

# HEROES OF THE HOUR:

MAHATMA GANDHI - -  
TILAK MAHARAJ - -  
SH. S. SUBRAMANIA IYER

GANESH & CO.

**HEROES OF THE HOUR**

# Heroes of the Hour

MAHATMA GANDHI  
TILAK MAHARAJ  
SIR SUBRAMANYA IYER

GANESH & CO., MADRAS.

Heroes of the Home

THE CAMBRIDGE PRESS, MADRAS  
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Gandhi  
Jewell

THE CAMBRIDGE PRESS, MADRAS



DS481

G3H47

A time like this demands  
Great hearts, strong minds, true faith, and  
willing hands :  
Men whom the lust of office cannot kill,  
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy :  
Men who possess opinions and a will :  
Men who have honour, men who will not lie.

—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

## FOREWORD

I HAVE pleasure in warmly commending this volume to all who desire to understand the many-faced beauty and heroism of the spirit embodied in India's great men. Here are three noble Indian types, worthy of our homage and admiration. May many more such Heroes come to us, Heroes not only of the Hour but for all Time.

ADYAR, }  
*4th March, 1918.* }

ANNIE BESANT.

### PUBLISHERS' NOTE

IN presenting this volume to the public the Publishers desire to thank their contributors and wish to add that the proem and the biography of Dr. Sir S. Subramanya Iyer are from the pen of Mr. K. Vyasa Rao.

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
Proem . . . . .	v
Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi . . . . .	1
Tilak Maharaj . . . . .	85
Dr. Sir S. Subramanya Iyer . . . . .	199

## PROEM

“Your country wants heroes; be heroes.”

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

‘NO age, that has not its heroes’ may well be said rather than that the age of heroes is gone, that there is no room for a hero in modern times. The term “heroic age” does not imply that the world has been without heroes since the close of that period. If one has an eye to detect the hero he may not find it necessary to go with a lantern in search of heroes, although to find a perfect man one may have to go with a lantern in each hand and for his whole life-time search in vain. An honest man, such as Diogenes wanted to find, might not be found in any age—has not been found through all the traditional and historical times till now. “Honest” according to Diogenes meant honest in every respect, in every relation and according to a standard that makes allowance for nothing and rejects on the slightest suspicion of deviation from

## *Heroes of the Hour*

that standard. God has not produced his "noblest work" as yet, for verily such a man cannot live in this conditioned world any more than a fish can live out of water. There may be other worlds in which honest men may live but this world is for many striving to be honest, successful in one effort, unsuccessful in another, and for many others to whom the idea of honesty is no issue at all in a vast number of concerns. A world of evolution, every man has to evolve a higher out of a lower nature by conscious efforts of self-surrender. Through limitations and imperfections, falling and rising alternately, chastened by experience, mellowed by repentance, fortified by introspection man leaves behind him one stage for a higher stage—and so long as there is a higher stage, no man, [no woman is perfect. Such men who seek to tread this path of renunciation of worldly goods and worldly prospects overcoming the frailties, passions and cravings of inherited congenital possession, such men are few indeed. No man can be perfect; but one who is on the road which can never take him from imperfections is he who clings to self-gratification, as though that is the reality of existence. On what

## *Proem*

road we are is the only question of moment—all being imperfect—whether having to be imperfect, we cling to imperfections, or whether being full of imperfections, we strive to shed one imperfection after another. But, where is the place for the “hero” in this moving procession of imperfect men and women, most of them clinging to the wrong road, a few being on the right one? His place is as a man whose endurance and courage, whose resolve to suffer are for the benefit of any section of humanity, whatever be the arena in which these qualities are brought to play. There is room for such a man in the age of science as well as of poetry, in the age of political tyranny and spiritual thralldom as well as in an age of capitalist monopoly. The man who in rearing a bacteriological culture exposes himself every moment to infection and death, is a hero as much as Achilles or Arjuna. The men who have perished in the attempt to bring the atmospheric air under control for purposes of aerial navigation are heroes and martyrs; for while they could have well avoided the danger, they have faced it for adding to the sum total of human achievements, in the domain of Science. In fact, but for the



## *Heroes of the Hour*

hero who appears to be a necessary instrument of progress in God's scheme, there would have been a stagnant stationary world.

However, a long time may elapse before heroes are found in any particular country; and then the evils of stagnation begin to oppress that land. Of course, past heroism is a great asset, but to be lost in admiration of it, incapable of heroism at the present hour is a sign of national decadence which all but leads to national extinction. No land is richer in past heroic deeds, both in times of war and peace than India. Nowhere is the spirit of renunciation so instinctive as in India, and nowhere is the yearning for freedom—absolute and not seeming but real—so haunting an ambition of the human mind as in India. But all these qualities which go to temper the steel edge of heroism have been allowed to escape in impotent chagrin, in fruitless sighs, in silent lamentations and in the philosophic gravitation to live and let live. The result has been India has remained the dumping ground of foreign administrators, legislators and law-givers; of foreign educationists, educational reformers and designers; of foreign architects, artists and



## *Proem*

artizans ; of foreign manufactures of apparel, utensils, eatables, drinks, medicines, pills and potions and what not ; of foreign "salvationists" of our very souls ; of foreign political constitution—makers, of foreign instructors of the wives, and mothers of the race ; of foreign founts of solace in literature, drama and poetry ; of foreign interpreters of our religion and ritual. Where, has not the foreign influence penetrated ? In our offices and councils, in our schools and colleges, in our homes and hearths, everywhere it is the influence of foreign genius, of foreign labour, of foreign enterprise and foreign standards of taste, happiness and duty that has been at work. Excepting what is born of this dependence is there anything that the nation can call its own now ? Far be it from any Indian to say that a good thing, a good idea, a good service becomes bad, because it proceeds from a foreign source ; and far be it from him to aspire that India should stew in its own juice. But this servile dependence on foreign good offices in the most vital concerns of the nation from year to year and from week to week is too enfeebling a looking after the well being of India, not to render it ultimately an imbecile. In this process of

## *Heroes of the Hour*

national enervation there is no room for initiative, but ample scope for imitation ; no motive for self-protection, but every reason for punishing *lese Majesty* ; no need for inventions, research, discovery, but every necessity to forthwith become a market for all of them.

We are not masters, and have not the responsibility of masters ; obedience is our duty and safety is our reward. Others protect our shores, take steps to irrigate our lands, to decide our disputes, to interpret the intentions of our lawgivers, to tell us how we should teach our babes, and, verily and verily, spell our names ! Our part and lot in life is to have the benefit of all these kindly endeavours on our behalf in return for merely accepting these gifts. Such a gift as this may bless the giver ; but it leaves the taker worse than cursed—leaves him unworthy of a curse even. Indian Nationalism, which is directed not even against foreign influence as such, but against its tendency to deaden the roots of race-consciousness, has psychologically nothing to do with our political allegiance. England we need as the navigator needs the lode star. But we need it, not to perform for us all our physiological functions, but to share with us.

the risks and benefits of the journey. The whole position may be put in a nut shell in this statement:—England has been taking care of us so well that prolonged, we may ever hereafter become incapable of taking care of ourselves. What we need is to be taken care of in such a way as will enable us to dispense with external help. “We have done everything for India and yet they complain”—is the attitude of mind of the Anglo-Indian who has not stood in our shoes and has not known where they pinch, bite, and inflame, who does not know that we have come to dread “this doing everything for us.” It is like the grievance of the vacuous minded person who puts the bird in a cage, feeds it, cleanses its barred habitation, talks to it endearingly, and wonders why he is told that it cannot be happy under this state of protection. Doing everything for another is doing him in fact the worst service—and under this philanthropic guardianship, the nation has become fit only to dream of its past glories, wallowing in foreign good offices, aimless and nerveless. Barren in everything that makes a people respected by others, we have become habitual seekers of salvation in another

## *Heroes of the Hour*

world—rather in another state of existence. Such a mental condition is by no means to be despised, as after all is said and done, this world and its problems cannot absorb all our devotion. But existence in this world is a necessary preparation for a future state of existence—otherwise, there is no meaning in birth and death. How do we exist in this world?—defended and ruled by others, educated by others, clothed by others, carried in our own country from place to place by others! What is wrong in such an existence? Nothing except that it leaves us perpetual infants. And what is there wrong in being perpetual infants on the material plane, when we are all grey-beards in spiritual understanding? “Forbid them not; for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs”—was the injunction of the Lord Jesus as to children. Why should we not consent to remain a race of perpetual infants under the ward and protection of a more energetic nation—whichever it may be for the time being? In reality, this question has again and again occurred not to doubting Thomases, but to men who are ready to leap into any fire for any cause, but do not know what cause it is that they should do so

## Proem

for ? Man being in his nature spiritual, is there a spiritual basis for *political* self-dependence ? If not, why need we bother about what counts only on the material plane ? The reply to it is—if this spiritual yearning at least is ours, how can we preserve it as the only yearning worth satisfying, unless our civilisation is of our own mould—unless in fact we belong to ourselves ? It is one thing in regard to ideals and civilization to be influenced as a free people, and another to be influenced as a people that has no option of its own in its primary concerns. It is one thing to say what we should do with our mental, moral and physical energies, when we are free to reject or accept the advice, and another to direct our energies, when we have no option but to obey. In the latter course we are not on the path of evolution—in fact the process of evolution is arrested for the time being. Without liberty there is no evolution. It is in making mistakes, in making fewer mistakes after making mistakes, it is in this endless process of elimination and acquisition, that the secret of Evolution lies. But what is the secret of this secret ? *Liberty*. So, where there is no Evolution, there is no spiritualisation ; and where there is no liberty there can be



## *Heroes of the Hour*

no Evolution, *i.e.*, where there is no liberty there is no spiritualisation. Good government is no substitute for Self-government was said by Mr. Campbell-Bannerman as a purely political proposition; but there is a deep, spiritual significance underlying it. The truth is that where good government is not the outcome of Self-government the good government does not belong to the *people* so long as it is not Self-government also. If it is not of the people, of what avail is it to the people? Ergo, good government is no substitute for Self-government—least of all in the case of a country whose ideal of Government is to make for man's spiritual advancement. All these truths have been seen by many and have yet to be seen by many more. The danger lies however in taking a truth to the knowledge of a people. There is the safe but ineffectual way, and a risky but fruitful way. The risky and fruitful way has been trodden fearlessly by Gandhi, Tilak and Subramanya Iyer among a few others. They are not any of them politicians primarily, they are even patriots only secondarily; they are all essentially seekers of emancipation. But finding the soul-stifling limitations that have their

origin in our political condition, they have in an increasing measure realised the imperious necessity for a change in our political status. When the spiritual fire animates a person in any sphere of action he becomes a hero unconsciously, and the lives of these three men will illustrate how each in his own sphere has acted and endured for the sake of his country with the faith of the heroes—and the sterling sincerity of him who offers himself unreservedly for a cause. A common possession of these three men is not only faith in the righteousness of their cause with their readiness to suffer for it, but also the possession of a *heart* dedicated to the service of their country—in an uncompromising avowal of what they are about. If, in acting this conviction, they are prepared to suffer rather than retract, their countrymen cannot help presenting them to a future generation as the heroes of an hour when the destinies of India lay committed into the hands of its sons, irrespective of creed and caste, bereft of cloaks and clothing, as children of the country, when in the thick of an era of War among nations for the safeguarding of rights of nations, they stood not indifferently, but bore the standard

## *Heroes of the Hour*

of their country bravely, with rectitude in every fibre, regardless of consequences, indifferent to the result, mindful only that they failed not in their duty at once to their sovereign and their motherland. The story of their heroism will not lapse into oblivion, but, mingling with the life of the nation, will impart to it a new strength of purpose enabling it to march unfatigued from Victory to Victory, not for material aggrandizement but for the fulfilment of the destiny of the race for which its prophets and martyrs have so nobly striven.





MAHATMA GANDHI

## HEROES OF THE HOUR

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MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE AND CAREER

THE figure of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi is to-day a transfigured presence in the eyes of his countrymen. Like the unveiling of some sanctuary, where the high gods sit in session, or like some romance of the soul, is his career. The loftiest ideals of conduct of which man has dreamed are in him translated into actuality. He is the latest, though not the least, of the world's apostles. He seems for ever robed in vestments of shining white. Infinitely gentle, to the inner ear, is his footfall upon earth. His accents have the dewy freshness of the dawn. His brows are steeped in serenity and calm. His head is crowned with the martyr's crown. The radiance of the light spiritual encircles his whole being.

## *Heroes of the Hour*

What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul! Return good for evil. Hatred ceases not by hatred but by love. How often has humanity in its long story listened to such exhortations! And yet how few are the souls to whom they have ever carried the waters of life! To all men, surely, come glimpses of the highest. At the moment they touch our being with ecstasy and fade even before they are recognised. Not so with the great Ones of earth, the elect of God. They live their lives as ever before the altar. A divine inebriation is upon them and they can know no rest till they have drained the immortal cup to the dregs. The steep they sight they needs must climb: and far down in the valley there kneels before them an adoring host of mortals.

The spontaneous and heartfelt reverence which Mr. Gandhi's name inspires to-day is a token that in him also India has recognised one such born priest of the ideal. The Sermon on the Mount may appear to many as gloriously impractical, but to Mr. Gandhi at least nothing is or ought to be more practical. To turn the left cheek when the right is beaten; to bless those that curse; to suffer for

## Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

righteousness' sake; these are the very ideals to which he has surrendered his whole being. And by impassioned devotion to them he has developed a character before which men stand in awe. To the self-discipline of the ascetic he adds the sweetness and simplicity of a saint. The hero's will is in him wedded to the heart of a child. The service of man answers to the love of God. It was of such that it was said: *Ye are the salt of the earth.*

But how to write the life of such a man? How to tell the story of the soul's development? The task is impossible. The hopes and strivings of millions fulfil themselves in a single perfected character and to that extent the common man makes the hero and the apostle. The events of the personal drama simply register the rise and fall of consciousness; their explanation is outside them. In Mr. Gandhi's case, such a revelation came in the shape of the South African struggle. It was then that he burst upon the world as a moral force of the first order. That force itself had been long in preparing: how long who shall say? The story of that struggle with its shining roll of martyrs, both men and women, its thrilling incidents, marvellous pathos, and

## *Heroes of the Hour*

divine inspiration still waits for its destined chronicler. When he comes and throws it into terms of immortal literature it will assuredly take rank with the most memorable and resplendent chapters of its kind in history. It was an example and a demonstration of what one man can do by the sheer force of his character. It was likewise a demonstration of how masses of men and women, apparently lifeless and down-trodden, can develop astounding heroism under the impulsion of a truly great and selfless leader. The work done by Mr. Gandhi in South Africa must ever be reckoned amongst the greatest things accomplished by any single man. His life prior to his emergence on the South African stage was comparatively uneventful except for one or two glimpses of the coming greatness.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on the 2nd of October 1869, the youngest of three children in a Vaishya family, at Porbander, a city of Kathiawar in Guzerat. Courage, administrative capacity, and piety were hereditary in the family. His immediate ancestors were in their way quite remarkable. His grand-father was Dewan of the Rana of Porbander, and an incident recorded of him

### *Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

shows what a fearless nature he had. Incurring the displeasure of the Queen who was acting as Regent for her son, he had actually to flee the Court of Porbander and take refuge with the Nawab of Junagadh who received him with great kindness. The courtiers of the Nawab observed and remarked that the ex-Dewan of Porbander gave his salute to the Nawab with his left hand in outrage of all convention. But the intrepid man replied, "In spite of all that I have suffered I keep my right hand for Porbander still." Mr Gandhi's father was no less distinguished. Succeeding his father as Dewan of Porbander and losing like him the favour of the Ruling Chief, he repaired to Rajkot where he was entertained as Dewan. Here he rose rapidly in favour and such was the high regard which the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot came to have for him that he (the Thakore Saheb) pressed his minister to accept a large grant of land in token of his esteem. But wealth had no attractions for him, and at first he declined the generous offer. Even when the entreaties of friends and relatives prevailed at last it was only a fraction of what was offered that he could be persuaded to accept. Even more interesting is another



## *Heroes of the Hour*

incident told of him. Happening to hear one day the Assistant Political Agent hold abusive language regarding the Thakore Sahib, he indignantly repudiated it. His Omnipotence the Political Agent demanded an apology which was stoutly refused. To rehabilitate his dignity the Assistant Political Agent there-upon ordered the offending Dewan to be arrested and detained under a tree for some hours! The apology was eventually waived and a reconciliation effected. Comment is needless. Mr. Gandhi's father was also a man of severe piety and could repeat the Baghavad Gita from end to end. His mother, however, was the most remarkable of all. Her influence on the character of her son has been profound and ineffaceable. Religion was the breath of her life. Long and rigorous were her fasts; many and lavish were her charities; and never could she brook to see a starving soul in her neighbourhood. Though in these respects she was typical of the Hindu woman, yet one feels that there must have been something unique about her. How else could she have been the mother of a Gandhi?

In a home presided over by such a mother was his childhood passed. He was duly put to

## *Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

school at Porbander but a change occurring in its fortunes the whole family removed to Rajkot. Here the boy studied at first in a Vernacular school, and afterwards in the Kathiawar High School, whence he passed the matriculation examination at the age of seventeen. It may here be said that Mr. Gandhi was married as a boy of twelve to the noble soul who is now his partner in life and the glorified participator in all his sufferings and struggles.

An incident in his school life deserves more than ordinary mention. Born and bred in an atmosphere of uncompromising Vaishnavism, he had learned to perfection its ritual and worship, if not also to some extent, its rationale and doctrine. The principle of Ahimsa, non-killing (non-resistance to evil generally), is one of the keynotes of this teaching and Vaishnavas are, as a rule, strict vegetarians. But those were the days when even a school-boy unconsciously imbibed a contempt for religion in general and for the ways of his forefathers in particular. Mr. Gandhi seems to have been no exception to this rule. Truth to say, the young Gandhi became a veritable sceptic even at the stage of his school career. This wreck of faith brought one disastrous



## *Heroes of the Hour*

consequence in its train. He and some school-companions of his came sincerely to believe that vegetarianism was a folly and superstition, and that to be civilised, the eating of flesh was essential. Nor were the boys slow to put their belief into action. Buying some flesh in secret every evening, they went to a secluded spot on the bank of a stream, cooked it and made a convivial meal. But Mr. Gandhi's conscience was all the while never at peace. At home he had to tell lies to excuse his lack of appetite and one subterfuge led to another. The boy loved truth and hated falsehood, and simply to avoid telling lies he abjured flesh-eating for ever. Truly the boy is father of the man !

After he passed the matriculation examination he was advised by a friend of the family to go to England and qualify himself for the Bar. His mother, however, would not listen to any such thing. Many a gruesome tale had the good woman heard of the abandoned nature of life in England and she shrank from the prospect of exposing her son to all its temptations as from the thought of hell. But the son was firm and the mother had to yield. But not until she had taken her son to a Jain Sannyasin

## *Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

and made him swear three solemn vows forswearing wine, flesh and women, did she give her consent.

Once in England Mr. Gandhi set about to make of himself a thorough 'English gentleman.' An Indian friend of his, then in England, who gloried in his anglicised ways took him in hand and gave lessons in fashion. Under his leadership he began to school himself in dancing, English music, and French, in fact in all the accomplishments needed for the great role of the 'English gentleman.' His heart, however, was never in the matter. The vows he had taken at his mother's instance haunted him strangely. One day he went to a party and there was served with flesh soup. It was a critical moment. His conscience swelled in protest and bade him make his choice on the spot between his three vows and the character of the English gentleman. And conscience won. Much to the chagrin of his friend before alluded to, he rose from the table and committed the great social sin of quitting the party abruptly. A great triumph for a youth! He thereafter bade adieu to all his new-fangled ways: his feet ceased to dance, his

## *Heroes of the Hour*

fingers knew the violin no more, and the possibilities of the 'English gentleman' in him were lost for ever.

All this proved to be but the beginning of a keen spiritual struggle which stirred his being to its depths and out of which he emerged into an assured self-consciousness and abiding peace of soul. The eternal problems of existence now faced him and pressed for an answer. That this struggle was not merely intellectual, that it was no passing spasm such as even inferior men have known is proved by his subsequent career. As in the case of all great souls, his entire being was, we may take it, cast into the crucible to be melted and poured into divine moulds. The sense of an insufferable void within and without, that tribulation of the spirit which lays hands of torture upon the barred doors of the heart and unseals the inner vision—this it was that assailed him. At this critical time, friends were not wanting who tried to persuade him that in Christianity he would find the light for which he yearned. But these apparently did not meet with much success. At the same time he began to make a close study of the Bhagavad Gita, and it was the spiritual

*Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

panorama which here was unveiled before him that finally stilled the commotion of his soul. It was here that he found the staff upon which he could lean. The void was now filled, light flooded his being and he had sensed the peace that passeth understanding. Hereafter the soul's endeavour was to be one, not of search, but realisation.

Mr. Gandhi's stay in England was otherwise uneventful. He passed the London Matriculation Examination, qualified himself for the Bar, and returned to India.

Melancholy news awaited his arrival in Bombay. Unknown to himself a calamity, which to a Hindu at least is one of the great calamities of life, had befallen him. His mother who had loved him as perhaps only a Hindu mother could, who had saved him from moral ruin, and who had doubtless winged ceaseless thoughts of love and prayer for her far-away son in England, that angel of a mother was no more. She had been dead sometime and the occurrence had been purposely kept a secret from him. We shall not attempt to describe his feelings when at last the news was disclosed to him.

The next eighteen months Mr. Gandhi spent,

## *Heroes of the Hour*

partly at Bombay and partly at Rajkot, devoting himself to a deeper study of love and the Hindu scriptures. He also set up practice in the Bombay High Court. But there was other work to do for him in a different part of the world and the fates thus fulfilled themselves. A firm at Porbander which had a branch at Pretoria had an important law-suit in South Africa in which several Indians were concerned. The conduct of this suit expected to last for over a year being offered to him, he accepted it and proceeded to South Africa.

