame; and then he said to me, in that quiet, restrained voice of his,—"You are a Christian, and yet you use an argument like that! I thought your Bible taught you that Christ was divine, and that just because he was divine, he sacrificed himself for such a sinful creature as man. That teaching I can understand: but what you have just said I cannot undertand at all. I should love to imagine the whole Universe sacrificing itself to save the life of one single worm. That would be beautiful. But your argument is not beautiful at all. No Hindu would ever use it for a moment. The whole Jain religion would revolt against it. Buddhism would utterly repudiate it. And it is not Christian, either!"

I have mentioned this simple instance, not merely to show his quick, sudden surprises in argument, but because it contains in a small compass his own fundamental teaching concerning the poor. In contrast with this, it was seriously argued at a recent meeting in Calcutta by a group of ardent nationalists, who were present, that the fate of the few thousand refugees in

the Cholera camp at Chandpur, whom I mentioned in my second letter, ought not to stand in the way of a general railway and steamship strike, if it could be brought to pass. A few thousand coolies might be sacrificed, if India's 320,000,000 could obtain Swaraj. Remembering Mahatma Gandhi's argument outside Pretoria, I told the story of it to the meeting. So long, I said, as the whole of India was ready to sacrifice itself for a few thousand poor people, the act was glorious. But if this doctrine were reversed then the high spiritual standard of Mahatma Gandhi would be left behind, and there would be nothing glorious at all. The audience at once responded to this ideal. They could not resist its power.

This brings me to the final point of these long letters. The main indictment, which the Non-co-operation movement is bringing against the system of administration now predominant in India is this. The system more and more terribly oppresses the poor. It crushes the poor. It tyrannises over the poor. The burden of the oppression is growing more and more immense and the system is too hard and wooden

and impervious for any vital change to take place in it as it now stands.

There was a time when the Government of India was truly called 'The Protector of the Poor'. It was the noblest title it could bear,—far greater than that of Kaiser-i-Hind, or any such pomposity. But this noblest title of all has been lost. The poor on every hand are crying out under the oppression.

This is terrible indictment. And though I have struggled for many years to disbelieve it, I am daily becoming more certain that it is not to be cast aside as untrue. Let me give one single example from an 'Open Letter to the Viceroy by Mr. S. E. Stokes of Kotgarh. It relates to things happening among the villagers on the Hindustan Tibet Road within fourteen miles of Viceregal Lodge at Simla. It refers to one of the greatest of all oppressions which the Government of India have gone on tacitly conniving at, year after year, knowing well what was happening to the poor people. Mr. Stokes writes to the Viceroy: "I left the Viceregal Lodge inspired by a hope that a matter so near to Simla would soon receive your attention, and return-

ed to my house at Kotgarh to spend some weeks on my back in bed by the doctor's orders. But I was aroused from the feeling of security, to find that repressive measures were being taken against my comrades at the very first stage on the road from Simla. Some had been arrested, for attempting to educate public opinion against the oppression and injustice, which had turned them into slaves. Others were being fined heavily; others were being browbeaten and terrorised. I came to Fagu, in spite of my ill-health, to find the stage full of the Simla Police; the people cowed; their leaders hand-cuffed. Munshi Kapur Singh had been arrested, because he was engaged in getting the people to sign a representation, in which they stated their refusal in future to give certain forms of forced labour, so unjust in their nature that a description of them should have aroused the hot indignation of every true Englishman. . . . . I can see now but one path of honour. *We must refuse co-operation, until justice has been done.*" (the Italics are mine.)

Mr. Stokes is an American, who naturalised himself as a British subject during the

War, in order that he might help Great Britain in her hour of danger. He served with distinction by recruiting soldiers for the army from these very Hills. His instincts, from the very first, have been on the side of Co-operation, and he has struggled long to co-operate. But he has been driven, by the oppression of the poor which he has seen, to declare at last: "*We must refuse to co-operate, until justice has been done.*"

Even if, in this one case, tardy justice is accomplished, owing to Mr. Stokes' own persistence and his immediate nearness to the Viceroy of India,—even then, there are still literally hundreds of thousands of instances—among the 320,000,000 of India, where justice is not done; where these same things go on, not only unpunished, but actually countenanced (yes! and even instigated) by subordinate Government officials. A statement by Mahatma Gandhi, the importance of which can hardly be over-rated, has recently appeared. He is speaking about the liquor traffic in India, which, in the cause of the sorely tempted poor people he is doing his very utmost to stop. With regard to this, and other methods of

helping the poor to recover from the present miserable condition, he writes :—

"I see nothing wrong in inviting the Moderates and the Government to co-operate with us in all that we are doing. I see nothing wrong in appealing to the Moderates, or even to the Government through their authorised channels, to help us, in the Khilafat, or in the Punjab matters, or to shut up all the liquor shops, or to dot every one of their schools with spinning wheels and to prohibit by legislation the import of foreign cloth. For if they succeed in doing these things, I would cease to think evil of the institution they adore or administer. In making my appeal to them, I have shown them a way to partial reinstatement in public estimation, and have furnished myself and the country with a further effective cause, in the event of failure of the appeal, to demonstrate the wooden nature of the system."

Judge for yourself ; Are these words of a mere fanatic ? Do they seem to you to be the speech of a purely negative and destructive worker ? Are these the sentences of one, who is merely a politician ? Surely no politician would give to his opponents such an opening as that !

But greatly as I could wish that the Government would take the opening thus offered, and co-operate with one who thus shows them the way to do so, yet, my own experience tells me, the probabilities are, that in these matters, which affect the very existence of the countless millions of the poor, the administration will insist upon carrying out its own wooden policy, and will not bend to the desires of the common people, as they have been so clearly and unmistakably expressed by Mahatma Gandhi.

P. S. I have just read the words of one of the very ablest and most cautious of Indian political thinkers, the editor of 'The Indian Social Reformer'. He has not adopted the non-co-operation platform. His words are therefore all the more significant.

"At one time," he writes 'it looked as if the British connection would prove to be the greatest formative influence in India's long history. That was when English administrators like Munro conceived their purpose here to be to help India to help herself. This type of administrator has disappeared since the early seventies, and the last quarter of a cen-

tury has seen the progressive increase of the kind of Imperialism whose purpose is to help itself by making India helpless against its exploiting tendencies. . . . . The degeneration to exploiting Imperialism deprived it of its moral authority and it has had to resort increasingly to repressive laws and communal preferences. But these treacherous weapons have broken in its hands. The policy of utilising Indian Mohammadans as a sort of pretorian guard to defend the bureaucracy against the political aspirations of the educated classes, has recoiled on its inventors with an impact which they will not soon forget. The repressive Acts have to go because they have not only not repressed, but have added fuel to the fire of discontent. . . . . Whatever chances the hybrid Reform Scheme, conferring a semblance of power on Indian Ministers, might have had, have been cruelly obliterated by the operation of recent years illustrative of exploitation at its worst. Is it possible for Britain in India to purge herself of the exploiting spirit and to revert to the pure altruism of her early Empire builders!"

Would you compare, this most carefully written sentence of a strong co-operator with Mahatma Gandhi's statement which I have just quoted? It should explain to you the universal dissatisfaction in India today, so utterly different from the pictures given in the English Press.

C. F. ANDREWS.

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