And here perhaps it will be fitting to envisage in general outline the position of the Indian immigrant in South Africa at the time. That position was frankly one of the utmost ignominy and injustice. More than half a century ago the colony of Natal wanted cheap labour for the development of its resources, and its eyes were turned to India as the best market for this supply. Representations were accordingly made to the Government of India through the Imperial Government and the indenture system was inaugurated. One gathers that in the early negotiations that went on between the Imperial and the Indian Governments on the question, solemn promises were



*Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

made by the Imperial Government that the indentured immigrant would be treated with every consideration during the term of indenture and thereafter be accorded every facility to settle in South Africa if he so chose. But the way to a certain place is paved with good intentions and after a time the indenture system fast proved itself an abomination. Thousands of sturdy peasants from all parts of India, simple souls caught in the meshes of the recruiting agents by specious promises of a land flowing with milk and honey, found themselves on landing in South Africa waking up to a hopeless sense of anguish and disillusionment. The physical and moral conditions of life on the estates were ideally calculated to turn the very angels into brutes. The treatment accorded to the indentured labourer by his master was, to be as mild as possible, revolting in the extreme. The slave-owner was at least compelled by his selfishness to take care of the physical comfort of his human chattels but the employer of indentured labour was destitute of even this consideration! The tales of cruelty and individual suffering that has been collected and published almost tempt us to think that man was made not in the

## *Heroes of the Hour*

image of God but in that of His Ancient Enemy. And the most hopeless feature of the situation was that these victims of colonial greed were bound to serve their term and that they had no chance of laying, and much less of making good, any case against their masters. The laws themselves were unjust to the indentured labourer and were atrociously administered.

The position of the indentured labourer who had served his term and did not desire to re-enlist was one of calculated invidiousness. At every step he was hemmed in by a thousand obstacles thrown in his way and intended to frustrate any attempt to acquire a livelihood in freedom. Law and society conspired together to fix the brand of helotry to his brow. It was brought home to him in numberless ways that he was regarded as the member of some sub-human species, in whom it was sacrilege to defile the earth occupied by the white man, except as his hewer of wood and drawer of water. The law of the land here also did but reflect this dominant spirit of exclusiveness. It made distinctions between man and man on the ground of colour and race. In Natal, for instance, every ex-indentured Indian, man,

woman, and child (boys and girls over a certain age) had to pay a poll tax of £3 per head. It is unnecessary, however to catalogue in detail the various disabilities legal, economic, political and social under which the Indian laboured.

The small body of professional people, lawyers, doctors, merchants, religious teachers, who followed in the wake of the indentured Indian, these also, whatever their position and culture, fell equally under the same ban. The coloured man was in the eyes of the white colonist in South Africa a vile and accursed thing. There could be no distinction here of high and low. If these colonials had been asked to paint God they would have painted him white! There were certain differences in the position of the Indian between one province and another, in South Africa itself, the ideal in this line having been attained in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, then independent. Not to labour the tale throughout South Africa the law was unjust to the Indian and man inhuman.

It is however interesting to think what a medley of elements contributed to this attitude. First and foremost, there was the antipathy of colour and race—to what lengths this can go



## *Heroes of the Hour*

in the modern civilized West, the American institution of lynching sufficiently illustrates. Secondly, there was the economic factor—the free Indian was a formidable competitor in trade to the small white dealer. His habits were simple, his life temperate, and he was able to sell things much more cheaply. Thirdly, there was the instinct of earth-monopoly—South Africa must be and continue to remain a white-man's land. Lastly, there was a vague feeling that the influx of the coloured man was a growing menace to the civilization of the white. The solution of the problem from the point of view of the South African colonist was very simple—to prohibit all immigration in the future, and to make the position of those that already had come so intolerable as to drive them to repatriate themselves. And towards this end, forces were inwardly making in South Africa when Mr. Gandhi first landed there. The paradox of the whole thing lay in the fact, that while India had been asking for the Indian, in South Africa, the elementary rights of a British citizen, the colonial was all the while thinking of casting him out for ever as an unclean thing.

From the very day that Mr. Gandhi set foot

*Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

at Natal he had to taste of the bitter cup of humiliation which was then the Indian's portion. At court he was rudely ordered to remove the barrister's turban he had on, and he left the court at once burning with mortification. This experience, however, was soon eclipsed by a host of others still more ignominious. 'Journeying to the Transvaal in a railway train, the guard unceremoniously ordered him to quit the first-class compartment, though he had paid for it, and betake himself to the van. Refusing, he was brutally dragged out with his luggage. And the train at once steamed off. All this was on British soil! In the Transvaal itself things were even worse. As he was sitting on the box of a coach on the way to Pretoria, the guard asked him to dismount because he wanted to smoke there. A refusal brought two consecutive blows in quick succession. In Pretoria he was once kicked off a foot-path by a sentry. The catalogue may be still further extended, but it would be a weariness of the flesh.

The law suit which he had been engaged to conduct was at last over, and a social gathering was given in his honour on the eve of his departure for India. That evening

## *Heroes of the Hour*

Mr. Gandhi chanced to see a local newspaper which announced that a bill was about to be introduced into the colonial Parliament to disfranchise Indians and that other bills of a similar character were soon to follow. With true insight he immediately perceived the gravity of the situation, and explained to the assembled guests that if the Indian community in South Africa was to be saved from utter extinction immediate and resolute action should be taken. At his instance a message was at once sent to the colonial Parliament requesting delay of proceedings, which was soon followed up by a largely signed petition against the new measure. But all this was of no avail. The bill was passed in due course. Now another largely signed petition was sent to the Colonial Secretary in England, and in consequence the Royal Assent was withheld. But this again was of no avail for the same goal was reached by a new bill through a slightly different route. Now it was that Mr. Gandhi seriously mooted the question of a central organization in South Africa to keep vigilant watch over Indian interests. But it was represented to him that such an organization would be impossible un-

*Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

less he himself consented to remain in South Africa. The prominent Indians guaranteed him a 'practice if he should choose to stay. In response to their wishes he enrolled himself in the Supreme Court of Natal though not without some objection, at first, on the ground of his colour. Thus began for him that long association with South Africa which was destined to have such memorable results.

From a moral point of view the choice that he made to remain in South Africa, to which he had gone only on a temporary professional visit, was the first great act of Mr. Gandhi's public career. A young man with his life before him and every prospect of carving distinction for himself in his own native land is called upon to brush all that aside and devote himself to the uplift of his own countrymen in a far away land amidst circumstances of disgusting humiliation and struggle. How many in Mr. Gandhi's position would have made the same choice? How many would have had the same passivity to surrender themselves to the guiding hand of destiny? How many would have placed service above self? But to men born for great ends such crises of the soul come only to find them pre-

## *Heroes of the Hour*

pared. The South African Indian community were like a flock of sheep without a shepherd, surrounded by ravenous wolves, and Mr. Gandhi chose to be the shepherd. South Africa was the vine-yard of the Lord in which he was called upon to dig and delve, and he chose to be the labourer. From the day that his resolve was taken he consecrated himself to his work as to a high and lofty mission.

His first step, was to make his countrymen in South Africa articulate. And with this object, he organised them into various societies all over the land. He trained them in methods of constitutional agitation and for the purpose held meetings and conferences, and promoted petitions and memorials. He also sought out young men willing and capable and trained them for public work. And it was his character that imparted vitality to all his endeavours. By mixing with high and low on equal terms, by his readiness to succour the needy and console the afflicted, by the example he set of a simple, pure and austere life, by his transparent sincerity and perfect selflessness he made a profound impression upon them all and acquired an influence which deepened in the passage of the years into a.

## *Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

boundless reverence. Nor should it be forgotten that, that amongst the European community itself there were some good men and true who saw and recognised in him a soul of transcendent goodness.

In the year 1896 Mr. Gandhi came to India to take his wife and children to South Africa. Before he left South Africa he wrote and published an 'open letter' detailing the wrongs and grievances of his countrymen resident there.

News of the splendid work which he had done in South Africa had travelled before him to India, and Indians of all classes joined in according him an enthusiastic reception wherever he went. In these meetings Mr. Gandhi had of course to make some speeches. Our good friend, Reuter, sent highly garbled versions of his addresses to South Africa. He was represented as telling his Indian audiences that Indians in South Africa were uniformly treated like wild beasts. The blood of the Colonials was up and the feeling against Mr. Gandhi reached white heat. Meeting after meeting was held in which he was denounced in the most scathing terms. Meanwhile he was urgently requested to return



## *Heroes of the Hour*

to Natal without a moment's delay, and he embarked accordingly.

The steamer carrying Mr. Gandhi reached Durban on the same day as another steamer, which had left Bombay with 600 Indian passengers on board two days after Mr. Gandhi's own departure. The two ships were immediately quarantined indefinitely. Great things were transpiring at Durban meanwhile. The Colonials were determined not to land the Asiatics. Gigantic demonstrations were taking place, and the expediency of sending the Indians back was gravely discussed. It was plain that the Colonials would go any length to accomplish their purpose. The more boisterous spirits even proposed the sinking of the ship. Word was sent to Mr. Gandhi that if he and his compatriots should attempt to land they should do so at infinite peril; but threats were of no avail. On the day on which the new Indian arrivals were expected to land a huge concourse had assembled at the docks. There was no end of hissing, shouting, roaring and cursing. The Attorney-General of Natal addressed the infuriate gathering and promised them that the matter would receive the early attention of Parliament, commanding them at

### *Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

the same time in the name of the Queen to disperse. And the crowd dispersed. Mr. Gandhi came ashore sometime after the landing of his fellow-passengers, having previously sent his wife and children to the house of a friend. He was immediately recognised by some of the stragglers who at once began to set up a howl. A rickshaw was engaged, but the way was blocked. Mr. Gandhi walked on foot with a European friend and when they reached one of the streets the pressure was so great that the two friends were separated. The crowd at once began to maul Mr. Gandhi till the Police came and took him to the house of a friend. The Police Superintendent expressed his apprehensions that the mob in their frenzy would even set fire to the house. Mr. Gandhi was obliged to dress himself as a Police constable and take refuge in the Police Station. This ebullition of abnormal feeling subsided after some time and a momentous page in Mr. Gandhi's life was turned.

In October 1899 war broke out between the English and the Boers in South Africa. Mr. Gandhi, with the sagacity of a true leader at once perceived what a golden opportunity it was to the British Indians to vindicate

## *Heroes of the Hour*

their self-respect and readiness to suffer in the cause of the Empire. At his call hundreds of his countrymen in South Africa were glad to enlist themselves as Volunteers, but the offer was rejected with scorn by the powers that be. The offer was renewed a second time, only to meet with a similar fate. When however the British arms sustained some disasters, it was recognised that every man available should be put into the field and Mr. Gandhi's offer on behalf of his compatriots was accepted. A thousand Indians came forward, and were constituted into an Ambulance Corps, to assist in carrying the wounded to the hospitals. Of the service that was rendered in that direction, it is not necessary to speak as it has been recognised even in South Africa. At another time the British Indians were employed to receive the wounded out of the line of fire and carry them to a place more than twenty miles off. When the battle was raging, Major Bapte who was commanding came to Mr. Gandhi who of course was one of the Volunteers, and represented that if they worked from within the line of the fire they should be rendering inestimable service. At once all the Indian Volunteers responded to

*Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

the request and dauntlessly exposed themselves to shot and shell. Many an Indian life was lost that day.

The war was over and the Transvaal became a part of the British Empire. Mr. Gandhi was under the impression that, since the wrongs of the British Indian subjects of the Queen were one of the declared causes of the war, under the new Government those wrongs would be a thing of the past. And accordingly he returned to India with no idea of going back, but he was reckoning without his host. The little finger of the new Government was thicker than the loins of the Boers. The Boers had indeed stung the Indian subjects of the Queen with whips but the new Government stung them with scorpions. A new Asiatic department was constituted to deal with Asiatics as a species apart. A most insidious policy of exclusion was maturing. The prospect was dark and appalling and Mr. Gandhi had to return to the scene of his labours. He interviewed the authorities but he was assured that he had no business to interfere in the matter while they themselves were there to look after everything. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain was then in South Africa

## *Heroes of the Hour*

and a deputation led by Mr. Gandhi waited upon him in Natal. In Pretoria however a similar deputation was disallowed unless Mr. Gandhi was excluded. Evidently Mr. Gandhi's name was becoming gall and worm-wood to the authorities. But he was not the man to be frightened. He determined to fight out the battle in the Law Courts and enrolled himself on the Supreme Court of Pretoria.

He now felt more than ever the imperative need of an organ which should at once educate the South African Indian community on the one hand and be on the other the faithful mouth-piece of their views. In 1903 a press was bought and the paper "Indian Opinion" was ushered into existence. It was published in four languages, English, Tamil, Guzerati and Hindi. At first it didn't prove a success and entailed such heavy loss that during the first year alone Mr. Gandhi had to pay a sum of £ 2,000 out of his own pocket. Though in subsequent years the financial position of the paper has somewhat improved, it has never been a pecuniary success. Notwithstanding, it has grown to be a great force in South Africa and rendered invaluable service during the recent struggle.

## *Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

In the year 1904 a virulent attack of plague broke out among the Indian Community in Johannesburg. The Municipal authorities were either ignorant or apathetic. Mr. Gandhi, however, was at once on the scene and sent word to the authorities that if immediate action were not taken an epidemic was in prospect. But no answer came. One day the plague carried off as many as twenty-one victims. Mr. Gandhi with three or four noble comrades at once broke open one of the Indian stores which was empty, and had the patients carried there and did what he could in the matter. The next morning the Municipal authorities bestirred themselves and took the necessary action. The plague lasted a month counting more than a hundred victims. We in India may shudder to think to what an appalling magnitude the outbreak may have grown but for the heroic endeavours of the subject of this sketch, and his devoted comrades. In such ways, indeed, had Mr. Gandhi's influence begun to bear fruit.

It was about this time also that Mr. Gandhi founded the famous "Phoenix Settlement." He had been reading Ruskin's *Unto this Last* and its influence sank deep into his mind..



### *Heroes of the Hour*

He was at once on fire with the author's idea of country settlements and shortly after the plague subsided, Mr. Gandhi went to Natal and purchased a piece of land at Phoenix, a place situated "on the hill sides of a rich grassy country." Houses were built and a village sprang up on the mountain side. In this 'settlement' Mr. Gandhi sought to enshrine his ideal of the simple life. It was to be a retreat from the bustle of city life where men and women might by communion with nature seek to divest their life and mind of all artificial trappings and come nearer to the source of their own being. It was to be an ashrama, a spot of sanctity and peace. Its members were to be a spiritual brotherhood and were to know no differences of rank. To all alike labour was to be a privilege and a joy. All had to dig, plough and cultivate the adjoining land with their own hands. Mr. Gandhi himself when he was in South Africa used to go to the village during his moments of leisure and take part in the work of cultivation like anybody else. But he had to fulfil this sublime idealistic impulse of his at immense pecuniary sacrifice, for the scheme, we are told "absolutely impoverished him."

## *Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

It was here also that Mr. Gandhi practised a great *tapasya*. Here he laid upon himself and his family the yoke of an iron discipline in daily habit. He stripped himself of all luxury in externals. He wore the coarsest raiment and for food took only so much as would suffice to keep body and soul together. He slept upon a coarse blanket in the open air. He starved the flesh and reined in the mind. And his soul waxed in joy and strength. And to those that beheld it was a marvel and a wonder.

In 1906 the Zulus broke out in rebellion and a corps of twenty Indians with Mr. Gandhi as leader was formed to help to carry the wounded to the hospital. The corps subsequently acted as nurses and Mr. Gandhi ministered in person to the wounded Zulus. The founding of the Phoenix Ashrama and the nursing of the Zulus with all their meaning in terms of the higher life were a fitting prelude to what was about to follow.

In the year 1906 the new Government of the Transvaal brought forward a new law affecting all Asiatics, which was sinister, retrograde and obnoxious in the last degree. One morning all the children of Asia in the Transvaal

### *Heroes of the Hour*

awoke and found themselves called upon to register themselves anew by giving thumb impressions. Thus all Asiatics were placed on a level with convicts. And yet these light-hearted legislators and their compatriots were by profession the flock of an Asiatic whose injunction to his disciples was to go forth amongst the children of men as lambs amongst wolves ! Who will dare to say that in the dealings of the western nations with 'coloured' races this spirit has ever been much in evidence ? How else could these colonials have so merrily blackened a whole continent which has been the home of the oldest civilisations and has given to humanity its greatest prophets and saviours ? But in this case also the Asiatic lambs were destined to give a glorious object-lesson to the wolves.

The object of the new measure was apparently to prevent unlawful immigration from what they regarded as the pariah continent. Now the Indian Community throughout South Africa and their leaders were quite willing that reasonable restrictions should be placed on all future immigration though on abstract considerations of justice they could have insisted upon the right of the

‘open door.’ But what they had been agitating against all these years and what they could not reconcile themselves to was that this object should be compassed by laws which tended to differentiate them on any ground of colour or race. The principle of equality of all races before the law, however much its application may have to be tempered by considerations of circumstance, had been the very head and front of their demands. And now defiance and contempt were hurled at them in the shape of this new law. It was at the same time a certainty that it was but the precursor in the Transvaal and in other parts of South Africa of more insidious and flagrant measures intended to drive out the Indian Community once and for ever. And it was hailed by the colonials as the beginning of the end, while the Indian Community was convulsed with indignation.

Meanwhile Mr. Gandhi and his co-workers were not idle. They proceeded to interview the member of the Government in charge of the new bill, but when they succeeded only in getting women excluded from its operation it was realised that there was now nothing left for persuasion to accomplish. The

## *Heroes of the Hour*

Legislative Council passed the new measure after the farce of a discussion. Infinitely more important to us are the proceedings of another meeting held in that very city and at the very time when the bill was being rushed through the council. It is an immense gathering, consisting of several thousands of Indians of all classes and creeds. A great spirit animates all. Impassioned speeches are made denouncing the new law. But now at the close the great throng rises up and shouts a solemn 'Amen.' It is the vow of passive resistance that he has thus been administered. Those thousands had decided not against the new bill but against the new Act. They had decided also that henceforth they were to be the masters of their own fate and not General Smuts or Botha or the Legislative Council. And the onlooker may well have whispered to himself, "To-day we have been present at the lighting of a fire which will never go out."

It was a momentous step. But Mr. Gandhi on whom the burden of leadership now lay heavily was eager to take any step that promised an alternative solution. And accordingly a deputation under his leadership and

that of Mr. Ali was sent to England to agitate, if possible, against the Royal Assent being given to the new legislation. The Royal Assent was withheld in consequence till a constitutional Government should be installed in the Transvaal. As a result of its efforts a committee in London with Lord Ampthill, ex-Governor of Madras, as President, Sir Mancherjee Bowanagree as Executive Chairman, and Mr. Ritch as Secretary, was also formed to keep guard over Indian interests in South Africa. But the relief thus obtained was only temporary. A constitutional Government was soon formed in the Transvaal, the new measure was passed in hot haste, received the Royal Assent, and became law.

Thus was the Indian community in the Transvaal impelled upon the great destiny of 'passive resistance.' To register or not to register was now the question: to register and sell their honour and self-respect for a mess of pottage or not to register and take up arms against a 'sea of troubles.' Like the voice of God speaking to the inmost soul was Mr. Gandhi's appeal to his countrymen at this hour. There could be no question, he explained, of their submitting to this final and crowning



## *Heroes of the Hour*

challenge of colonial insolence to Indian manhood. There was nothing left but to bare the majesty of their own souls to the storm and defy it to do its utmost. The prison and the gaol were now to be the cells of their own self-discipline. All the forces of darkness in league were powerless to move them from the firm-set purpose of their own hearts. Was spirit greater than matter? Was the body to be nailed to the cross or the soul? Was not Heaven itself beckoning them to the great Heights? In such wise did Mr. Gandhi adjure his countrymen.

The words of the leader awoke a responsive thrill in thousands of intrepid hearts. Like one man they vowed against the registration. Like one man they resolved to face prosecution and persecution, dungeon and death itself. Like one man they resolved to make atonement for the heaped-up humiliations of many years by a supreme and triumphant act of self-vindication which should rivet the eyes of the whole world. The hour of the spirit's rebound when individuals and communities alike cleave through every consideration save that of their own integrity, that hour had come.

### *Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

The passive resistance movement had commenced. The registering officers went about from place to place, but little business had they to do as ninety-five per cent. of the people remained true to their oath. The law took its course and a veritable saturnalia of imprisonments ensued. The gaols became literally crammed with the Indians who suffered for conscience' sake. High and low, rich and poor went to the gaol as to the bridal. Husband was separated from wife, child from parent, and yet the fervour and pertinacity of the sufferers abated not. Mr. Gandhi himself was sentenced to two months' simple imprisonment. During the trial he took full responsibility for the course adopted by the Indian community and asked for the maximum punishment for himself. The authorities were naturally perturbed to see the worm turning and for the first time displayed a chastened mood. Negotiations were opened through the mediation of one, Mr. Cartwright, a journalist, and it was agreed that the new law should be suspended for three months, that in the meanwhile registration should be made voluntarily, and that at the end of the period it should be

## *Heroes of the Hour*

revealed. In pursuance of this arrangement Mr. Gandhi himself, to set an example, went to the office to register. The position of a leader is fraught with peril, and a Pathan who had joined the passive resistance movement imagined that Mr. Gandhi was playing the coward and betraying his trust. Under this impression he dealt him such severe blows on his way to the registration office that he instantly fell down senseless on the spot. As a result of the injuries received he hovered between life and death for some time, during which the wife of his good friend and admirer, the Rev. Mr. Doke, a baptist minister of Johannesburg, devotedly nursed him back to life. His friends afterwards asked him to take legal action against the Pathan but he replied that the Pathan had done only what he considered to be right! This incident threw the situation into confusion for the moment but subsequently the process of voluntary registration was satisfactorily completed and the authorities were called upon to perform their part of the compact. But this they refused to do, and all efforts at compromise proving futile there was now no alternative but to resume the struggle.

*Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

Once more did the rapture of suffering come upon thousands and the prison-house become a holy of holies. And how glorious was the spirit which had come upon them ! Gentle and meek and uncomplaining, it was the very spirit of that Cross which their persecutors professed to follow but honoured so little in practice. It was almost as if one heard these men exclaim, " Lord, forgive them, for they know not what they do." From every class and sect were the heroes drawn. Many among them were the poorest of the poor, living by the sweat of the brow and innocent of 'education.' Wealthy merchants went into voluntary insolvency rather than prove false to their vow. The ruin and misery caused, the dislocation of family life, the hunger and starvation of the women and children were indescribable. But the women amidst all the desolation of their hearts only cheered the men on ! The passive resisters were subjected to cruel hardships and indignities in gaol that their spirit might be broken, but this served only to quicken and intensify it. They had tasted of an immortal cup and anguish itself had now become only the food of their souls.

To us in Southern India it is a matter

## *Heroes of the Hour*

for splendid pride that amongst them all none displayed greater resolution or a more indomitable fibre than the children of the Tamil land. It has been calculated that out of a total population of nine thousand male Indians in the Transvaal two thousand seven hundred had in this way suffered 'untold miseries in prison,' and many of them again and again. Needless to say, Mr. Gandhi himself was one of the victims this time also, being sentenced to a term of two months with hard labour. We have no space to refer to the hardships he endured with his brother sufferers in jail, to his many acts of self-denial, and to the sublime manner in which he bore up, believing as he did that suffering is the heaven-ordained path to perfection. That so many should have been consumed by the apostolic fire and should have so clearly realised the issues at stake is a tribute at once to the relentless fury of the persecutors, the spiritual force of Mr. Gandhi, and the greatness of common human nature.

After his release from his second term of imprisonment Mr. Gandhi organised two deputations, one to England and the other to India for the purpose of educating public

*Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

opinion in both countries. Several of the delegates were arrested on the eve of their departure and sentenced to prison as passive resisters. But Mr. Gandhi and some others nevertheless went to England and were successful in awakening some interest in the matter. The Transvaal ministers were then in England and the Imperial authorities tried to bring about a settlement. But General Smuts was implacable and nothing worth mentioning came of it. Arrangements were however made for a body of volunteers who undertook to collect funds and keep public interest alive, and the deputation returned to South Africa.

The deputation to India consisted of but one individual, that doughty and indefatigable champion of the Indian cause in South Africa, and Editor of the paper '*Indian Opinion*,' Mr. H. S. L. Polak. Feeling in India had reached a high pitch of resentment against the policy of the Transvaal Government even before his arrival. But when he under the direction of the late Mr. Gokhale toured the country and narrated in dozens of meetings the heart-rending tale of the South African persecution that feeling easily reached boiling-



### *Heroes of the Hour*

point and the demand for reprisals came from every quarter of the land. Funds also came pouring in for the relief of the distressed children in a far-away land who had done so much to raise their motherland in the estimation of the world.

One great and immediate result of Mr. Polak's propaganda was that attention in India was concentrated upon the enormities of the Indenture system as never it had been concentrated before. And when in March 1912 the late Mr. Gokhale moved in the Imperial Legislative Council a resolution for its abolition in a speech of classic force and dignity, the Government of India had to bow to Indian public opinion and signify acceptance. It was the first great victory of the Passive Resistance movement.

In South Africa itself the movement had a two-fold reaction. On the one hand, it made an indelible impression upon the better mind of the colonial and this found expression in the formation of a committee called the Hosken Committee, under the presidency of Sir William Hosken, a good, ardent and noble man, who in the face of obloquy from his own countrymen expounded the Indian cause with a zeal that

*Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

was above all praise. On the other hand, it spurred the authorities to that increasing vindictiveness which imagines that the soul could be coerced by a more thoroughgoing application of brute force.

With the blindness that has characterised the persecutor in history the authorities in the Transvaal strengthened their hands by a new power, *viz.*, that of deportation, hoping thereby to foil the Passive Resister. At first they deported the more prominent of them across the Natal border but these returned as fast as they were sent out. Not to be baulked the authorities now went the length of deporting a good many of the passive resisters, about sixty-four in number, all the way to India. But these again were sent back with the sympathy and admiration of a whole nation. Utterly lost to all sense of shame the Transvaal authorities by hook and by crook did their level best to prevent them from landing. And one of the returning deportees, a lion-hearted youth Narayanaswamy, by name, hunted in this way from one British port to another died in Delgoa Bay in Portuguese territory. And his martyr-death threw a fresh halo of sanctity over the cause. The Government

## *Heroes of the Hour*

of India greatly impressed by the gravity of the situation in India consequent on the Transvaal occurrences moved the Imperial Government in England, who in their turn did their best to woo the Transvaalies to a more conciliatory mood. And the result was that the deportation process subsequently stopped.

After the various provinces of South Africa had been constituted into the South African Union the Imperial Government in England at the insistence of the Government of India strove once more to persuade the Union Government to effect a reasonable settlement of the problem, and for the purpose, addressed to the latter a despatch in October 1910, recommending the repeal of the law which had been the origin of the whole trouble, and the adoption of legislation on non-racial lines which, while prohibiting all future immigration in effect, will yet leave room for the entry into South Africa of a small and defined minimum of educated people. At the same time the Imperial Government pointed out that any such law should not have the effect of taking away any rights till then enjoyed by immigrants in the coast-lying provinces. This time the Union Government were willing

*Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

to consider the suggestion, and to give effect thereto brought forward the Union Immigration Bill in 1911, which while repealing the old law did not annul the racial distinction, and further took away several rights from the residents of the coast districts—the very thing deprecated by the Imperial Government. This bill was naturally unacceptable to the Indian Community and finally was not passed. An understanding however was arrived at by which the passive resisters agreed to suspend their movement, and the authorities agreed to introduce satisfactory legislation in 1912, meanwhile administering the law as though it had been already altered. The measure of 1912 was however no better and the truce was extended for one more year. It was then that Mr. Gandhi invited the late Mr. Gokhale to South Africa to study the whole situation on the spot, and the latter with the full approval of the Indian and Imperial Governments sailed for that country and arrived at Capetown on 22nd October, 1912. He stayed for about three weeks and toured the whole country visiting every important city. Everywhere he was received with signal honour, not merely by the Indian community

## *Heroes of the Hour*

but also by the colonial authorities themselves, and succeeded in making a great impression by that sweet reasonableness for which he was so well-known. He interviewed the Union ministers and secured from them the promise of a satisfactory settlement, and amongst other things the repeal of the £3 tax which every ex-indentured Indian man and woman had to pay in Natal, and to which reference has been made already. Things seemed to augur well for the future and hope began to revive where despair had reigned before.

A fresh and extraordinary complication was now introduced into the situation in the shape of a judicial decision of the Union Court which declared all Indian marriages to be null and void under the law of the Union. The consternation into which it plunged the entire Indian Community is imagined than described. When the long-expected legislation was at last introduced into the Union Parliament in 1913, it was evident that it was merely tinkering with the whole problem without any attempt at solving it in a liberal or large-hearted manner. Warnings were accordingly given and representations made

*Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

to the authorities by the Indian leaders but to no purpose. A few amendments were made in the original bill but the Act as passed was absolutely inadequate to meet the requirements of the situation. At this juncture a deputation was sent to England to bring home to the Imperial authorities and the British public the profound danger of the whole position, and the certainty that if timely steps were not taken it would lead to the revival of passive resistance on a vastly enlarged scale. But it was in vain. It required still an appalling amount of suffering before the conscience of the Union could at all be moved.

The struggle accordingly recommenced with a grimness and determination which threw into the shade even the previous campaigns. The principal planks of the passive resister this time were, the abolition of the £3 tax, the complete eradication of the racial bar as a principle of legislation, the recognition of the validity of Indian marriages, the right of entry into Cape Colony of all South Africa-born Indians, and the sympathetic and equitable administration of all laws affecting the British Indian immigrant.



## *Heroes of the Hour*

Of the incidents of this final stage of the struggle one can speak only in terms of bated breath. For it had been decreed that the baptism of fire through which the Indian Community had been passing during these long years should now be bestowed on the only two classes which had hitherto remained outside it—the women and the indentured labourer. The Indian women in the Transvaal had indeed already played a memorable part, by the fine understanding they had displayed of the purposes of the whole movement, and by the whole-hearted sympathy and encouragement which they had given to their men-folk. But the time had now come for the women themselves to step into the flaming breach. Like an arrow in the heart did they receive the judicial dictum which pronounced their marriages to be invalid. Or rather it was that the entrance of this arrow was but the occasion for the opening of the flood-gates of that idealism of which woman's heart is the chosen home. And in what a deluge did it thereafter pour! How many hundreds were the Indian women that sanctified the prison-houses of South Africa! And how superb was the intoxication that came upon the men-folk as

they beheld their own mothers, wives and sisters mock at the crucifixion of the body! Never before in the history of the world had a more signal proof been given of the power of the human soul to defy the arrayed forces of wickedness and embrace suffering in the battle for honour and self-respect. The splendour and ecstasy of it all will last through the ages.

The account given by Mrs. Polak in the pages of 'Indian Opinion' of the part played by women in the struggle is so interesting that it deserves to be quoted in full. She writes:—

“Ruskin has said: “A woman's duty is twofold, her duty to her home and her duty to the State.” Scarcely an Indian woman in South Africa has read Ruskin's words, probably never heard of them, but the spirit of truth manifests itself in many ways and places, and the Indian women of South Africa intuitively knew this as one of the true laws of life, and their work showed that they performed their greater duty accordingly. These women, without any training for public life, accustomed to the retirement of women of India, not versed or read in the science of sociology, just patient,

## *Heroes of the Hour*

dutiful wives, mothers, and daughters of a struggling class of workers, in an hour of need, moved by the spirit of a larger life, took up their duty to their country, and served it with that heroism of which such women alone are capable.

It is said so often that woman does not reason, and perhaps it is a charge largely true, but where the elementary laws of being are concerned, woman follows a surer path than any dictated by reason, and sooner or later gets to her goal. Every reform movement has shown that, from the moment women stand side by side with men in the maintenance of a principle, however dimly understood by them, the spirit of the movement grows, is crystallised, and success to the movement is assured.

The Western is so accustomed to think of the Indian woman as one living in retirement, without any broad thought and without any interest in public affairs, that it must have come with a shock of surprise to learn that many Indian women, some with babies in their arms, some expecting babies to be born to them, and some quite young girls, were

leaving their homes and taking part in all the hardships of the Passive Resistance campaign.

The last phase of the fight, and the one through which to-day we rejoice in peace, was practically led in the early stages by a small band of women from Natal, who challenged prison to vindicate their right to the legal recognition of their wifehood, and a similar small band of women from Johannesburg.

The women from Natal, all of them wives of wellknown members of the Indian community, travelled up to Volksrust, were arrested and sentenced to three months' hard labour, and were the first of hundreds to go to gaol. The women from the Transvaal travelled down the line, taking in the mines on their way, holding meetings and calling upon the men to refuse to work and to die rather than live as slaves, and at the call of these women, thousands laid down their tools and went on strike. I think it may safely be said that, but for the early work of these brave women, during the middle of last year, the wonderful response to the call of honour and country might never have taken place. About six weeks after the Transvaal women left, they also were arrested, and a similar sentence to that passed upon the

## *Heroes of the Hour*

women of Natal was passed upon them, and they were forcibly vaccinated. So these brave women were shut away from life, but the fight now so splendidly begun went on.

A few days after the release of these last women, two gave birth to children, and another, a young girl of about twenty, passed away, and a third hovered between life and death for months, but the goal was won. To-day, all these women are back in their homes and are busy in the usual routine of an Indian woman's life. There is absolutely none of the pride of heroism about them. They are the same patient, dutiful women that India has produced for centuries; yet they endured the publicity, and no one who does not know India can understand how terrible to the Indian woman such publicity is. They endured the physical hardship, the mental sorrow, the heartache; for nearly all who did not take young children with them left young ones at home, endured hunger strikes, because they were deprived of fat to eat and sandals to put on—endured it all without harshness or bitterness. India has many things to be proud of, but of none more than the part the Indian

women of South Africa took in the uplifting and recognition of a people here despised."

The foregoing account refers to a strike on the coal-mines. The organization of a strike of the Indentured labourers was part and parcel of the scheme of the leaders for the final campaign. This strike and the famous march of the strikers to the Transvaal, we cannot better describe than in the words of an article entitled "That Wonderful March" in that self-same journal. It runs:—

"The question of the repeal of the £3 tax had become urgent already in 1908 and 1909, when an organisation had been formed for the purpose of securing it, and petitions widely signed had been sent to the then Natal Parliament, without other result than the passing of the ineffective Act of 1910, giving magistrates discretion—which some used, while others did not—to exempt certain classes of women in certain circumstances.

During his campaign in India, in 1909-10 and 1911-12, and his visit to England in 1911, Mr. Polak had pressed the question upon the attention of the people and Government of India and the British public, who had hitherto



## *Heroes of the Hour*

been ignorant as to the harsh incidence of the tax and grim misery that it entailed.

Accordingly, when the Hon. Mr. Gokhale came to South Africa in 1912, and set himself to the task of examining Indian grievances on the spot, he immediately seized upon the tax as one that required and was capable of immediate remedy, and he, therefore, as he has told us, made special representations on the subject at the meeting of Ministers at Pretoria, when, he is positive, a definite undertaking was given him to repeal the tax. His efforts to that end had already been foreshadowed whilst he had travelled through the Union, and he had given assurances to vast crowds of those liable to the tax that he would not rest until he had secured its repeal, a resolve that had been much encouraged by the sympathetic speeches and conversations of prominent Natalians, both at the Durban banquet and at the subsequent Chamber of Commerce meeting. And these promises, fortified by the knowledge of what had transpired at Pretoria, Mr. Gandhi, upon his return from Zanzibar, whither he had accompanied Mr. Gokhale, repeated again and

*Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

again in a responsible manner, to large numbers of those affected by the tax.

When, therefore, in 1913, a measure was introduced into the Union Parliament, at the end of the session, exempting women only from its operation, but requiring them to take out an annual licence, a message was sent to Mr. Gokhale in India requiring whether the promise of repeal had been limited to women. The reply was that it applied to all who were affected by the tax, and the Bill was promptly killed by Mr. Meyler and the late Sir David Hunter, who protested against its further progress, as they felt convinced that to pass it would be to delay total repeal indefinitely. Up to this time there had been no denial by the Government of the promise alleged.

At the rising of Parliament, Mr. Gandhi entered into fresh negotiations with the Union Government, reminding them of the promise, and asking for a definite undertaking of repeal of the tax in 1914. Meanwhile, in England, Mr. Polak, who had gone there at Mr. Gokhale's instance, had made it clear to the Imperial authorities and the British public that, whilst the repeal of the £3 tax had not previously formed part of the Passive Resisters' demands,

## *Heroes of the Hour*

the question had now become so acute, and Indian public feeling in South Africa had become so intense owing to what was regarded as the Union Government's breach of faith that, in the unfortunate event of the revival of the struggle, repeal of the tax would be made part and parcel of it. Lord Ampthill, too, after consulting with Mr. Gokhale, referred in explicit terms to the promise of repeal, in a portentous speech in the House of Lords. In the result, the Union Government declined to give an undertaking on the subject, though they still did not deny the promise, and the question therefore, formed one of the five points of Passive Resistance in Mr. A. M. Cachalia's letter of the 12th September, announcing the revival of the struggle. At the same time, Mr. Gokhale, in the face of the objections of his medical advisers, hurried back to India to rouse the Government and his fellow-countrymen to action.

On September 28, and before any important activity had developed Mr. Gandhi addressed to the Secretary for the Interior a letter containing the following warning and appeal :—

“I know also what responsibility lies on my shoulders in advising such a momentous

step, but I feel that it is not possible for me to refrain from advising a step which I consider to be necessary, to be of educational value, and, in the end, to be valuable both to the Indian community and to the State. This step consists in actively, persistently, and continuously asking those who are liable to pay the £3 tax to decline to do so and to suffer the penalties for non-payment, and what is more important; in asking those who are now serving indenture and who will, therefore, be liable to pay the £3 Tax upon the completion of their indenture, to strike work until the tax is withdrawn. I feel that in view of Lord Ampthill's declaration in the House of Lords, evidently with the approval of Mr. Gokhale, as to the definite promise made by the Government and repeated to Lord Gladstone, this advice to indentured Indians would be fully justified. . . . Can I not even now, whilst in the midst of the struggle, appeal to General Smuts and ask him to reconsider his decision . . . . on the question of the £3 tax?" The letter was shown to General Smuts who vouchsafed no reply, but who also did not even then repudiate the promise, nor did he warn the employers of the intentions of the Passive

## *Heroes of the Hour*

Resistance leaders. A fortnight later, in a statement circulated by Reuter's Agency throughout the South African press, it was clearly stated that "the movement will also consist in advising indentured Indians to suspend work until the £3 Tax is removed. The indentured Indians will not be invited to join the general struggle." The public thus received ample warning of what was toward.

The Indian women who had joined the struggle as a protest against the refusal of the Government to legalise Indian marriages and who, as Passive Resisters, had unsuccessfully sought imprisonment at Vereeniging, Germistont and Volksrust, were allowed to pass into Natal unmolested, and the first steps taken to "call out" the Indians on the coal-mines in the northern part of the Province were due to the courage and devotion of these women, whose appearance there was almost in the nature of an accident. Under the guidance of Mr. C. K. T. Naidoo, they made Newcastle their headquarters, and, travelling from mine to mine, they made eloquent appeal to the Indian labourers and their families to cease work until an assurance of repeal of the tax was given by the Government. The response

*Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

was immediate and general. Mine after mine was closed down, as the Indian labourers refused to work, and a state of panic ensued amongst the employers, who at first continued to give rations as an inducement to their employees to remain on the mines. A hurried conference of mine-owners was held at Durban, at which Mr. Gandhi was invited to be present, and he then explained the situation and referred to the promise made to Mr. Gokhale. He pointed out that the labourers were being asked to strike only so long as the £3 Tax was unrepealed, and because it had been alleged—an allegation that was subsequently discovered to be well-founded—that the employers were opposed to repeal. The conference telegraphed to General Smuts inquiring about the promise, which was denied by him and by General Botha, for the first time ; but it is significant that the late Mr. Fischer, who was also present at the meeting with the Ministers, did not repudiate it, though his physical condition did not preclude his doing so. Mr. Gokhale at once cabled, stating that a promise of repeal had undoubtedly been made to him, and, as a result of the hostile attitude now taken up by



## *Heroes of the Hour*

the Government and by the employers, the labourers were invited to leave the mines, where improper influences were being used to induce them to return to work.

Mr. Gandhi placed himself at the head of a vast commissariat organisation, and, together with a small body of assistants, chief of whom was Mr. Albert Christopher, and with the co-operation of Mr. Kallenbach, the Indians—men, women and children—were fed and maintained at Newcastle, where they flocked by the hundred, coming by road and rail as fast as they could leave the mines, with the result that the latter, from Dundee and Ladysmith to Newcastle, were denuded of their labour supply. It was a pathetic and yet a cheering sight to watch these patient hundreds plodding slowly along muddy roads, in inclement weather, to the Newcastle centre, where they lived on a handful of rice, bread, and sugar a day, in the open, without shelter, without cooking accommodation beyond what they improvised on the bare veld, without comfort of any kind. But they were buoyed up with a great hope, and they had an inspiring leader. Mr. Kallenbach, too, fought their battles for them with the Newcastle-

*Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

municipality and magistracy, and later they saw how Mr. Gandhi shared their daily life and hardships, nursed the sick, and fed the hungry. They knew that the Indian women, who had urged them to strike, were cheerfully suffering imprisonment with hard labour, for their sake, and they felt in honour bound to struggle on until they had secured the repeal of the tax that weighed so heavily upon so many of them. And the women amongst them were no less heroic than the men. One mother, whose little child died of exposure on the road to Newcastle, was heard to say : "We must not pine for the dead ; it is the living for which we must work." Such a spirit ensured ultimate success.

As their members swelled, it was felt that the only possible method of compelling the Union Government to realise their responsibilities and assume charge was to march the whole of the strikers into the Transvaal, there to court arrest and imprisonment, and it was accordingly decided to concentrate at Charles-town, the border village, where Messrs. Vallibhai and Mukdoom rendered great service. At the head of a large "army," therefore, Mr. Gandhi marched there on October 30th.,

## *Heroes of the Hour*

but just before the march commenced, a number of strikers were arrested and removed to the gaols after sentence of imprisonment. Day by day hundreds more marched to or entrained for Charlestown, where a vast camp was organised, under the sanitary control of the District Health Officer, Dr. Briscoe, and rations, that were pouring in from Durban and Johannesburg Indian merchants, to which were added supplies purchased with money that was being cabled in large sums from India, were daily distributed to a gathering of men, women and children that numbered finally over 3,000.

Meanwhile, Mr. Gandhi had telegraphed the intentions of the "invaders" to the Government, who apparently took no notice of the warning. Simultaneously, efforts were made, without success, by the Deputy Protector to induce the strikers to return to work, and large batches of them were arrested, and eventually imprisoned.

At last, a week after the notification, Mr. Gandhi commenced the now famous "invasion" of the Transvaal, with a following of over 2,000. The women and children were left behind at Charlestown, in charge of Miss

*Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

Schlesin and Mr. Kallenbach, who worked day and night to make their lot somewhat easier. At the border, the "army" came to a stand, whilst Mr. Gandhi, who was near the rear, having remained behind to make final arrangements, came forward to interview the police officer who, with a small patrol, was on duty at the gate of entry. Whilst these preliminaries were in train, the main body became impatient, and a mass of cheering, shouting Indians, clad in ragged clothes, and bearing their pitifully small belongings upon their heads, swarmed through the streets of Volksrust, determined to do or die, brushing the handful of police aside like so many helpless and insignificant atoms. They encamped on the farther side of the town, and the great march had commenced. The programme was to march, at the rate of some 25 miles a day, until the men were arrested, or Tolstoy Farm, at Lawley, near Johannesburg, was reached, and the Government were informed of each stopping-place. Eight days were set aside to reach their destination, unless they were earlier arrested, and, from the swing and energy of their marching, it was plain that a phenomenal feat was being per-

## *Heroes of the Hour*

formed by men, many of them heavily burdened, unused to conditions of "war," but accustomed to hard and simple life, and on a meagre and unusual diet. That night they reached Palmford, where special accommodation was offered to Mr. Gandhi, who, however, refused to accept hospitality which his humbler countrymen could not share.

Meanwhile, the Government were not altogether idle, but with that stupidity which almost invariably characterises governments in similiar emergencies, they did the wrong thing, and issued a warrant for the arrest of Mr. Gandhi, hoping thus to demoralise the forces that he was leading. Mr. Gandhi surrendered to the warrant of Palmford, having, at the request of the authorities, pointed out some of his own followers to give evidence for him, as the Crown would not otherwise have been able to prove its case against him! He was motored swiftly to Volksrust, but the "army" silently and grimly pursued its march undeterred by the loss of its revered leader. At Volksrust, Mr. Gandhi was charged with breach of the Immigration Act and applied for bail, as he was in charge of large numbers of men entirely dependent upon him, and his application was

granted. Realising, however, the probable risks that would ensue if the people were left leaderless, he addressed the following telegram to the Minister of the Interior:

“Whilst I appreciate the fact of Government having at last arrested prime mover in passive resistance struggle, cannot help remarking that from point view humanity moment chosen most unfortunate. Government probably know that marchers include 122 women, 50 tender children, all voluntarily marching on starvation rations without provision for shelter during stages. Tearing me away under such circumstances from them is violation all considerations justice. When arrested last night, left men without informing them. They might become infuriated. I, therefore, ask either that I may be allowed continue march with men, or Government send them by rail Tolstoy Farm and provide full rations for them. Leaving them without one in whom they have confidence, and without Government making provision for them, is, in my opinion, an act from which I hope on reconsideration Government will recoil. If untoward incidents happen during further progress march, or if deaths occur, especially



## *Heroes of the Hour*

amongst women with babies in arms, responsibility will be Government's." No reply was returned to this humane appeal, but it was understood that the Government had no intention of assuming charge of this large body of men, women and children. Writing at the time of Mr. Gandhi's arrest, the special correspondent of the *Natal Mercury* sent his paper the following vivid description of the conditions prevailing both then and earlier at Charlestown:—

"We arrived at Palmford about 8-30 P.M. last night, and found them all sleeping in the veld, just below the station. Many of them were feeling the cold severely . . . I visited Charlestown twice on the 5th (the day before the march commenced). The whole appearance of the town resembled nothing but an Indian bazaar. The town was crowded with Indians . . . No sanitary arrangements were made at first, and the position from a health point of view was awful; but later Mr. Gandhi assisted the municipal officials, and the position was greatly improved. I found Mr. Gandhi at the back of an Indian store, in the yard, serving out curry and rice to his followers, who marched up, and each man received his quota. One

*Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

baker sold 5,000 loaves to the Indians in one day."

Mr. Gandhi, upon his release on bail, swiftly motored back to his followers, rejoining them on the march, which proceeded quietly as far as Paardeberg, where the remaining women and children were left behind in charge of a few of the men, who had become footsore. The main body reached Standerton on the morning of the 8th, where a number of strikers were arrested by their compound managers, assisted by a few police, and entrained for Natal. And here, too, Mr. Gandhi was re-arrested on the same charge as before. He again requested bail, and, owing to the attitude of the strikers, who persistently refused to move from the Court precincts until their leader was restored to them, his request was granted, and the march was resumed immediately.

Sunday, the 9th, was an historic day. With a view to a final consultation with him before leaving for India, Mr. Polak had telegraphed to Mr. Gandhi, saying that he was joining him, and had received a wire suggesting Greylingstad as the meeting place, but with the warning that he (Mr. Polak) might be arrested if he came. He joined the column at

## *Heroes of the Hour*

a small place named Teakworth, a few miles on the Standerton side of Greylingstad. The "army," spread along the road for a distance of some three miles, was led by a small, limping, bent, but dogged man, coarsely dressed, and using a staff, with a serene and peaceful countenance, however, and a look of sureness and content. That was Gandhi, the principal Passive Resister. The two friends greeted each other, and eagerly exchanged news. Whilst thus engaged, and when about an hour distant from Greylingstad, not far ahead was seen a Cape cart, and walking rapidly towards them were a couple of police officers, behind whom came Mr. M. Chamney, the Principal Immigration Officer of the Transvaal. Realising the pacific nature of the demonstration and of the Indian leader's intentions, Mr. Chamney had complimented Mr. Gandhi by undertaking his arrest upon a warrant issued under the Natal Indenture Law with no stronger support than this. The Cape cart, with its precious freight, drove swiftly away, and the column resumed its march quietly, under the leadership of Mr. Polak, who had at once assumed the responsibility, preceded

by the two mounted policemen. A few minutes later, Messrs. Cachalia and Bhyat, who, together with Mr. Badat of Volksrust, were in charge of the commissariat arrangements, of which Mr. Polak was in entire ignorance, joined the column, having accidentally missed it in on another road, and they at once proceeded to Balfour, where it was due next morning and where food supplies were awaiting its arrival. The evening was fine and clear, and the cooking-fires that were lit from end to end of the veldt offered a bright and sparkling spectacle. Gradually, the buzz and throb of conversation sank, as sleep fell upon the camp. The night, however, was dismal and wretched, a cold wind howled mournfully down from the neighbouring hills, and a drizzle of rain added to the discomfort of the shelterless throng.

But the night was portentous, for it was decreed that the march should end on the morrow, though of this the marchers were as yet unaware. At four in the morning it was resumed, and the moving mass of heroic men swung forward into their stride, covering the ground at a splendid pace, and, laden as they were, without waggons and without food, they

### *Heroes of the Hour*

travelled the distance between Greylingstad and Balfour, 13 miles, in  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours. Upon reaching the latter place, without any police escort, just before 9 a.m., it became evident that the last stage had been reached, for three special trains were drawn up at the station to take back the strikers to Natal. Mr. Polak was approached by the Police Officer in charge of the arrangements, and by Mr. Chamney, to co-operate with them in effecting the arrest of the "army," and upon receiving their assurance that the men were really to be sent to Natal, where criminal proceedings were awaiting them, he replied that he would gladly do so as the whole object of the march had thus been fulfilled, and his own responsibility ceased. At the same time, he offered himself for arrest also, but he was informed that the Government did not desire this. He, however, warned the officials that, in Mr. Gandhi's enforced absence, it might be difficult for him to induce compliance with their desire, as but few of the men had ever seen him before. Mr. Gandhi, however, was passing through from Heideberg, en route for Dundee, where he was subsequently imprisoned, and sent a message urging the people quietly to surrender.



*Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

They were fed as rapidly as food could be supplied to them—a handful of rice and bread each—and then Mr. Chamney, having questioned them as to their proofs of rights of residence, proclaimed them prohibited immigrants. For the moment, chaos prevailed, as a number of stalwarts, who had set their hearts upon reaching Johannesburg, called upon the multitude to march forward, but, instantly realising the danger of this movement, which, whilst it would have resulted in bloodshed, would have swept aside the small band of twenty-five policemen in the twinkling of an eye, and let loose an uncontrolled body of men to roam over the Transvaal, who would not afterwards probably have been located, Mr. Polak, followed by Messrs. Cachalia and Bhyat, rushed to the head of the column and implored the people to remember that their object, as passive resisters, was not Johannesburg but gaol, and eventually peace was restored. Gradually, and in small groups, the men entrained, Mr. Polak accompanying the first train as far as Charlestown, where he was shortly afterwards arrested. Here, the strikers having been locked up without food or water for eight hours, the trains were not



## *Heroes of the Hour*

allowed to remain more than a couple of minutes, the platform being occupied by armed police, who kept back the women that had remained there and now urged their men-folk, with tears in their eyes and choking voices, not to mind them but to remain true to their duty. And slowly the trains steamed south, bearing nearly two thousand humble heroes to a bitter fate and a shameful experience, but firm in the knowledge that they had done what they had set out to do, and that the repeal of the hated tax was now certain. The great and impressive march was over.

The *Times* has since declared that it must live in memory as one of the most remarkable manifestations in history of the spirit of Passive Resistance. It had achieved all that its organisers, in their fondest dreams, had hoped for it. It had proclaimed, as nothing else could have done, the stubborn endurance, the dogged persistency, the grim tenacity, the stern determination, the magnificent self-sacrifice of the Passive Resisters. And it assured success. It was not a defeat, as the shallow critics had at the time proclaimed it. Had the strikers not exercised, under the guidance of trusted leaders, immense self-

control—there was no pillage, no disorder, no violence—all the forces that the Government had brought against them could not have prevented their swarming over the Transvaal. But it was the glorious ending of a peaceful demonstration of workers determined upon achieving freedom for themselves, their wives, their children. A splendid victory for Truth had been won. The honour of the Indian Motherland had been vindicated. Mr. Gokhale's word had been made good.

And the sign of this is to be found in the work of Messrs. Andrews and Pearson, the report of the Commission, its acceptance by the Government, the debates in Parliament, and the passing of Act 22 of 1914, repealing the £3 Tax for ever and granting freedom of residence in Natal to those who choose to remain unindentured. The real victory is that of the soul-force of the marchers, starving, weary, but buoyed up with unconquerable hope, over the brute-force of those who had declared their intention at all costs to maintain them in a condition of perpetual helotage."

Thus ended the great march. The majesty of the law was once more vindicated by the arrest, trial and imprisonment of

## *Heroes of the Hour*

thousands. Mr. Gandhi himself who, as the account quoted above mentions, had been arrested at Volksrust and released on bail was subsequently tried and sentenced to fifteen months. At the trial he delivered himself as follows:—

Addressing the Court at Volksrust, Mr. Gandhi said that he had given the Minister of the Interior due notice of his intention to cross the border with the prohibited immigrants, and had informed the Immigration Officer at Volksrust of the date of crossing. He assured the Court that the present movement had nothing whatever to do with the unlawful entry of a single Indian for the purpose of residence in the Transvaal. He might fairly claim that during his whole career in the Transvaal he had been actuated by a desire to assist the Government in preventing surreptitious entry and unlawful settlement, but he pleaded guilty to knowingly committing an offence against the Section under which he was charged. He was aware that his action was fraught with the greatest risks and intense personal suffering to his followers. He was convinced that nothing short of much suffering would move the conscience of the Governor, or

*Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

of the inhabitants of the Union, of which, in spite of this breach of the laws, he claimed to be a sane and law-abiding citizen.

The strike on the coal-mines had meanwhile spread to the sugar plantations in Natal. A savage attempt was made to suppress it and in the attempt some of the strikers were shot dead, and several injured.

The cup of suffering was now full to the brim. Resentment in India had reached white heat. The Government of India were alarmed at the situation. And Lord Hardinge then Viceroy of India, in his famous speech at Madras, placed himself at the head of Indian public opinion and asked for the appointment of a commission to institute a searching enquiry into the whole matter. The Imperial Authorities also bestirred themselves as they had never done before. And the authors of the policy which had led to such incalculable misery and bitterness now for the first time showed likewise unmistakable signs of relenting by acceding to the demand for the commission of enquiry. But when it was actually constituted with Sir William Solomon as President, its composition rendered it so dubious that the Indian leaders resolved to

### *Heroes of the Hour*

ignore it altogether. It was at this crisis of affairs that the well-known missionary gentlemen, the Rev. Messrs. Andrews and Pearson, true children of the Man of Sorrows paid a visit to South Africa and by their persistent endeavours in influential circles were able to diffuse a healing spirit. All is well that ends well. The findings of the Solomon commission were favourable to the Indian community on all points referred to it for report. Its recommendations were endorsed without reservation by the Union Government and given effect to by the subsequent passing of the Indians' Relief Act. This gave satisfaction to the Indian Community and Mr. Gandhi formally announced the closing of the struggle.

It will be interesting at this stage to take stock of the results achieved by the concentrated suffering of eight long years. But we shall miss its significance if we do not grasp clearly at the outset that the battle was from first to last a moral and spiritual one, and was waged not for the compassing of material ends but for the vindication of manhood. And from this point of view it surely realised its purpose in a measure that the great protagonists of the movement themselves could not

*Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

at first have dreamed of. The struggle was the means, the struggle was the end. To those who have known the intensity of aspiration and elevation of character that made the fight possible the talk of material results must ever seem a pitiful meanness. Such have received the initiation of the highest self-knowledge. They have been face to face with that mood of the soul which sights nothing but endless horizons of spiritual endeavour and achievement. They have known that the life of the ordinary selfish man is not the real life but that deep within everyone high or low sleeps a heaven into which some day we shall all awake.

Furthermore they have created for their children and their children's children the priceless memory of a heroic past. And down to the remotest generations will linger the pride of how the forefathers braved the fury of the persecutor and staked their all for nothing but their own honour. Nay shall not the motherland herself treasure for ever the story of the deeds of the humblest of her children in a far away land as it has treasured the legend of Rama and Sita, or that of the Pandava brothers? Will not humanity itself the world



## *Heroes of the Hour*

over feel a quickened sense of its own divinity as it peruses the same golden record? Has not another chapter been added to the world's Acts of the Apostles?

Let us now reckon the tale of the martyrs to whom it was given to give their lives to the cause. There was that young girl, Valiamma of whom Mr. Gandhi has said: "Simple-minded in faith she had not the knowledge that he had, she did not know what passive resistance was, she did not know what it was the community would gain, but she was simply taken up with unbounded enthusiasm for her people—went to gaol, came out of it a wreck, and within a few days died." There were the two youths from the Tamil land, Nagappan and Narayanaswamy—the former died shortly after his release from prison, and the latter at Delgoa Bay after having vainly attempted to land in South Africa as already told. And lastly there was the old man Harbatsingh, a Hindustani stalwart who went to gaol as a passive resister when he was seventy-five; and who when questioned by Mr. Gandhi why he had come, had answered. "What does it matter? I know what you are fighting for. You have not to pay the £3 tax

*Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

but my fellow ex-indentured Indians have to pay that tax, and what more glorious death could I meet?" And he met his death in the gaol at Durban.

Coming lower down the scale, the feeling of contempt for the 'coloured man' which had so long possessed the white settlers has yielded place to one of respect and admiration. The instinct of race-superiority has been knocked out of at least the better mind of the Union. The principle of differentiation on racial grounds has disappeared. The livery of manhood shines in place of the badge of servitude. Unfading lustre has been reflected upon the name of the mother-country, and an invaluable contribution made to the life of Indian Nationalism.

And last but not least, the struggle has removed the mask from the small emaciated figure known to the world as Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, and set him before the world in his true lineaments—a moral giant, a spiritual hero, and a peerless soldier of God.

The material fruits of the struggle were in themselves by no means inconsiderable. The hated law which started the whole trouble was repealed. The £3 tax has been abolished.

## *Heroes of the Hour*

The recognition of Indian marriages has been secured. The system of indentured immigration has been put an end to. And most important of all, the passing of further laws intended to drive out the Indians from South Africa, which would certainly have followed, was nipped in the bud. But of none of these gains could it be said that it was wholly material.

There are still great disabilities under which the Indian resident of the Union has to labour. These we shall enumerate in the words of Mr. Gandhi himself: "There was still the gold law which had many a sting in it. There was still the Licensing laws throughout the Union which also contained many a sting. There was still a matter which the colonial-born Indians could not understand or appreciate, namely, the water-tight compartments in which they had to live; whilst there was free inter-communication and inter-migration between the provinces for the Europeans, Indians had to be cooped up in their respective provinces. Then there was undue restraint on their trading activity. There was the prohibition as to their holding landed property in the Transvaal which was

degrading and all these things took Indians into all sorts of undesirable channels." Further the Indians have yet to be admitted to the political franchise. The sympathy which takes an equal interest in all classes of the ruled is still far distant. And lastly the practical stoppage of immigration from India has deprived the South African Indians of that opportunity of living intercourse with the mother country which he cannot but value so highly. These and like wrongs will have to be set right in the future, God grant without the necessity of similar struggles!

The sense of triumph and rejoicing which marked the closing of the memorable struggle was mingled by the sadness of the thought that the great central figure, the genius and inspirer of the whole movement, the redeemer and Avatar of the Indian community in South Africa was soon to depart to the motherland for ever. Heightened a thousandfold was the pathos of farewell which in this case is best left to the imagination. His mission accomplished, the conquering hero returned to his native land in the faith, as he has said, that "it is in India that the nearest approach to perfection is most possible."

## *Heroes of the Hour*

The welcome accorded to Mr. Gandhi on his return home, was characterised by all the warmth, affection, and delicate reverence which India alone of all lands knows to offer to the great of soul. Since his return to this country he has been mainly devoting himself to a personal study and comprehension of the problems with which a great and ancient civilisation in process of transition to a new order necessarily teems. For this purpose, he has been going about from place to place, making the acquaintance of people of all grades and conditions, and coming into contact with the leaders of thought and activity. A man's character is written in his slightest acts and when during the early days of his arrival in this country, he was seen alighting from a third class compartment, at Howrah station, while the elite of Calcutta, assembled on the platform, were making a search for him in the first and second-class compartments, almost a sensation was caused. This was no vanity of humility on his part but proceeded from the firm resolve not to stain himself by any luxury which is not accessible to the poorest in the land. It was simply that passionate determination to one himself with the sorrows of

*Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

the lowest and meanest of which his daily life is so eloquent an expression. And recently, he has become the fiery champion of the woes of the third-class passenger! In his eyes there is no wrong so trivial as to be unworthy of his earnest attention and striving. Such is the spirit that he has brought to the task of nation-making in this land.

There was again that incident at the opening of the Hindu University, when the platform was crowded with Rajahs and Maharajahs, and Mr. Gandhi made a speech at which several people left the meeting construing his words to be disloyal. It was sheer misunderstanding, as it afterwards turned out, of the spirit of a man whose whole life is a consuming effort to throw out of himself the very seed of hatred and every slightest motion of mind or heart which could have the shadow of any reaction of evil.

The Champaran incident is still fresh in the mind of the public and requires no elaboration. He had gone there on invitation to undertake an enquiry as to the conditions of the labourers in the Indigo plantations and the treatment meted out to them by their



### *Heroes of the Hour*

employers. The District Magistrate of Champaran took it into his head that his presence was a serious danger to the district and would lead to a breach of the peace. And he had an order served upon Mr. Gandhi to the effect that the latter was to leave the district by the 'next available train.' Mr. Gandhi replied that he had come there out of a sense of duty and would stay and submit to the penalty of disobedience. At the trial that followed he simply pleaded guilty, and made a statement that he was faced by a conflict of duty, the duty of obeying the law and the duty of enquiry upon which he had come, and that under the circumstances he could only throw the responsibility of removing him on the administration. The Magistrate postponed judgment till some hours later in the day, and at the interview with the District Magistrate the same day he undertook not to go out to the village till instructions were received from the provincial administration. The case was adjourned to some days later, and the higher authorities subsequently issued instructions not to proceed with the prosecution. Some of the planters took the occasion to make a rabid attack upon Mr. Gandhi, but the recently

## Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

published report of the Champaran commission of enquiry which was the immediate result of his visit has amply justified him.

The idea of a monster petition to the authorities from the people is not new in the modern political history of India. But when Mr. Gandhi revived the suggestion in connection with the Congress-Moslem-League scheme of reform, the moment was most opportune and the idea caught like magic. He himself undertook the propaganda in his own province of Gujarat and carried it out with characteristic thoroughness. The true patriot can never be idle, neither can he ever rest on his oars.

But far the most pregnant act of his in India has been the establishment of the *Satyagrahasrama*. As its name signifies, it stands for truth, truth as the highest consideration of all, truth in thought, word and deed. Its members have likewise to take the vow of celibacy, the vow of control of the palate, the vow of non-thieving, the vow of Swadeshi, the vow of fearlessness, and the vow of redeeming the untouchables in India. That education should be imparted through the vernaculars is also one of its cardinal principles. The Ashrama is thus the nucleus of a great new

## *Heroes of the Hour*

order for the perfecting of the individual and the uplifting of the nation.

It is as the embodiment of *Satyagraha*, as a veritable lamp burning upon the altar, that Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi stands to-day before his countrymen. Truth-force or love-force, as he himself has translated the term into English, is to him the greatest of all powers. In proportion as individuals and nations alike fulfil the law of this power and fit themselves into it they live and grow : the rest is death. The delicacy of insight and vision, the force of character, and all the virtues which have thrown a mantle of splendour over his name are but the fruit of this central realisation carried into action. It would be vain to speculate as to what he would have become had his life been cast in other places than South Africa. God sends his chosen servants to do the work appointed for them. It is ours to recognize them.



TILAK MAHARAJ

## TILAK MAHARAJ

INDIAN leaders we have many. Every one of them has a place and a province where he receives the maximum homage. There are some who are for special reasons enshrined in the hearts of certain sections of the people. There are others still who are actually idolised. It may be said without fear of contradiction that if there is one leader to-day whom all India loves with pride, that leader is Balwant Rau Gangadhar Tilak. Maharshi Gandhi certainly steals our hearts as powerfully, but his is a unique life far and away from the ordinary world. He is the calm, cool simple yet unreachable mount Kailas. Mr. Tilak is the nearer, the more readily reachable Varanasi combining in itself the holiness of a shrine and the attraction of a city. The feeling that we extend to Mr. Gandhi is a feeling of reverence and

## *Heroes of the Hour*

that which we extend to Mr. Tilak is one of love and esteem. The one is Maharaj, the other is Maharshi. The very address that we use is an indication of our attitude towards each. The ordinary human mind no doubt worships the ideal, and the God-Head in great and awful reverence, but it can grow practically enthusiastic only over what is nearer, what is closer to its own image, what is, as a matter of fact, a more perfect and powerful identity of its own self. This peculiar trait in human nature is at the bottom of all hero-worship and all such heroes as appear to mankind to be made of the stuff of which it has experience do stand on a footing of closer relationship than others. It is the privilege of only a few souls to be in essence the greatness that ordinary humanity is not and yet at the same time appear to be made of the stuff of which it has full experience. That one of such exceptional souls is Mr. Tilak goes without saying. He is a man of the world, still he is a man beyond and above the world. He is the type of the Indian Hindu contemplated by the particularly Indian institution of Ashramas. Our method of Sikshana never tolerates what is either abnormal or subnormal.



## *Tilak Maharaj*

It emphatically lays down, as a beautiful sloka in Raghuvamsa puts it, that man is made to enjoy the good things of the world in proper time. Only our Gurus tell us we should never be slaves unto our desires. Mr. Tilak in all the life that he has led has truly exemplified the truth and significance of our ancient wisdom. Though simple in habits and simpler in appearance, he has never advocated abnormal renunciation either by word of mouth or by action in life. He has most undauntedly stood all privation and suffering when such conduct became necessary for the sake of the land and the cause he loved. Beyond and above this fine Indian Hindu character of worldliness and unworldliness, he has exhibited a strength of consistency not much rivalled by any great leader of mankind. He has therefore become the man that is nearest the heart of every feeling Indian and the brother—the elder brother—of all patriotic souls born in this land of Bharatavarsha. To study his life is to study that which is a beacon-light in the path of all Grihastas willing to lead the life ordained for them in the history of this great land in this eventful *Yuga*.

## *Heroes of the Hour*

To picture| unto one's own mind Mr. Tilak without once at least seeing him with the physical eye is to attempt to realise only half the truth. He is short in stature and thin in build to-day. Both these characteristics indicate and are most often associated with great nimbleness. Look at him as he enters an informal company of friends and you will feel that some very near relation of the group is getting into its midst to give it life and liveliness. You may have around men seven feet high and twenty stone in weight but your impression would be the same. The moment you are face to face with Mr. Tilak your impression grows stronger. At close range as at a distance his beaming eyes pour forth their abundant effulgence on you. His countenance is certainly always serious but it never looks as though there were peevishness or sullenness anywhere lurking. Nor does ever fear raise its muscular contortions. His forehead is spacious and it becomes that which hides behind a brain conspicuously capacious. It is only those who had the advantage of watching Mr. Tilak stand supremely cool and motionless on the congress platform at Surat amidst a sea of turmoil that can recognise the courageous

## *Tilak Maharaj*

beauty of that Lion of Indian's face. Mr. Tilak's voice is no less attractive. His accents have a clear ring. His sentences are always simple and his ideas directly expressed. There is no vehemence in his utterance. There is a pleasing reasonableness about his manner. In conversation, in public-speaking this is the keynote of Mr. Tilak's achievement.

Mr. Tilak is not given to parading his knowledge of English. He is as great a scholar in that language as any born in this country but he is one of those rare sons of India who early recognised that our salvation lies only through the vernaculars of the land. Most of his speeches have been delivered in Maharatti and almost the whole of his career has been that of a Maharatti journalist. We do want English. No advocate of Vernaculars has ever disputed its place as a common medium for the Britisher and the Indian, and as a common world language bringing to our doors the developing culture of the world. Mr. Tilak by his work as a professor of the Fergusson College, by his literary contributions to the English language and by his occasional English endeavour for the education of his fellow countrymen has certainly proved his desire to honor English

## *Heroes of the Hour*

and be honored by its use. But what he has constantly refused to do in precept as well as in practice is to attach an undue importance to the English language as a medium of national education—political or otherwise. The English educated elite of our brethren do no doubt feel that the vernaculars should be given a place—an important place, nay sometimes, a predominant place. But yet the Moha of the English language and English surroundings has not quitted. Even to-day, the day of Home Rule talk and Home Rule Agitation, you will find English and English educated and English-mouthed leaders exalted over the vernaculars and its votaries. If the latter escape without insult and injury from the elite they have to consider themselves fortunate. If they get a word of sympathy and a nod of approval they have to feel honored by demi-Gods. If they get a few rupees or a few notes worth of practical help they must bow and feel they have had their soul's Mukti. In the absence of Home Rule *i.e.*, the rule of the people by the people—not the rule of any Beauracracy Brahmin or Non-Brahmin, European or non-European, religious or non-religious; in the absence of that enlightenment which the populace gets by the

exercise and practice of political right which is the privilege of every well-born and well-bred human individual; in the absence of an effective consciousness in the popular mind that its own self is the master and all the so-called leaders and the so-called officials are its servants, it is no wonder that as in administration so in public life the magic wand of an unfamiliar, mysterious language has had its influence. If to-day that influence is not bereft of its predominance, sometimes even in matters religious, it is easy enough to estimate what its influence must have meant to the life-work of Mr. Tilak these thirty seven years. Wedding himself to the service more of the real people than of people as represented by the half and quarter English-educated classes he surely could not expect much understanding or substantial help from the latter. What he lost in the way of sympathy from a few educated gentlemen of easy disposition he amply made good by the staunch adherence of masses of India's sons who have gradually awakened to the greatness of the brother that has through a life of struggle and suffering stood by them and worked for their well-being. Led by the masses the classes have begun to



## *Heroes of the Hour*

rally to his banner and forget their own ancient forgetfulness of duty. The process has just begun and it is yet to spread and complete. It therefore seems opportune that the world should be better acquainted with the life history of that great soul known to the world under the name of Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

Mr. Tilak's ancestry has in itself the seeds of his personal greatness. His fore-fathers distinguished themselves in the History of Maharashtra. From them he has inherited that attachment to the land of his birth which is at the bottom of all his enthusiasm for work. Mr. Tilak's father Gangadhar Ramachandra Tilak was in himself a great scholar and a great educationist. He was first an assistant teacher at Ratnagiri and later rose to the position of a Deputy-Inspector. While he was at Ratnagiri Mr. Tilak was born on the 23rd of July 1856. Young Balwant Rau must have been early influenced by his father and he must have taken after him in the matter of mathematical capacity and the burning desire to teach what he knew to the world. While yet the young lad was dreaming the happy dreams of boyhood Mr. Gangadhar Ramachandra Tilak left him to



## *Tilak Maharaj*

struggle alone in the world and departed to the next in 1872. To Mr. Balwant Rau who was yet in his sixteenth year the bereavement must have been really unbearable. Yet Providence works in mysterious ways. Young Balwant Rau pursued his course of studies and by the time he was twenty he had graduated with honors from the Deccan College. Though there was in Mr. Tilak's nature, hidden far away from the gaze of the moment, the necessary trait to bring him to the profession—to that Godly profession—of teaching he yet followed the usual course all Indians of University Education were and are following and entered the Law College to take the degree of LL.B. He passed out of that College in 1879. The Higher Power that guides the destinies of mankind is so shrewd that in spite of all the wonderfully mistaken ways of man it sets the circumstances of the world to its own tune and through the very mistakes of mankind fulfils its own purpose—the purpose of shaping the progress of humanity. Just about the time young Balwant Rau was passing through the Law College he came into contact with one of those few young spirits who made modern Maharashtra.

## *Heroes of the Hour*

Mr. Agarkar felt in unison with Mr. Balwant Rau Gangadhar Tilak and their brains sped in all directions to serve the motherland. Under the conditions of ignorance prevailing in our country—thicker in 1880 than to-day—the first idea that catches the imagination of all patriotic dispositions is that of doing something to chase away the darkness from around us. This idea has a special fascination naturally to the hearts which are themselves searching after the light of knowledge. Many an young man, many a band of young men must have felt enamoured of the thought that he or they shall be the instrument of spreading cheaper, freer, sounder education in a country like ours where all education has long been cramped, long been denied to all except the few who can command enormous amounts to spend at schools and colleges. But all those that dream dreams cannot realise them. It was given however to Mr. Agarkar and Mr. Balwant Rau Tilak to achieve their object through toil and turmoil. With the determination to succeed, Messrs. Agarkar and Tilak pledged themselves to absolute independence of Government service and started on the path of establishing an institution wherein

## *Tilak Maharaj*

Education should be cheap and effective. Two raw young men just out of college attempting to do such an impossible feat of establishing a cheap national college was reason enough to elders to look upon these as idealists and fanatics. However a third enthusiast was later found to join the two young men who had burning notions of service. That third was no other than the famous Maharatti prose writer Mr. Vishnu Krishna Chiplunkur. When the ball begins to roll the players gather by instinct. So when three could be found to espouse the ideal of cheap education there were others more who could help them on the journey. Messrs. M. B. Namjoshi and V. S. Apte joined forces with the trio above named and thus by the end of 1880 the Poona New English School, ushered into existence on the 2nd of January that year, was in full swing with five enthusiastic masters to steer it to safe haven.

The thirst for educative work when once it begins does not easily subside. Large schemes and methods suggest themselves to thinking minds and one of such is the good work that may be easily done through the publication of leaflets, pamphlets and journals.

### *Heroes of the Hour*

Agarkar — Tilak — Chiplunkar Brotherhood found ample energy awaiting in themselves for more useful work and so decided to start two papers—one in English and one in Maharatti. The English paper they started was the *Maharatta*. It was but right that they intended to indicate national—rather sub-national—consciousness even in the name of the journal they were starting. The Maharatti paper they established was the *Kesari* probably foretelling even then that that would be the paper which would bring home to the Indian mind that we are lions when we realise it, not sheep as we have been habitually taught to think of ourselves.

Even from the earliest period of his journalistic career Mr. Tilak the hero of this life-sketch has had to undergo persecutions and prosecutions. Really the story of Mr. Tilak is the story of his prosecutions. His is the life consecrated to suffer penalties imposed by a law made and interpreted by a close Bureaucracy ; so that, others may have the advantage of the exposition of the principles on which that law is founded—nay more—of the gradual broadening of those very principles in response to the growing abhorrence of humanity in this.

country towards a managed and arbitrary system of legislation. Mr. Tilak's first experience of law's tyranny came to him in company with his friends and co-workers Agarkar and Chiplunkur. A little while after they started the *Maharatta* and the *Kesari* they had to take up cudgels against the Kharbari of the state of Kolhapur. As Maharattas still holding dear in memory the greatness of the house of Shivaji they could not reconcile themselves to the treatment accorded to H. H. Shivaji Rau the Maharaja. It is the duty of every honest journalist to expose most fearlessly the vagaries of any official whatsoever who oppresses in the name of the authority he possesses the people left in his charge. It is no wonder that Maharatta young men with still the light of greatness of their race burning in them took most seriously to heart the indignities heaped on a prince who in different circumstances might have been the peer of all the Majesties of the world. As a consequence of the intrepid courage of the trio conducting the *Maharatta* and the *Kesari*, they were brought before a court of law on a charge of defamation. While the trial was proceeding Mr. Chiplunkur died and Mr. Tilak and Agarkar were left to keep



## *Heroes of the Hour*

each other company in jail. They were sentenced to simple imprisonment for four months. Looking back upon the history of India these thirty seven years, one feels that after all the first incarceration of Mr. Tilak for four months was a blessing in disguise to the whole country. In the case of ordinary men that do not question or inquire, short term and easy-conditioned imprisonment may be itself a real set-back. They may sit idle in their cells brooding over the calamity that has befallen them and imagining to themselves how worse their condition might have been if they had longer to serve and more rigorous lives to live. To one who is conscious of his sin and who is oppressed by the weight of his own evil-doing this brooding and this ennui may be more real still and his whole nature may thereafter be bent to attempting to desist from the course of his past. It may even be stated without fear of exaggeration that if real reformation is meant, short-termed, easy-conditioned punishment should be the rule. If fear of punishment is a corrective, the fear should be kept up, not obliterated by the imposition of actual experience. This whole theory of punishment, however, is inoperative in the case of real,



### *Tilak Maharaj*

thinking, honest patriots. There are some even amongst these who call themselves patriots and saviours of the world, who under restraint feel that they have to fret, fume and waste and thus proclaim their own selves as very great sufferers. Such a frame of mind is not consistent with either strength or the future development of the individual or the cause. It is endurance in the dungeon-depths, calmness in the midst of dark enveloping confinement that feeds the stream of patriotic enthusiasm and forges the power that ultimately shakes the tyrant and his tyranny. Therefore, when conditions are easier, when the imprisonment is simple, the true patriot finds his duty in studying the world around him—the world of prison and its denizens and sympathising with the common felon and the common criminal with whom his association lies, learn to appreciate the meaning of the lowly life of the lowliest brother. To one who thus contemplates in love the great secret of existence and the utter meaninglessness of the so-called privileges of social life, all obstructions, all difficulties, all dangers become mere chaff and straw as against the solid well-being of humanity. That Mr. Tilak's first imprisonment gave him this opportunity is proved by

## *Heroes of the Hour*

the splendid results of his life. On return from jail Mr. Tilak joined Mr. Namjoshi as usual and carried on the work they had set for themselves. The Poona new English School by its very success aroused hopes of a greater and greater expansion. The patriotic comrades at its helm decided that it should grow into a college. They therefore started and founded in 1884 the Deccan Education Society. The staff of teachers ready to serve the motherland on a mere pittance was strengthened by the addition of Professors V. G. Kelkar, Dharap and M. S. Gole. Consequently in 1885 the Deccan Education Society brought into existence under its own management that institution which to-day is the pride of Maharashtra—the famous Fergusson College. Mr. Tilak took upon himself the duty of teaching Mathematics, Science and Sanskrit. As Professor of these three subjects he proved himself a veritable, versatile genius. With his example of independence and industry, students must have felt themselves in a real haven of knowledge and culture. Mr. Tilak, however, did not continue long as Professor. He worked for five years with all his might and then differences of opinion arose as to certain

## *Tilak Maharaj*

matters relating to the duties and conduct of the teachers of the College. No father ever desires to serve his child ill. If it becomes impossible for him to keep the child under his protection he would rather see it well under some other roof than insist upon his own right and spoil its prospects. Just the same relation holds good in the case of children other than those made of flesh and blood. Mr. Tilak though he might have felt that he was perfectly right in his own conviction that the life-members of the College should confine their attention to their work as teachers and not distract it by other activities, yet resigned connection with the institution and permitted it to grow independently of himself. After-events have certainly shown that he did well. The Fergusson College has become a force in the land, its Professors standing out as the exponents, of a new Social and Economic thought. Mr. Tilak himself has had the advantage of being free to do much other work in politics and achieve the leadership of India by the most constant sacrifice any one person is ever privileged to exhibit. Mr. Tilak has always aimed at carrying the people with him, and has ever stood against

## *Heroes of the Hour*

the interference of others and outsiders in matters relating purely to the Hindu Society. He therefore has had to maintain a different angle of vision altogether from the more ardent spirits the extremists among whom, dazzled by the absolute theoretical social justice taught in English schools and oblivious to the very many differentiations made by and existing under a system of alien Bureaucracy, have maintained and sometimes still maintain that the oppression of the weak, the lowly born, the lowly placed, is a special sin of this glorious land of Bharata Varsha and that we cannot and ought not to claim emancipation from dependence on autocracy on that account. Mr. Agarkar did not belong surely to this extremist school, but he did feel that more and better social justice should be practised in this land for its improvement. So Mr. Tilak and Mr. Agarkar as they developed each in his own line could not agree on matters religious as well as social. In 1888 Mr. Agarkar gave up his connection with the *Kesari* and later both the *Kesari* and the *Maharatta* came to be owned once more by a trio Messrs. Tilak, Kelkar and H. N. Gokhale. The trio did not achieve much. There were yet a further

change and a further change and Mr. Tilak became both the Editor and Proprietor of the two journals. That these journals have had very great influence in moulding the life of Maharashtra in particular and India in general goes without saying. No other vernacular paper has had the circulation of the *Kesari*. When unhampered by the restrictions placed upon its circulation by certain Native princes of India it is understood to have circulated to the extent of well near thirty thousand. The prestige that the *Maharatta* maintains even to this day under a different but equally competent Editor bespeaks the care bestowed upon it by Mr. Tilak. It is probably the foremost independent paper in our country. A little after Mr. Tilak became the sole Editor of the *Kesari* and the *Maharatta* the controversy over the Age of Consent Bill arose. The fight was bitter and a great deal of recrimination was indulged in by the Social Reformers against the Orthodox and by the Orthodox against the Social Reformers. Though one's heart always yearns to support, the more radical, the more progressive section yet one has no right to forget that the more



## *Heroes of the Hour*

conservative have their own honest ways of thinking. Mr. Tilak sticking peculiarly to his idea of non-interference by outsiders in matters of development purely Indian—and this phase of thought it is that has very materially contributed to the emphasis he always lays upon self-help in all progress we have yet to make—threw the weight of his opinion and personality on the side of the Orthodox. With Mr. Tilak going over to the conservative two clearly cut parties sprang into existence in Poona. Patience cannot always be expected of men filled with new-born enthusiasm. And so the radical Reformer could not excuse Mr. Tilak of the abysmal fall he had suffered by pandering to the tastes of the populace. So abuse after abuse was heaped upon the head of the devoted Champion of the cause of the Orthodox. That such periods occur in the lives of great men proves neither their incapacity nor the ingratitude of the mass of mankind. It proves on the other hand that when great men are thrown up and great causes have to be worked, there is so much ferment let loose by an ordaining hand that leavens the world and creates a clearer and a better vision. Nor are the great really



exercised over the frothy appearance of such a necessary ferment.

In addition to carrying on his other duties and conducting a law-class, about this time Mr. Tilak was utilising to the fullest his profound knowledge of Sanskrit and Mathematics to search out certain Astronomical references in the Vedas and prove from these their hoary age. As his original genius unfurled its banner and began to make conquests in the unknown realms of the long, long past, his name was well-recognised as that of a solid and independent scholar of Antiquity. He contributed papers to the International Congress of Orientals held in London during the year 1892, published subsequently under the name of 'The Orion' or 'Researches into the Antiquity of the Vedas.' They received the approbation of European scholars like MaxMuller, Whitney and Weber. Consequent upon this fame to scholarship, Mr. Tilak was obliged to carry on detailed discussions with some of these Professors. One of them Dr. Whitney ultimately recognised the merit of this native oriental scholar and gave him deservedly the highest praise in the Journal of the American

### *Heroes of the Hour*

Oriental Society. Mr. Tilak's Control of Vedic literature drew from another scholar Dr. Bloomfield of John Hopkin's University an admiration which could describe Mr. Tilak only as a Lion in learning and no less.

In dealing with the subject of the age of the Vedas in such detail Mr. Tilak's purpose cannot be considered to be one of merely satisfying his own antiquarian curiosity. Though India could claim according to traditions a civilisation of long *Yugas* covering periods of thousands of years before Christ, scholars of Indian Chronology were wont to express doubts as to such great age of Indian institutions. If real data could be found on which the fact of the hoary age of Indian civilisation could be established, they would certainly serve two causes at the same time—the cause of human knowledge and the cause of India's self-realisation. The latter, to Mr. Tilak's mind, must have been the more appealing at the time. Whatever his immediate motives were or were not, the fact stands out clearly that he ably attempted to prove that the hymns of the Rig-veda were composed prior to 4000 B.C.

The same care that Mr. Tilak bestowed

## *Tilak Maharaj*

upon maintaining the honor of his beloved motherland was equally bestowed on maintaining the honor of all those whom he knew and loved. An incident happened about this time which clearly shows this peculiar trait of Mr. Tilak's personal character. Rao Sabeb Bapat was an officer of the Settlement Department of the Baroda state. He was also Mr. Tilak's nearest friend. A number of charges of corruption was brought against him and he had to stand accused before a court of law. Mr. Tilak knew that his friend was in danger for no fault of his and so threw himself heart and soul into the defence of Mr. Bapat. Mr. Tilak the lawyer was fully utilised for relieving the distress of one near and dear and people were led to conjecture how great a luminary he might have been if he continued practising at the bar. No conjectures seem to be necessary now. The defence that he conducted for himself in the *Kesari* prosecution of 1908 struck the world dumb with admiration for his powers of argument and grasp of legal situations. Mr. Tilak might certainly have become a great lawyer, a greater judge and probably the greatest administrator and counsellor of Government.

## *Heroes of the Hour*

under freer conditions. That he did not become an *apke vaste* judge or an *apke vaste* councillor—and that has been the fate of Indian judges and Indian Councillors with very rare and noble exceptions—none need feel that the country has been the poorer for it. It is probably Mr. Tilak's renunciation of the legal walk of life that has made him the greatest advocate that he is of the dumb millions of Bharatavarsha.

Incident by incident brought Mr. Tilak gradually into the fore-front and he was called upon to fill positions which to him meant mere fields of so much more experience and to others meant and, mean even to-day, the be-all and end-all of existence. He was elected Secretary of the Deccan Standing Committee of the Congress and he held that office for a number of years. The first five Sessions of the Bombay Provincial Conference were his handiwork. He was twice elected to the Bombay Legislative Council and there did his duty undaunted by official or unofficial frowns. He enjoyed the privilege, so far as it is a privilege, of being returned a Fellow of the University of Bombay. He was also made one of the city fathers of Poona by the largest vote of the people

### *Tilak Maharaj*

in 1895. As in the capacity of a legislative councillor so in the capacities of a Fellow and a Municipal Councillor Mr. Tilak followed out his usual method of thorough endeavour. It would be well to note here that none of these great qualifications of Mr. Tilak—qualifications which in the case of others would be trotted out every minute as huge claims to consideration and respect—do not require advertisement since his life has been consecrated to a higher purpose and a nobler aspiration. It is time we turn our attention to the story of his first connection with *the political* movement of the country—the Congress.

Secretary of the Deccan Standing Committee as Mr. Tilak was, he was elected Secretary of the Poona Congress in 1895. It was the Eleventh Session of the Congress that had to sit. Differences had already arisen as to the propriety of lending the Congress *Pandal* for holding the Sessions of the Social Conference. Though no doubt the congress itself was started with the intention of helping the political as well as the social well-being of the country, it had early been recognised that in a land where the structural edifice of society was largely based on a kind of religious sentiment it would



### *Heroes of the Hour*

not be right to mix up political and social matters in any abrupt and officious manner. So the idea had grown stronger day by day that it was better to keep social and political matters apart in Indian development for a long time to come; and no amount of honest enthusiastic—nay fanatic—advocacy of the cause of Social Reform as not really very distinct from either religious or political reform can establish the theory that the Social Reformer at the time and out of the heat of the moment tried to establish—that Mr. Tilak acted as he did out of the ambition to win cheap notoriety and popular favour. To-day when in all fields of thought—political, social, and religious—we have advanced towards a vision of freedom and absolute freedom, it looks strange that a person of the stamp of Mr. Tilak should have made common cause with the illiberals who denied the use of a patriotic Pandal for purposes of free and honest discussion of matters vitally concerning the well-being of the peoples of the country. We have to bear in mind however two cardinal facts. In these early times Mr. Tilak foresaw what to-day is being very loudly preached by us Indians, and our friends the liberal Europeans, that political emancipation



through the Co-operative awakening of the masses was as important for the cause of Social Reform as the movement of Social Reform itself. He also felt bound to protest against the extravagances of the Social Reformer who, in his zeal for introducing what he considered modern civilization and the only civilization possible, proved more iconoclastic than constructive, and considered *that* right Reform which spoke ill of all that was past and ancient in the history of India. Surely to a patriotic mind which most properly believed that the future greatness of any nation could only be possible by the consciousness of its past glory and past achievement, this frenzy for things modern and things foreign must have tasted gall and wormwood. If under such circumstances Mr. Tilak showed the narrowness he did, it certainly did not arise out of any personal ambitions but out of a real conviction that he was taking the only possible course left to him under the imperfections of the moment. From later history we do know Mr. Tilak is not such a fanatic on behalf of Orthodoxy as he was attempted to be made out by his opponents. His endeavour has all along been to shape the present on the foundations of the past with the

## *Heroes of the Hour*

new bricks and the new mortar that the moment may yield. To harmonise the past and the present and to formulate the future on the basis of such harmony is certainly not a blunder, not a sin. In doing it, it is possible that Mr. Tilak on account of his strong nature made stronger still by keen opposition did lay at one time greater emphasis upon *national lines* of reform than was necessary. His practice however has proved him the opposite of a fanatic orthodox. He has educated his daughters and postponed their marriage till the Shastras, as at present understood by the orthodox, have been violated. He has definitely declared that caste-distinction was merely based on Division of Labour and does not signify superiority or inferiority by birth. He has also set at nought the authority of all accepted commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita and stood forth boldly as the champion of a new school of thought of action as against the old school of secluded contemplation. He is to-day thinking of crossing the seas to work for Mother India. In this wise Mr. Tilak has vindicated himself. It is therefore idle to be bemoaning the incident that occurred in 1895—his resignation of the Secretaryship of

## *Tilak Maharaj*

the Eleventh National Congress. He felt keenly on the particular issue, and probably believing that continuing as Secretary thereafter was not in keeping with a sense of self-respect, he resigned the position. Had he continued who knows if he might have not proceeded from one compromise to another and landed himself in a position where-from he could not rise and lead the Great new National thought which he did lead later and which to-day has become the thought of the country. Resigning as he did the Secretary's place Mr. Tilak did not cut himself away from the Congress. He remained with the Congress, spoke at the Congress more than once during the sessions held at Poona, carried on work on the lines of the Congress till the split at Surat appeared to part friends, only to reunite them later.

1896 was a year of famine ; and prices rose so high that people despaired of living. Men in Poona went about as elsewhere with the cry of high prices and scarce supply written large on their famished bodies and sorrow-struck faces. It was at this time that Mr. Tilak's humanity was drawn out to its fullest and his sympathy for fellow-men

## *Heroes of the Hour*

exhibited in its real proportions. He toiled hard, and incessantly poured into the ears of grain merchants streams of pathetic appeals. They were ultimately overpowered by his entreaties and then sprang up in Poona cheap grain shops which proved antidotes both to the severity of prices and the shortage of supplies. Nothing touches the chord of human affection more powerfully than friendship in times of necessity. A friend in need is a friend indeed. The whole population of Poona immediately felt grateful to the hand that was outstretched to relieve, and henceforth Mr. Tilak became practically the uncrowned king of the masses. Having attended to the wants of the people in his own place Mr. Tilak proceeded to work some relief to the famine-stricken population of Sholapur and other places. He had the intention of thoroughly co-operating with the officials and concerting measures of relief. But authority is always suspicious of men who may capture the hearts of the people. So any little cause that may show itself is enough to make it discredit the honest work of sincere friends of mankind. The same thing happened in the case of Mr. Tilak. As Mr. Tilak was trying to get to the official

## *Tilak Maharaj*

imagination and influence it to do something effectively, there was a little flutter in the dovecots of the bureaucracy on account of the criticisms passed by the Sarvajanaick Sabha. So Mr. Tilak was distrusted and all his pious intentions to work in harmony with the agents of the Government were frustrated.

Not merely did Mr. Tilak work during times of famine but he also rendered great services to the people during the first outbreak of plague at Poona. If he chose to run away from the danger of possible contagion he could have very easily and comfortably followed the example of other 'armed chair politicians. But his is a message of undaunted courage and incessant service. He stayed in Poona and helped in all possible ways the attempts the Government were making to stop the ravages of the fell disease. He organised a hospital and incessantly preached in his paper the absolute necessity of the people's co-operation with the Government. The agents of the British Government in this country have seen no greater critic than Mr. Tilak when they were in the wrong. Equally have they not seen a greater friend and co-operator in matters where they



## *Heroes of the Hour*

strove to serve the cause of the public consigned to their care. In spite of the rebuff Mr. Tilak received when he attempted to work for the amelioration of the famine stricken communities of Sholapur and other places, he did all he could during the prevalence of plague in Poona to assist the authorities. This itself must have been a sufficient eye-opener to the men in power as to the genuine character of Mr. Tilak's Patriotism and loyalty. But such eye-openers rarely operate on the parched up consciences of sun-dried bureaucrats.

The occasion soon arose for power to show itself against a patriot whose honest work on behalf of his brethren was making him gradually more powerful than itself. Having the stern stuff of the hero in him, Mr. Tilak felt, most unconsciously perhaps but none the less strongly and convincedly, that the only source of salvation for a land lay through the worship of its heroes. A hero is always a man of action and the two traits of heroism according to Carlyle, are earnestness and sincerity. Action sincere and honest is probably the highest virtue that any nation may cultivate; and that nation particularly which is in the throes of a decadent Yuga with a history of



past greatness and glory, has the highest need of it. So it happens that when any such nation awakens to its budding life out of a temporary decadence, its prophets always appeal to the gay vegetation, the gayer flowers and fruits which once adorned and beautified the very place on which the hand of time has had its effect. They point to the wonderful purposes of the Higher Power and in accents of ecstasy speak of the opening spring and its promise. This leads to the dawn of the consciousness that we have the power to realise ourselves and find self-expression incessantly in eternity and that what was in life yesterday can be reproduced to-day and what we achieve to-day may yet be achieved by another generation near or far in the future. This wonderful aspect of life it is that appeals to mankind in heroworship and it was left to Mr. Tilak to grasp the situation instinctively and introduce into Maharashtra the cult of hero-worship in the form of Sivaji celebration. What other name in history can appeal to the Maharatta more strongly than the name of Sivaji that great founder of the Maharatta Empire and greater embodiment of Maharatta genius? What more effective

### *Heroes of the Hour*

weapon could there be in the armoury of an emasculated nation than the memory of such a great one to chase away the oppressive consciousness of incapacity for real life? Though Mr. Tilak or his followers never for a moment dreamt that sinister meanings would be read into the celebration of a feast, which merely roused national consciousness, yet it was exactly that which happened. The authorities smelt sedition in a report of the proceedings that appeared in the *Kesari* and forthwith connected it in their own minds with an unfortunate incident which unhappily occurred about the same time. However much educated men like Mr. Tilak restrained people from thinking ill of the sanitary measures the Government was taking against the spread of plague, during times twenty years ago when ignorance was thicker in the country, men were not prepared to confide in what the English-educated said about sanitation and matters like that. It happened therefore that certain strict measures adopted, gave rise to a ferment in the superstitious mind of the populace and led ultimately to the murder of Mr. Rand and Ayerest. Even Sir Valentine Chirol admits to this extent, that Mr. Tilak could

not be *directly* connected with the murder and then proceeds audaciously to suggest that Mr. Tilak's writings did tend to cause not merely this single act but also all later acts of violence in the country. In support of his theory he adduces the statement of an accused person that read the reports of certain oppressive acts of the whites in the Kesari and other papers and decided to act as he did. If this is an argument for the audacity of Sir Valentine Chirol then he will have consistently to libel all papers which publish reports of the high-handed behaviour of individuals or even reports of legal proceedings where misbehaviour of the Superior Races has come into light in a court of law and has been judicially dealt with. No wonder that when men of Sir Valentine Chirol's type could be found even to-day there were lesser and more illiberal men still, in charge of administration in the nineties of the last century. Pressed by the panic pestilence had caused, the Government of Bombay launched a prosecution against Mr. Tilak. He was arrested in Bombay and as became lower Magistracy the Chief Presidency Magistrate of Poona refused him bail. At that stage even the High Court did not interfere. When how-

## *Heroes of the Hour*

ever bail was again applied for after the case was committed to the High Court Sessions Justice Tyabji granted bail founding his action upon an admirable recital of the Custom of the Criminal Courts in England. A Jury consisting of six Europeans and three Indians was empanelled and Mr. Tilak stood his trial before it. The sensation that Mr. Tilak's trial created at the time cannot be adequately described in words. The writer was then no older than fourteen and studying though he was in the third form in a far off mofussil station, he could not escape the vague knowledge and the vaguer excitement of the hour. Mr. Tilak's 1897 trial was but the second under the Press Law in India, the first being that of the Bangabasi long anterior. During the trial of Mr. Tilak's case a great deal of the discussion turned round the meaning of individual Vernacular words and his conviction was obtained by an appeal to the seditious nature of such words. To-day after the judgment of the learned judges who tried the latest of Mr. Tilak's cases a much needed legal dictum has been arrived at, that it is the effect of the whole speech or writing that must be taken into consideration not the meaning of

## *Tilak Maharaj*

any particular word or even passage. That the decision in Mr. Tilak's first trial did have a very baneful effect on honest journalism in India is manifest by the scores of later decisions in several cases which followed exactly the same lines as the judgment in Mr. Tilak's first trial. Mr. Tilak certainly suffered once again in 1908 and had to survive that suffering and the suffering of the later trial in 1916 to get a small Judicial Dictum established in the administration of the law of the country. Mr. Tilak was convicted of sedition by the six Europeans of the Jury that formed a majority therein and was sentenced to Eighteen months rigorous imprisonment. To-day it comes back to the mind as a romantic tale and one still hears the popular whispered talk 'Mr. Tilak it seems is reduced 4 lbs in weight, 8 lbs in weight, 10 lbs in weight. Is it possible that the Government could inflict on a patriot like this a suffering so disproportionate.' The sympathy for Mr. Tilak was very greatly enhanced at the time by the peculiar stubbornness with which a number of obstacles were placed in his way when on his behalf attempts were made to get a hearing of the full bench upon some points at issue



## *Heroes of the Hour*

and later to appeal to the Privy Council. Even the appearance of such a famous lawyer as Mr. Asquith at the bar of the Privy Council could not procure for Mr. Tilak a chance of justice. The last refuge of all who are punished for no fault of theirs is the throne and to the throne did the literary friends of Mr. Tilak like Professor Max Muller and Mr. William Hunter betake themselves on behalf of the Indian Scholar of the Vedas. Negotiations opened and Mr. Tilak was released on the understanding that he would keep to certain conditions. A great deal was made of these conditions later. It is therefore well to mention them in their proper place. Mr. Tilak was to avoid public demonstrations after release and if he committed the same offence he had to undergo in addition to the sentence that might be imposed on him for the fresher offence six months imprisonment that was excused at the first release. That the first stipulation was kept has not been disputed. The second stipulation does not mean much in so far as the whole issue has to rest on the view that certain people, set up as judges, take of particular acts done or said to have been done. By the latest



## *Tilak Maharaj*

decision in his favor, Mr. Tilak may very well claim that he never broke the stipulations he entered into, and claim also that even the imperfect law was more imperfectly administered so as to injure him and help his enemies.

Return from jail and a few months rest found Mr. Tilak fit again for public work. With his usual energy he threw himself again into Congress politics and travelled in 1898 so far South as Madras to attend the Congress that was being held there. He undertook a journey further South to Ceylon and got into better touch with the people of Southern India. The Sivaji celebration was once more an accomplished fact in 1900 and the inspiration Mr. Tilak gave at Raighad established it for ever as an annual festival. It came later on to be copied all over the country including the so-called benighted Madras.

Mr. Tilak was incessantly at work with his theory of the antiquity of the Vedas, working as he was very strenuously in the more mundane spheres of existence and this time he evolved not a statement merely based upon the Vedas and their astronomical significance but also on the undisputed facts of Geological Science worked out and stated by the most

## *Heroes of the Hour*

eminent scholars of the world. He called his work 'The Arctic Home of the Vedas.' In it Mr. Tilak located the original home of the ancestors of all civilised nations somewhere in the Arctic regions. To the modern mind which has long been accustomed to believe that the Aryans migrated to the several continents from either Mid-Asia or Mid-Europe this was a revelation and this seems yet to be a revelation. Mr. Tilak's conclusions have not been generally accepted and they have not had the superb fortune of that wonderful 'Theory of Black Hole of Calcutta' which vitiated and in certain cases still vitiates Indian history by obtruding into the realm of text-books. It may be hoped however that time will ere long arrive when the researches of the real native Vedic scholar will be accepted as deserving of greater attention than the researches of men whose knowledge of the things that were at the beginning is after all second-hand and thirdhand. One thing however may be taken as a sign that sooner or later Mr. Tilak's Arctic Home in the Vedas will have its influence in the making of historical theories. His methods of critical study have not been questioned. An eminent American scholar Dr. F. W. Warren

### *Tilak Maharaj*

Principal of the Boston University has characterised Mr. Tilak's methods as the outcome of absolute candour and respect for the strictest historical and scientific investigation.

For once in the life of Mr. Tilak he had to suffer the agonies that to a public man are the most excruciating. Imprisonment for sedition has no terrors—absolutely none—when compared to the anguish that an impeachment of private character brings with it, especially when such an impeachment arises out of circumstances into which the individual enters with high motives to render service as best as it lies in his power to do. When one has done one's duty and satisfied one's own conscience one has no need to feel worried over the littlenesses of others who, actuated very often by small selfish ends, sometimes by mere jealousy and malice, and sometimes by their own imperfect understanding, try to besmear the loftiest characters with mud and tar. Still caring, as every one does, for the opinion of the world, all that have to deal with the many-headed and the many-tongued public feel, under normal conditions, the insult wantonly offered by little tin-gods possessing, for the time-being,

### *Heroes of the Hour*

the varying ear and the queer heart of the scandal monger. The feeling is certainly keener when this attempt at defaming is made in courts of law and the individual is put to the trouble of expending energy, time and money in a thousand ways of waste. However, born in an imperfect world with small imperfections in our own nature which lend to evil-doers pegs on which to hang for a time their own theories of our wickedness, we have ever to stand erect in our honesty of purpose, and through good report and bad, fight the battle ultimately to reach the haven where the very Evil-doers and calumniators do stand trembling in their own evil-doing and sin. Mr. Tilak had a great friend known as Shri Baba Maharaja. That was a great aristocrat of Maharashtra, a first-class Sirdar of Poona. Mr. Tilak took always very great interest in the welfare of the family of Sri Baba Maharaja. So the latter had the greatest regard for a friend whose greatness as a man gave a higher title to respect than anything else others could claim. Shri Baba Maharaja died just a short time after Mr. Tilak's release. While on the death-bed he sent for Mr. Tilak and pressed him to accept the great responsibility, of executor-

### *Tilak Maharaj*

ship of the property. With the generous heart that Mr. Tilak possesses to satisfy the demands of personal friendship as well as to safe-guard the interests of those dear and near, he took upon himself the task of guiding the affairs of the Maharaja's family. The air that surrounds aristocratic families in general and Indian aristocratic families in particular, is, as is well-known, not very congenial for strictness and goodness to thrive. When the situation is complicated by the appearance of a young widow as the heir to the property, the position becomes certainly much worse. Mr. Tilak with the zeal of the puritan began cutting away the stinking rubbish that had accumulated. He decided to pay off the debts of the family and with that view shortened the allowance of the widow. He recommended the adoption of a boy as the most advisable step for the future well-being of the family's affairs. All this must have meant to the hangers on of the widow a death-blow. So they worked on the young susceptibilities of Tai Maharaj and gradually set her up against Mr. Tilak. The work of the evil-doers might have begun at the very beginning but it did not manifest itself till too late. Tai Maharaj went



### *Heroes of the Hour*

along with Mr. Tilak and others to Aurangabad and there took in adoption a boy belonging to another branch of the old family. This was really the most natural course to take for a Hindu woman of an aristocratic family to keep up the traditions of such a family. But somehow immediately Tai Maharaj had returned from Aurangabad, she found herself entirely in the hands of her evil-counsellors. They probably put into her head wonderful notions of her own importance. What it was that happened we cannot know. She instituted proceedings against Mr. Tilak and others in the court of the District Judge of Poona asking for a revocation of the probate of the will of her late husband. Mr. Tilak was not a favourite with the Heaven-born service. Mr. Aston the district judge took a very perverse view of the matter and not only did he invalidate the probate and revoke it, but also permitted floods of irrelevant evidence on points having no direct connection with the matter under consideration. He recorded, against all the protests of Mr. Tilak, much gossip as to the unlawful confinement of Tai Maharaj and the adoption at Aurangabad. This was done with the clear intention of damaging the



## *Tilak Maharaj*

personal reputation of Mr. Tilak and crushing him once for all as a trusted leader of the people. Mr. Aston the District Judge did not feel his purpose fulfilled by the mere record he made. He therefore proceeded against Mr. Tilak under the Criminal Procedure code and handed him over to the Poona Magistrate to be dealt with. The opportunity was attempted to be availed of to the fullest as a long list of criminal charges—seven in number—including Forgery, and Perjury was drawn up. In an appeal to the High Court against the judgment of Mr. Aston, Mr. Tilak and his comrades were successful in the matter of the rehabilitation of the probate but they failed to get the criminal proceedings against Mr. Tilak stopped. The Poona Magistrate found Mr. Tilak guilty, convicted him and sentenced him to eighteen months rigorous imprisonment. How the enemies of Mr. Tilak chuckled at the prospect of their plans so well succeeding, it is needless to think of. They however received an immediate potion of severe disappointment when the Sessions Judge Mr. Lucas reduced the sentence to six months and, more remarkable still, declared in his judgment that Mr. Tilak's character was absolutely untainted by any

### *Heroes of the Hour*

corrupt intentions. One step further and the High Court set at nought all the astute labor of that glorious judge Mr. Aston. They quashed the conviction completely and the prosecution had to withdraw all charges intended to be pressed. The High Court by the way pronounced on the question of the adoption and pronounced in its favour. Mr. Tilak could thereafter easily obtain a civil decree fully recognising the validity of the adoption.

The latest episode of this dramatic scene has now been played out. The Privy Council has delivered judgment and Mr. Tilak's innocence has been proved to the hilt. As in public life so in private life he has passed through the severest fire. Sanctified in it and emerging from it with a wreath of the finest laurel fresh and fragrant, he stands to-day victor over evil-tongues and black hearts, pointing unto the younger generations the path of thorns that, tread boldly and erectly, leads to the life of peace and progress.

Tai Maharaj and her counsellors gave full employment to Mr. Tilak and his energies for three years from 1901-1904. From 1905 onwards we find Mr. Tilak again on his usual war-path and it so happens, thanks to the

### *Tilak Maharaj*

Unseen Hand which worked through that great Lord Curzon, that that year marked the new era in Indian politics. The partition of Bengal was an event full of potentialities for the awakening of the Indian political consciousness and the leaders of Bengal—old and young—took up the question of Indian aspirations in right earnest. The partition of the Bengalee speaking population, knit as they were into a peculiar fabric of unity by long established development of literature and thought, threw the whole country into the suspicion that the Bureaucracy was beginning to use the imperialistic weapon of 'Divide and Rule' to its fullest capacity over-riding even the natural affinity of language. Hence the movement against the step taken by the Curzon Government spread like wild-fire and developed gradually into the Swadeshi-Boycott-National Education-Swaraj agitation of the first ten years of this century. Mr. Tilak would not be Mr. Tilak the leader, if he did not see into the great prospects of a wonderful movement like the Anti-Partition movement. The obstinacy of the Bureaucracy in the face of voilent opposition proved the utter futility of the old methods of mendicancy. It was all

## *Heroes of the Hour*

very well to petition and pray as long as what was asked for was nothing that came directly in the way of vested interests. But it was perfect moonshine to depend upon mere petition and prayer when what was expected of the Giver was something directly touching his pocket and power. Personal relationship between the Rulers and the ruled, a kind of common fellowship when conveniences of life were not so mechanically procurable, and the comparative ignorance of the people, had helped in earlier days to keep the credit of the Bureaucracy and to induce faith in the all-curing power of prayer. But as knowledge grew on the part of the governed, and form and stiffness developed on the side of the rulers, the real defects of a lifeless Bureaucracy were out and people felt that some moral strength behind petition and prayer was essential to force from out of the way of the Beauracrat's vision the great obstacle of self-interest. And so arose the weapon known as protest used even by the mildest of agitators before the *new era* of Swadeshi-Boycott-National Education and Swaraj. What the apostles of the New Era advocated—Mr. Tilak was the strongest and at the same time the most

far-sighted apostle—was an extension of the principle of moral force and a practical realisation of it in action founded upon self-help. It is needless to go, in any great detail, into the history of the new movement. It is sufficient if the cardinal points in the evolution of Indian life are noted. True enough, at one time during the Swadesi agitation, academic discussion as to perfect Independence was very largely indulged in and true enough also that the extreme school of Nationalism preached the gospel of absolute 'hands off' to educate the people to a complete dissociation from the governmental machine in order to put a spoke into it and make it feel its helplessness if people did not co-operate. But none of the methods employed need have terrified a strong Government if its foundations were broad based upon the contentment of the people. But Bureaucracy, being what it was and what it can only be, discovered in all these methods of agitation danger not to itself—that would certainly have been frank and open—but to the British Government and the British Empire. It therefore began to forge one repressive measure after another and this sitting-over-the-safety-valve brought forth



## *Heroes of the Hour*

a crop of trouble and turmoil. The bomb, the new dastardly weapon of the man of despair, found its way from the *Tamasic* West, where it is most common, into the pure *Satwic* East. The tremor of the autocrat could know no bounds. In times such as that, it is not to be wondered that confusion worse confounded the whole issue. Men were found who, with the solicitude to appease the angered in authority only to gain advantages to the country, set their faces strong against any advance in the direction of independent action. There were others, more forward but still cautious, who advocated a mixed method of protest and prayer deprecating all suggestion of indignant aloofness. There were yet others who believed in no other weapon but that of strict moral force as exhibited by a thorough going policy of Passive Resistance. The school of the Extremist bomb thrower—which at no time was appreciable—developed last and happily for the country has not spread to many provinces even according to the testimony of the C. I. D. officers. Excepting this Extremist school all other thought was open and frank and as openly and frankly expressed.

That complications did arise is a fact well-



## *Tilak Maharaj*

known. From the time the Anti-Partition movement was set on foot differences did make their appearance. At the Benares Congress held under the presidency of Mr. Gokhale the New spirit showed itself very plainly and the next year the Bhishma of Indian politics, Dadabhai Nowroji, had to be called in to preside at the sessions held in Calcutta. It was there that the then Grand Old Man of India unfurled the banner of Swaraj and carried the resolutions of the Nationalist party. Progress required that the programme accepted at the Calcutta Congress should be struck to. But vested interests were not idle. Ways were found by the elements opposed to Indian development to work upon the imagination of some of the best sons of India. Unhappily for the moment, there were certain other causes also, into which it is useless to enter, that contributed to estrange feelings between leaders and leaders. Long before the time arrived for the holding of the Congress session of 1907 at Surat, there were virulent personal and party strifes in news-papers and the air was surcharged with suspicion of moderate thinkers. Mr. Tilak himself was not above being considered a politician "touched with

## *Heroes of the Hour*

the modest caution of the past." It is best to give Mr. Tilak's position in his own words. Speaking at the Congress session of 1916 on the resolution relating to Self-Government, he says

"It is the resolution of Self-Government. It is that for which we have been fighting, for which the Congress has been fighting for the last thirty years. The first note of it was heard ten years ago on the banks of the Hughli and it was sounded by the Grand Old Man of India, that Parsi Patriot of Bombay, Dadabhai Nowroji. Since the note was sounded, differences of opinion arose. Some said that the note ought to be carried on, and ought to be followed by a detailed scheme at once, that it should be taken up and made to resound all over India as soon as possible. There was another party amongst us that said that it could not be done so soon and the tune of that note required to be a little lowered. That was the cause of the dissension ten years ago and I am glad to say that I have lived these ten years to see that we are going to put our voices and shoulders together to push on this scheme of Self-Government."

Another quotation from his evidence before

the Decentralization Commission urged by Mr. Tilak himself at the Kesari trial of 1908, may also be found interesting in this connection. He said "The mere shifting of the centre of power and authority from one official to another is not, in my opinion, calculated to restore the feelings of cordiality between officers and people prevailing in earlier days. English education has created new aspirations and ideals amongst the people and so long as these national aspirations remain unsatisfied it is useless to expect that the hiatus between, the officers and the people could be removed by any scheme of official Decentralization whatever its other effects may be. It is no remedy not even palliative against the evil complained of, nor was it put forward by the people or their leaders. The fluctuating wave of Decentralization may infuse more or less life in the individual members of the Bureaucracy but it cannot remove the growing estrangement between the rulers and the ruled, unless and until the people are allowed more and more effective voice in the management of their own affairs in an ever expansive spirit of wise liberalism and wide sympathy *aiming at raising India to the level of the governing country.*"

## *Heroes of the Hour*

Mr. Tilak's position in 1907 was exactly the same as it is to-day, with reference to Self-Government. He was as practical then in his ideas as he is to-day. He did not endorse either the fanatic methods of the bomb-thrower or the academic ideal of the Seperatist Independent. Yet he became the leader of the forward party at the time and all the calumny consequent on the holding and the break up of the Surat Congress was heaped on his devoted head. Keeping with the moderates in their ideals, Mr. Tilak had yet to break away from them and suffer, to say the least, very many indignities. There is only one reason that can be thought of for such a state of affairs. Mr. Tilak embodied and even to-day embodies in himself the spirit of democracy. The other leaders in spite of their transparent sincerity, nobleness of character, and honesty of purpose had yet the fibres of aristocracy in them, the remnants of beaucratic disposition induced by the very endeavour they were making to soften the Beauracrat. Mr. Tilak did not believe in his own omniscience. He knew that a Higher Power was guiding the destiny of the nation, that as *leader* it was his duty to expose himself to all trouble that may come upon him.

### *Tilak Maharaj*

as a consequence of the short-sightedness or wrong-headedness of his own following, that he had no right to suppress the freedom of thought and expression in anyone simply because that one desired to take his lead, and that to break away from real, advanced thought merely because the exponents of that thought did not run in the same groove as he himself ran, was only to shun the duty of co-operating with mankind for its good in so far as that co-operation was possible without detriment to self-respect. The moderate leaders of the day—it is absolutely no disrespect to them—were much more calculating. They somehow imagined that getting concessions lay in their power, that a mistake here or a mistake there would spoil all prospect of improvement, that what they believed to be right all their followers should implicitly believe to be right, and that if perfect co-operation were not possible, co-operation itself should not be sought. It is this difference of view-point, this impatience to stand extreme forms of thought, this solicitude to dictate the good of the world, that has stood in the way of real progress. The mistake has occurred a thousand times in the history of the world and it is



### *Heroes of the Hour*

occurring even to-day. Mr. Tilak in 1907 stood firm against the temptation of the hour to dictate, and desired that the people's will should be carried out as evidenced by the feeling up in the country, whatever personal opinions leaders might hold. But the congress was to be at Surat, a place full of antagonism to Mr. Tilak and the New party. It is no good attempting to read the private motives of individual Great Men but it is a fact that the prominent leaders of Bombay stood resolutely against even a re-iteration of the Calcutta Congress Resolutions. The Nationalists were equally strong that the water-mark once reached should not be lowered. The momentous period of the Surat Congress arrived. Great attempts were made to bridge the gulf between the Moderates and the Nationalists. Lala Lajpat Rai and others plied their mission with the greatest care and earnestness. But all was of no avail. The Nationalist party had to make up its mind either to seek means to frustrate the ends of their moderate brethren, or get out of the congress without the resolutions of the previous year being recorded. There was not at the time enough organisation—nor is there yet—to get adequate number of delegates



representing all shades of opinion from all parts of the country. Local delegates could always outvote the country. At the place Mr. Mehta was the uncrowned king. So the situation was clear. On questions where there might be sharp division, the local power could certainly succeed. It would ultimately mean the Congress stultifying itself. Arguing in this manner the Nationalist Party met in a Conference and concerted measures to solve the problem of recording the country's opinion. Mr. Arabinda Ghose presided at the Conference and most of the prominent Nationalist leaders took part in the deliberations. The conclusions they arrived at, and the methods they adopted, looked then and look even to-day, a bit too punctilious. They had always a course open to them to make their own proposals, and if defeated, to appeal to the country for help at the next recording of opinion. They would not take it. They decided to follow a policy of obstruction from the start. Tit for tat was the phrase used. 'Our moderate brethren have cajoled the Congress into Surat to get their opinions endorsed by freely flooding into the pandal their own men. We shall adopt an

## *Heroes of the Hour*

equally efficacious weapon ready to our hands, the weapon of obstruction.' This was the disposition displayed. It may be worth recording here that some nationalists at the time, though they could see the force of an argument of this kind, could not subscribe to an instrument which meant a fratricidal war. The vast majority of the Nationalist party however decided to hamper proceedings constitutionally by beginning opposition to the very choice of the President—not because the party had any quarrel with Mr. Rash Bihari Ghose or any suspicion that he would not make a good President; but because every act of the party in power had to be opposed. This policy of obstruction led naturally enough to a great deal of confusion and on the first day speakers were all hooted down. The Congress was adjourned for the day and fresh negotiations were opened for peace. All that had any care for the Congress believed that the Second Day everything would go off peacefully. But strange to say, while the Nationalists were orderly, the moderates grew wild at the very appearance of Mr. Tilak on the platform to propose a certain Amendment. The Congress was no more controllable. There were two

## *Tilak Maharaj*

eminently pleasing factors, however, in that great flight of benches, chairs, and lathies. The unflinching, immovable figure of Mr. Tilak was a sight worth one's life to see. Over and over again the mind runs to catch a glimpse of that calm, serene, satwic face and those motionless limbs which, in their absolute muteness, loudly proclaimed utter defiance of all danger and turmoil. The seething ocean of free-fight made absolutely no impression upon the nerves of that astute warrior-politician and there was not as much as a wrinkle of a muscle in the face. The second factor in the situation was an equally grand endurance on the part of the uncrowned king of the place Mr. Mehta the Lion of Bombay. His consummate courage never yielded to the temptation of calling in the aid of the keepers of the peace and the protectors of the land. The whole scene when it ended was more a scene of an unfortunate domestic occurrence than that of a street encounter between strangers.

The break up of the Congress at Surat however gave an opportunity to the foes of India to 'Rally the Moderates.' Adverse from mistaken notions of principle to co-operating

## *Heroes of the Hour*

with their more forward brethren, the moderate leaders of the time were attempted to be imposed upon by men whose interest it was to crush the rising spirit of India. While yet the Moderate and the Nationalist were fighting as to who was or who was not responsible for the Congress fiasco, the cult of the Bomb made its appearance. An unfortunate outrage was committed at Muzafarpore and later the District Magistrate of Dacca was shot at. This was a splendid opportunity to divide and rule. The most honest nationalist could be called a Seditious with immunity. In the name of good sense and moderation and loyalty, all moderates could be called upon to support authority and help the Government in its determination to put down seditious agitators who were in the habit of exciting disaffection. The liberal had come into power. Lord Morley was in England to show sympathy; Lord Minto was in India to carry into effect that sympathy. What else did a moderate require as an assurance of the good will of the British Governors? Probably one or two of the moderate leaders were also told by hints and signs what may be coming? Was that not sufficient matter for gratification and should

not all the sincere moderates co-operate with the Bureaucracy to solve the insurmountable difficulties of administration in a tropical climate like India with a population yet to learn the A.B.C's of Local Self-Government? The Heaven Born Service of the times knew perfectly well this trend of thought that was the heritage of the Indian arm-chair politician and fully utilised it for averting danger to the British Empire. The Governor of Bombay took his Legislative Council into confidence to tell it that a policy of thorough repression would be thenceforth (20th June 1908) followed. On the heels of that declaration prosecutions began in the Bombay Presidency, equally as in other presidencies including the benighted and, according to Mr. Valentine Chirol, the model Presidency of Madras. Mr. Paranjpe the Editor of the *Kat* was committed to the Bombay Sessions for writing and publishing seditious articles in his paper just at the time when an young man known as Surendranath Arya was being tried in Madras for taking part in the Sivaji Celebration Ceremony held on the beach on the 3rd of May 1908. Mr. Tilak went from Poona to Bombay to help the cause of Mr. Paranjpe. Little did Mr. Tilak think



## *Heroes of the Hour*

that he was going there only to be arrested in his turn on a charge of sedition, though he had always the suspicion that he must ever be prepared to be handled by the Bureaucracy. On the 24th June the law laid hands on him and he was marched to the jail from the Sirdar Griha, the hotel in which he was putting up. Readers in the Madras Presidency can certainly recollect the times and their nature. Down in Tinnevely 124 A was utilised to bring into trouble Messrs. Chidambaram Pillai and Subramania Siva. The Bezwada Swaraj case which resulted in the conviction of Mr. G. Hari Sarvottama Rau, M.A. was another instance of repressive action. There were others still like the Cocanada riot case, the Ashe Murder case, the Cocanada attempt of Murder case which were all off-shoots of the Main Game. When the benighted Presidency received so much attention, provinces like Bengal and Bombay had very much better attention bestowed upon them. Mr. Tilak's case was pushed on with the greatest vigour and as a later chronicler records

“The Government were evidently in a terrible mood then and the close and stuffy atmosphere itself in the dingy room of the



## *Tilak Maharaj*

High Court was surcharged with emotional electricity. It is a wonder if the imagination of some people did not show them bombs hanging from the ceiling or pistols stuck up on the walls of the Court House! The friends of Mr. Tilak could see nothing but the unseen Andaman Islands, or the Penal Settlement of Port Blair. People who had not read the Penal Code might have even thought that on conviction Mr. Tilak might be blown off from the cannon's mouth. It was a time when the habitually merry became serious and the habitually serious dazed and awe-stricken."

The preliminaries to the Court House scene were equally awe-striking. As one batch of police officers was hunting after Mr. Tilak, another had left from Bombay to make *great* searches in Poona and elsewhere. It was at 10 P.M. in the night that the protectors of public tranquillity appeared before the Gaikwad's Wada in Narayanapet Poona, where Mr. Tilak's house and the Kesari and the Maharatta offices are located. Even the worst panic-stricken Government could not have ordered searches during the night. So the police did the next best thing. They turned out every other resident in the wada

### *Heroes of the Hour*

except Mr. Tilak's family. Even these were not left in the undisturbed possession of their own house. They were asked to find solace in a room down-stairs with a single attendant to cheer them. Every entrance to every room was carefully sealed and a strong police guard was placed over the wada during the night. At the same time as the scene was being enacted in Poona, another section of the police had advanced to Singhad. The search there was conducted in a more wonderful fashion. None of Mr. Tilak's men were present. Only the watchman was there and at the sight of the police he was overawed. He was in no mood to remonstrate whatever they did. So the guards that keep watch over the locks and hinges and the property of the public as against unwelcome intruders and interlopers in the absence of the owners, themselves forced open the hinges of doors and entered Mr. Tilak's bungalow at Singhad. All these closed and forced searches brought forth nothing ultimately except a piece of card used in the trial but not pressed either by the prosecution or by the judge and jury. To-day the Indian world has become accustomed to the vagaries of police searches but that is absolutely no reason why

## *Tilak Maharaj*

steps should not be devised to minimise if not abolish such vagaries. At the time, *i.e.*, in 1908, all this hubbub created by the maintainers of peace must have had its own effect on the mental equilibrium of the people.

The peculiar trend Mr. Tilak's trial took also must be noted to gauge exactly the psychological atmosphere of the times. Bail was applied for twice by the friends of Mr. Tilak and it was absolutely refused both by the Presidency Magistrate and Justice Davar who had to preside at the trial in the High Court. Mr. Tilak did not desire a special jury. His Counsel Mr. Baptista appeared for him and in the most convincing manner appealed that his client might be saved the great favour of a special jury. But the court was bent upon safe-guarding the interests of the accused against his will. So a special Jury with a majority of Europeans who knew no Maharatti was empanelled and Mr. Tilak was asked to stand a trial before them. During the trial Mr. Tilak conducted his own case. His cross-examination of the translator to the Government does credit to any eminent practising lawyer and his address to the Jury extending over five days has been acclaimed one of the finest

## *Heroes of the Hour*

pieces of argument ever advanced in cases of sedition. It was also characterised by a candour and frankness specially Mr. Tilak's. In one place he said 'I have not come here to ask you any grace; I am prepared to stand the consequences of my acts..... I have written it believing it my duty to write in the interests of the public in the way.' In vain Mr. Tilak argue that he was being tried not for what he did write but for what was a mistranslation into English of his writing. In vain did he attempt to establish the utter futility of relying upon the translators. The judge in summing up to the jury did what exactly Mr. Tilak had foreseen. 'Here is the article, we have got it translated from the original, we place it before you, you can see that some of the words are very strong and likely to excite disaffection, therefore as a matter of legal inference the accused is guilty, so return a verdict of guilty and go away.' This exactly was the spirit of the trial. However there were two Indians amongst the Jurors. They could not, as men who could understand the language of the articles, convict Mr. Tilak. When the verdict had to be given they differed from the rest. If it were England Mr. Tilak would have been

## *Tilak Maharaj*

acquitted. But this is India, the law here gives the judge power over the Juror. If a majority of the Jury should agree with him he can do as he decides. So Justice Davar the very same man that had defended Mr. Tilak at his first trial convicted him of sedition and class hatred and sentenced him to six years transportation and a Rs. 1,000 fine. The words that Mr. Tilak uttered as the sentence was passed have now become historic.

“There are Higher Powers that rule the destinies of men and nations and it may be the will of Providence that the cause I represent may be benefitted more by my suffering than by my freedom.”

What consummate Satwic Power must have reigned in the mind of Mr. Tilak it is not easy to estimate. At a time when the whole country was in the throes of repression and people were dazed after a sudden dash of effulgence, by the brazen conduct of the reactionaries, the display of such serenely optimistic resignation to the worst that might happen to any constitutional patriot was a marvellous feat of strength even in a Hindu Grihastha like Mr. Tilak. The declaration sent a thrill through the country never experienced



## *Heroes of the Hour*

before and nerved a great many souls that had, with the first show of repression, felt well-nigh broken down. The example that Mr. Tilak is, is due, in the greatest measure, to that declaration of faith, courage and sacrifice. There have been men who have suffered, there have been men who have exhibited courage in ecstasy, there have been men who have sacrificed their lives on the altar of a cause, but the world has not seen many who, in the hour of peril, have calmly put faith in the purposes of a Divine Power in preference to their own importance as makers of evolution. Many a weaker nature would have fulminated in wrath that the bureaucracy had shackled it and shut the world out of the great good that would have accrued by its own freedom. It was left to the true Indian Grihasta Mr. Tilak to understand the inner significance of man's effort and realise at the supremest moment in his life the truth of truths, that man after all is an instrument of God.

Mr. Tilak's calm stand appealed even to the Government, though not to the Advocate-General. The latter declined to give any certificate that there was an error in the decision of a point or points of law decided by Mr.



## *Tilak Maharaj*

Justice Davar in spite of the fact that Mr. Tilak's attorneys Messrs. Raghavayya Bhimji and Nagindas had specified in a number of paras the Judge's misdirection to the Jury. The Government were more considerate and they commuted transportation with simple imprisonment and remitted the fine of one thousand Rupees. An independent appeal to the Privy Council also proved useless.

Mr. Tilak's incarceration had moved however the people to the very heart. From all parts of India and from all political parties of the country protests arose in very very large numbers. Even the illiterate masses that could rarely realise the gifts or the genius of Mr. Tilak were greatly affected. The mill hands in Bombay actually struck work and showed their resentment in their own perfectly practical manner. In fact Mr. Tilak's incarceration in 1908 was the first occasion on which the whole of India, in a sense, rose to a man and demanded explanation of a high-handed action of the bureaucracy. It may be noted *there* were the seeds of a re-approachment again between the several sections of Indian political thought though the fruition of it had to wait for a number of years till 1915.

## *Heroes of the Hour*

To wander into the realms of confinement along with Mr. Tilak is not necessary. First to Ahmedabad and, then to Mandalay was Mr. Tilak moved. One who had put faith in a Higher Power which desired his incarceration for better purposes could feel absolutely no pain even in jail. Placed under simple imprisonment Mr. Tilak could turn his mind to some high thought and with his usual determination he did so. There is no greater theme than the theme of man's existence and duty that could naturally suggest itself to him. The Bhagavadgita was a message of duty and Mr. Tilak decided to examine it in the light of his intellect and genius and interpret it for himself. A man of action that he was, he could not help realising the great message of Action the Gita contained. He elaborated his thesis and projected a work of large dimensions. The Gitarahasya is the result of all that labor in restraint. In Maharatti several thousands of copies have already sold. The work is being translated into a number of Indian languages and English. It is beyond the scope of a short life of Mr. Tilak as this, to enter into any discussion of Mr. Tilak's scheme of life. Differences of opinion there

will always be and scholars belonging to diverse schools will always wrangle. It is best to note that Mr. Tilak by his interpretation of the Gita has made it a book of hourly application to life. It is no longer a book for meritorious reading alone. It is no longer a book to be bound in silk, worshipped and put aside. It is no longer a book for the C. I. D. officers to suspect a revolutionary in its possessor. It is a book for all men, women and children to read and digest. It is a book for all mankind to look upon as a gospel for daily existence in the ordinary world. It is a book most harmless in its message that no individual born in this world has a right to lead an idle life even in the name of spirituality. Let Mr. Tilak himself give in his own words the gist of *Gitarahasya*. He says:

“The conclusion I have come to is that the Gita advocates the performance of action in this world even after the actor has achieved the highest union with the supreme Deity by *Jnana* (knowledge) or *Bhakti* (devotion). This action must be done to keep the world going by the right path of evolution which the Creator has destined the world to follow. In order that the action may not bind the actor

## Heroes of the Hour

it must be done with the aim of helping his purpose and without any attachment to the coming result. This I hold is the lesson of Gita. *Jnana Yoga* there is. Yes. *Bhakti Yoga* there is. Yes. Who says not? But they are both subservient to the Karma Yoga preached in the Gita.

“The primary question of Arjuna is well-known and the essence of it may be stated thus: What was to be done in a case of *conflict of duties*, e.g. where one urged him to fight and the other not to fight. Krishna's answers always ended in asking him to stick to his duty as a Kshatriya. All philosophical ramifications of Krishna's advice always converged towards saying; *Therefore do your hero's part*. The word *therefore* occurring at the end of all his particular disquisitions indicated the point which he was proving and that point was *Karma* or *Action* and not *Knowledge* or *Dhyana* nor *Sanyasa* or *Renunciation* nor again *Bhakti* or *Devotion*. The real question at the root of the Gita is: Is it better to be content with knowledge and renounce the world or to participate in the action of the world. And Krishna definitely answers: Action with Knowledge is better

### *Tilak Maharaj*

than Renunciation with Knowledge. Arjuna was urged to Action on four grounds, (1) because action *could* not be shirked (2) because there was no sin if action were performed through reason as a duty (3) because if action or no action was the same, there was no ground to choose the one before the other (4) finally because for the sake of *Lokasangraha* a philosopher must *act* and show *how* to act.

“ I differ from almost all commentators when I say that the Gita enjoins action even after the perfection in *Jnana* and *Bhakti* is attained and the Deity is reached through these media. There is a fundamental unity underlying the Logos (Ishvara), Man and the world. The world is in existence because the Logos has willed it so. It is His will that holds it together. Man strives to gain union with God; and when this union is achieved the individual Will merges in the Mighty Universal Will. When this is achieved, will the individual say ‘ I shall do no action and I shall not help the world ’—the world which *is* because the Will with which he has sought union has willed it to be so.’ It does not stand to reason. It is not I who say so; the Gita says so. Sri Krishna himself says that there



### *Heroes of the Hour*

is nothing in all the three worlds that He need acquire and *still* He *acts*. He acts because if he did not, the world's Will will be ruined. If man seeks unity with the Deity he must necessarily seek unity with the (interests of) the world also, and work for it. If he does not, then the unity is not perfect, because there is union between two elements (man and Deity) out of the three and the third (the world) is left out. Serving the world and thus serving His Will is the surest way of salvation and this way can be followed by remaining *in* the world and not going away from it."

'That Providence took away Mr. Tilak from the ordinary routine of life for six years to employ him in a superb attempt to give the world this great message of active existence is no doubt a factor for partial gratification. There was another aspect of Mr. Tilak's personal life however which was not without its sombre colours. His wife who, in a greater Satwic spirit than her husband, had borne separation more than once in her life to prove unto the world the supreme heroism of which Indian women have always been capable, left this world for good during Mr. Tilak's incarceration. The only solace to the departing soul must



### *Tilak Maharaj*

have been the solace that all Indians of noble lives feel that they can meet their nearest and dearest, if they only choose, in a better more developed life of the future. To Mr. Tilak the disappearance of such a trusted and worthy comrade during forced absence from home must have been a matter for considerable pain. But the very High Power in which Mr. Tilak always trusts along with all his real Hindu brethren had willed it so. And that Will must be obeyed.

Mr. Tilak had to serve out full six years. He had not the advantages of special remissions in jail. The mercy extended to the ordinary criminal at the coronation or the Delhi Durbar, was not extended to political prisoners in general, much less to Mr. Tilak. In the usual course he could not be kept in jail beyond the end of July 1914

He had not long been out of jail before the present great world-war broke out. By the time he turned his attention to public work once more, the war was in full swing. Germany had rushed into Belgium and England had thrown its weight on behalf of the smaller state to protect the interests of the weak and uphold the liberty of nations. An open

### *Heroes of the Hour*

declaration of liberal intentions of saving an oppressed nationality had raised immense hopes in the subject nation of India; because India believed that if England chose, she could grant the boon of freedom to India without the great bloodshed or expanse England was undertaking on behalf of a stranger nation like Belgium. Indian troops had been despatched by the sagacious and liberal statesman Lord Hardinge to the field of battle in France and they had acquitted themselves in a manner worthy of the great traditions of this ancient land of valour. English imagination had been fired by the greatness of Indian effort; and statesmen and politicians, speakers and journalists had vied with one another in acclaiming the help rendered by India, and in ecstasy, suggesting that India should be treated after the war with very much greater consideration than she had received. Thanks to the labours of Mahatma Gandhi and his no less illustrious band of sufferers and followers including the noblest of men and women India has ever produced, the reputation of the Indian as a self-respecting member of humanity had also immensely risen and the western world, including the whilom

oppressors in the colonies, had been staggered into defeat by the superb Passive heroism of India's illustrious sons and daughters. This was the world's atmosphere into which Mr. Tilak emerged from his life in jail. How he gloried in his faith in a Higher Will than ours, others cannot possibly imagine. How he thanked that Higher Will for giving him another opportunity of serving it, is equally impossible of realisation by others. But one thing others can realise. He appreciated the psychological possibilities of the moment and once more heartily threw himself into practical political work.

With the same heartiness with which Mr. Tilak threw himself into public work the autocracy threw itself into opposition to him. He was not many days in the free air of Poona before the local authorities thought of watching his activities *vigilantly*. Two new police stations were improvised on both sides of his house and men who went there were harassed by enquiries. Ordinary espionage itself is hateful in this country. Men are stationed in the vicinity of your houses and they are required to note your movements for the benefit and safety of the lords above them.

## *Heroes of the Hour*

Poor ignorant tools of a more blindly ignorant hierarchy ! constables and coolies on a pittance of a few annas a day sit on an opposite pial or loiter about in the dusty streets before the houses of men whom they recognise sooner or later to be at least as great, if not far superior to, their own masters. If the spied are sympathetic—as in most cases they are, because they know that these eight-anna-a-day men are there to eke out existence somehow—their lot is somewhat bearable. Even then occasions may occur when the spies have the hardest time of it for absolutely no purpose. A coach or a motorcar drives up unexpectedly to the door and the spied is fast away. How to get the wherewithal to chase him secretly with the stomach half-ful ? Even if the wherewithal be provided by the department where to get the swiftest conveyance at that particular moment at which it is required without notice ? And after all if every impossible feat were performed by the man in the mask what is it that he can discover ? What have two friends conversed on the roadside ? How can he know ? What has happened within the interior of a club ? How can he know ? What is happening in a marriage party inside a house ? How can

## *Tilak Maharaj*

he know? A stranger has come into the house. Who is he? How can he know? It is five minutes to the starting of the train. The suspected boss runs in a motor and he is gone. Where has he gone? How is it ascertainable? The wise spy knows his limitations. As long as he must be a spy he must seek the help of the spied themselves by service and be rid of the bother by reporting 'so and so went to the market this morning and bought brinjals. The saleswoman was saucy and made faces at him. I noted even this small affair very carefully. In the noon at so and so's house there was a large party for dinner and I counted thirty leaves thrown outside. Evening at 5-30 p.m. so and so with wife and children and friends went to the theatre and an old woman was left in charge of the house. On enquiry I discovered she was a cook. Mid-night 12-21 so and so returned from the theatre and went upstairs to sleep. He is reported to be going to Mustanabad for a lecture to-morrow evening. This is a piece of secret information I have confidentially got from his clerk.' The meeting would have been actually advertised. This is discovery indeed! The unwise spy or the new spy or the wise spy when he cannot



### *Heroes of the Hour*

use his discretion on account of extreme external pressure by men who spy him in turn, has no other go but to seek information from the maid-servant, the washerman, the scavenger, the betel-leaf vendor, the ghariwalla and others of wonderfulest understanding and based upon the information so traced build his castles in the air on a foundation of half and full lies. During times of great happenings when, for instance, a Viceroy or a Secretary of State visits the country, the brood of spies spontaneously grows and most obnoxiously chatters about your surroundings. You may be admitted to an audience with the greatest worthy in the British Empire. Even a Local Government which smells danger in a lily may permit you to such an audience but still your guarding brood must not in the least be weakened. It strides across the road in curious costume and with more curious gait; it peeps into your window and peers at your writing table where friends from afar might have gathered; it whispers into your servant's ear, into your neighbour's ear, into your landlord's ear; it sometimes scares your visitor, it sometimes angers him; it haunts you like a useless burden always putting you in



## *Tilak Maharaj*

mind that it is an emblem of the waste of public money under a strange system of soulless administration; if you are a feeling animal it makes you at least sometimes uncomfortable for no fault of yours.

What special espionage that was contemplated by the establishment of two additional Police stations meant can now be easily recognised by the reader. But when actual imprisonment has been the trophy of service to the motherland, this small worry of espionage has absolutely no effect upon brave souls like Mr. Tilak. From day to day Mr. Tilak went on as usual. Mrs. Besant had entered the political arena and was striving her best, somehow to bring together the Nationalist and Moderate camps especially as the Congress Session of the Year was to be held in Madras the field of her own just-begun political labors. Mr. Tilak was prepared—as he is always prepared—to do what lay in his power to bring about once more a united Congress. The second half of 1914 was mainly occupied with this attempt. By the end of November, Mr. Tilak had worked so far as] to bring] together important Nationalist leaders and procure their opinion and consent

### *Heroes of the Hour*

upon certain matters. Whichever side might claim to have climbed up or climbed down, the simple issue at the moment was nothing more than the issue of the form in which the Nationalists who separated at Surat should enter the Congress. As the statement issued from the Servants of India Society dated 9th December 1914 substantially put it, the nationalists were willing to join the Congress but they felt that they were humiliated by the way in which the Congress constitution was framed especially with reference to the election of delegates. They did not want to come into the Congress Committee and objected to personal inquisitions not regulated by rules, which had then to be framed. They did not desire to apply for the affiliation of their associations to the then Provincial Congress Committees. They wished to join the Congress, only if separate and independent constituencies (of course accepting article I of the constitution) were created which should automatically give the right to elect delegates either at meetings of such bodies or at public meetings convened under their auspices. This looked certainly very fair to ask and Mr. Gokhale, the great man that he was, really felt

the force of it. He was quite amenable to the logic of the situation and willingly co-operated with Mr. Tilak and Mrs. Besant, as Mr. Tilak himself admits in his statement, in coming to an understanding on both sides that the success of the compromise depended not so much upon Mr. Gokhale's willingness but entirely upon the acceptance of the terms of the compromise by the conventionist leaders in the city of Bombay. The difficult task of winning over these people was assigned to Mr. N. Subba Rau. Mr. Subba Rau found that the Bombay conventionist leaders were dead opposed to the extension of the franchise to public meetings or to independent constituencies and that they felt great apprehension that the Congress would be running a great risk if Mr. Tilak and his followers came in. The fear was probably very real in their minds. To rely again upon the statement issued from the Servant of India Society.

“It is their (Nationalists') intention to take steps to widen the door of election as before to all public meetings if necessary, and get recognition of their methods by educating public opinion and working for and securing a majority in the Congress if possible. They

## *Heroes of the Hour*

are and have been willing to take the decision of the majority as binding on them and in cases where such decision is against them they would wait till opinion is created in their favour and not leave the Congress by quarrelling with the majority." To the free and simple mind of Mr. Gokhale nothing in this attitude appeared improper. But the Bombay Moderates had a fear of their own that some day their power would be lost over the Congress and therefore to secure that power they resolutely set their faces against the compromise altogether and their following began to misrepresent the constitutionalism of the Nationalists' methods. No quotation from Mr. Gokhale himself was enough to disabuse the minds of men who had resolved to misinterpret their brethren. The strangest incident in the whole scene was however the change of attitude Mr. Gokhale assumed at the last moment. He was somehow induced to side his nervous brethren of Bombay and confuse himself by issues not pertinent to the main proposition. He persisted in believing oral reports and accusing Mr. Tilak of having advocated the Boycott of Government. Mr. Gokhale was very near his end (he died on the

## *Tilak Maharaj*

19th of February, 8 days after Mr. Tilak had issued his reply to the statements of Mrs. Besant and Mr. Gokhale) and he was led into committing most unwittingly the greatest indiscretion in his life of writing ill of a comrade who had toiled and suffered in the cause of the country. Whatever or whoever was at the bottom of the mischief the mischief was done. The hopes of a union of Indian parties at the Madras Congress were frustrated. Mrs. Besant's appeal to get Mr. Tilak to attend the Congress was of no avail. No amount of calumny, no amount of hesitation on the part of friends, no amount of C. I. D. favor, stopt Mr. Tilak from his even tenor of work. As early as 4th September 1914 he had, in a letter written to the Maharatta, drawn pointed attention to the aspect of political life which, Mrs. Besant later transformed into the Home Rule agitation with the characteristic energy she has of developing long-begun movements so as to make them her own in order to concentrate attention and achieve their purpose. He said.

"I have like other political workers my own differences with the Government as regards certain measures and to a certain



## *Heroes of the Hour*

extent *even the system of internal administration*. But it is absurd on that account to speak of my actions or my attitude as in any way hostile to his Majesty's Government. That has *never* been my wish or my object. I may state once for all that we are trying in India, *as the Irish Home Rulers have been doing in Ireland*, for a reform of *the system of administration* and not for the overthrow of the Government; and I have no hesitation in saying that the acts of violence which have been committed in the different parts of India are not only repugnant to me but have, in my opinion, retarded to a great extent the pace of our political progress. Whether looked at from an individual or from a public point of view, they deserve, as I have said before on several occasions, to be equally condemned."

Mr. Syamji Krishna Varma used the term Home Rule at one time in his agitation. Earlier still referring to Lord Mayo's time Keene described the smallest measure of Local Self-Government as Home Rule. Mrs. Besant and her followers have spread ideas of Home Rule more than anybody else to-day. But the clear grasp of the situation with reference to the parallelism of agitation in Ireland and India and the



### *Tilak Maharaj*

thorough insight that the war had come to make that parallelism real and practical were peculiarly Mr. Tilak's and the agitation for Home Rule in its present form may fairly be dated from that day on which Mr. Tilak wrote to the Maharatta that memorable letter.

To resume, the Madras Congress was held and the protest of the country on behalf of the compromise was quite visible at it, in as much as the Central Provinces and the Punjab held aloof from it entirely and other provinces than Madras did not contribute very much more than 13% of the total number of the delegates. Owing to the declaration of War in August there was some little difference of opinion as to the holding of the Congress itself and the country was thankful that after all there was not a break in the recording of the nation's opinion. The Congress was not very strong on the question of the compromise it being ultimately referred to a committee for consideration. The very hindrances that stood in the way of success in Madras helped to redouble the efforts for a more united and potent 'Voice of India.' The dawn of 1915 was marked by a closer examination of the issues and January and February were months-

### *Heroes of the Hour*

in which very great discussion ensued. It was then that statements and counter-statements were published. It is needless to enumerate here all the several incidents in the domestic struggle. A little has already been sketched. It only remains to be stated that Mr. Tilak's open repudiation of the charge that he desired to Boycott the Government in reply to a telegram sent by Mrs. Besant from the camp of the Madras Congress and the disinclination of the Powers that were in the Congress to take up the question of compromise in any earnest fashion came out very clearly during the discussions.

In the latter part of February, however, a very sad incident happened, the saddest incident in the history of the year and threw the whole country into a gloom bringing politicians and thinkers of all schools to a common platform. The Hon. Mr. Gokhale died and India lost one of her most resplendent jewels. Overcome by feelings of affections for one who had served the country with the sincerest singleness of purpose Mr. Tilak said of Mr. Gokhale "This diamond of India, this jewel of Maharashtra, this prince of workers is taking eternal rest on the funeral ground.

## *Tilak Maharaj*

Look at him and try to emulate him. Mr. Gokhale has passed away from our midst after having satisfactorily performed his duty. Will any one of you come forward to take his place? I knew Mr. Gokhale from his youth. He was an ordinary and simple man in the beginning. He was not an Inamdar; he was not a Jagirdar; he was not a chief. He was an ordinary man like all of us here. He rose to such eminence by the sheer force of genius, ability and work. Mr. Gokhale is passing away from our midst and he has left behind him much to emulate. Everyone of you ought to try to place his example before his eyes and to fill up the gap; and if you will try to emulate him in this way, he will feel glad even in the next world."

This was another of Mr. Tilak's exemplary utterances. It went straight home to the hearts of all men who had hearts and proved the real worth of an honest patriot who, while not shirking personal strife, utterly forgets it when higher humanity and the cause of the country require it.

Mr. Gokhale served the motherland in death as when alive. That he killed himself by over-work for the motherland sank into the

### *Heroes of the Hour*

bosom of every feeling Indian and at a time when there appeared prospect of effort proving fruitful, the sons of India and her daughters rose to a man to emulate the example of Mr. Gokhale at least so far as his industry was concerned. Mrs. Besant proclaimed herself the disciple of the departed great Guru and during 1915 attempted to follow closely in his footsteps to do what was most in the interests of the country and the Congress. The Congress had been invited to Bombay. Opinions were being expressed that Bombay would frustrate what Madras had faintly begun. So Mrs. Besant felt she must do her highest to get through the Bombay Session with credit to the cause of the compromise which she had so earnestly taken up. The Committee that was appointed at the Madras Sessions delayed decision to the last moment and ultimately decided against Mrs. Besant. In the meanwhile Mrs. Besant took up the cry of Home Rule and began to thrust it home to all thinkers in India. She did not start her league but attempted strenuously to bring the moderate leaders of the country as far as possible to her way of thinking and then alone she thought that sympathy could be strengthened

### *Tilak Maharaj*

between the two wings of Indian opinion. She was perfectly right in her estimate. By the time the Congress met in Bombay Mrs. Besant had made a very fair start. Most of the influential leaders of Bharatavarsha had given consent to Mrs. Besant's Scheme of a League and on September 14, 1915 she formally declared the aim of holding a conference in Bombay and forming an All-India League. It had to be postponed however as Mrs. Besant felt the time had not yet come. Agitating as she was for Home Rule, she chose to fall in with the Congress and wait till the 1st of September 1916 the time limit fixed by the Congress Executive to come to a decision of their own. While Mrs. Besant, an unconnected individual, was endeavouring in this fashion to drag the *Yesterdays* into a line with the *To-morrows* step by step and achieving it as was evident by the difference in spirit of the Congress Sessions in Madras and again in Bombay Mr. Tilak as the leader of one of the parties to be reconciled was quietly and steadily doing his own work of educating the country. Under his guidance organisations sprang up in the Bombay Presidency and during the earlier part of 1916 work on behalf of Home Rule was well pushed



## *Heroes of the Hour*

forward. Immediately after the Bombay Congress Mr. C.Y. Chintamani spoke at Poona and Mr. Tilak presided at the meeting proclaiming, as the *Common Weal* at the time put it, the reunion of the Right and Left wings of the national party. The Non-Conventionist conference at Belgaum in the month of May 1916 under the inspiration of Mr. Tilak and the presidency of his friend and co-worker Srimant Rajamanya Rajasri Dadasaheb Khaparde proved another great link in the chain that was being patiently forged. The Conference was acclaimed most considerate and Mr. Tilak was particularly believed to have acted in the most friendly manner to all parties in the country, though it was probably unnecessary for responsible papers to construe him as promising 'to work constitutionally' as if such a promise were ever necessary from him. The opening months of 1916 found him thoroughly busy with propagandist work. That in the prosecution launched against him later under the Criminal Procedure Code, speeches so near one another as 1st of May, 31st of May, 1st of June were indicted, is proof enough of the work that Mr. Tilak did unostentatiously with his own people in his own language taking for



granted the establishment of the Home Rule League in Madras which was yet to come. The Government of Bombay were alarmed at the prospect of Mr. Tilak rising again into the leadership of India, this time the leadership of a United India, and so got convinced that they should gag his mouth unable to do more under war conditions for fear of a general excitement. The Madras Government had already acted against Mrs. Besant and demanded security from the New India. Their example must be perforce followed by the other provincial potentates. A notice issued from the secretariat of the Bombay Government asking Mr. Tilak to show cause why he should not be restrained in his *headlong* course of speech. The day chosen to serve the notice was itself sensational. Maharashtra was celebrating the 61st birth-day of Mr. Tilak and presenting him with a purse of a lack of rupees which he eventually dedicated for the work nearest to his heart—Home Rule. The statesmanship of the Bombay Government was providentially so poor that they chose this particular moment for presenting in their turn a repressive order. To Mr. Tilak the order did not matter much. He stood this trial

## *Heroes of the Hour*

as he stood other more exacting trials. But to the country it was of the greatest value. The day Mr. Tilak was executing the bonds totalling to Rs. 40,000 the affection of the country for him jumped up in volume to as many thousand times its own and everyone in the country, Nationalist or Moderate, felt the time had come when Mr. Tilak should be thoroughly supported. The Bombay Government as an instrument of God fixed Mr. Tilak in the hearts of Indians as their greatest example of sacrifice for the mother-land.

The proceedings in the security cases against Mr. Tilak are interesting and valuable. Before the District Magistrate of Poona the trial was of the same old kind. The points alleged against Mr. Tilak were wonderful distortions of his statements. He was accused of having said the following things in his speech.

1. The British Government keeps India in a continual state of bondage or slavery.
2. The British Government do not do their duty by India; they administer it for the benefit of England or Great Britain.
3. The British Government are not a real Government because they consider themselves

## *Tilak Maharaj*

insulted when told of things that have not been done and for the doing of which a desire was not apparent.

4. The British Government was full of self-conceit and think anything it does perfect.

5. The main objects of the British Government and its officials is to fill their aching bellies.

6. Intervening Collectors, Commissioners and other people are not wanted.

7. All British Rule except a mere nominal sovereignty is to be removed at an early moment.

8. The British have in the course of 50 years failed to educate India so that it is fit to rule itself.

9. The British are unfit to rule and must go.

10. The priests of the Deity *i.e.*, the British Government—the officials—must be removed because this priest or that priest does not do good to the people.

11. Responsible officials in India keep back from the King Emperor the full facts, hence justice is not done.

12. The only reason the Viceroy and other officials in India get high pay is because India has to pay for them.

## *Heroes of the Hour*

13. The Bureaucracy's first idea is to see that their pay is secured.

14. The present is a fit time of agitation for the getting of Home Rule.

15. Government consider this agitation bad because they will be losers by it.

16. There is a strong distinction between the administration in India and the sovereign's wishes.

17. Under the company's regime a letter used to come to the Governor-General as follows "so much profit must be made this year; realise it and send it to us"; this was the administration; the people's good was not considered; this was not a good sort of administration; Parliament under Queen Victoria did not approve of this system; now once more the administration of the country is in accordance with the Company's system.

18. Nobody in India told the country and its servants to come here; they are not wanted.

19. The Government is not generous and wise and will not listen to what you have to say and redress your grievances.

20. Its sight is so affected as not to see the figures in its own reports.

## *Tilak Maharaj*

21. This Government is no Government at all because it evades its responsibilities.

22. The question is whether a certain nation—India to wit—is to be treated like beasts.

23. If people stand in the road of this Home Rule movement they must be pushed out of the way by giving them a push.

The speeches are now before the country and the world. They have been read over and over again. It is needless to give long extracts from them. They have been fully adjudged. Mr. Tilak was as careful as a speaker could be. He clearly defined what Government meant. He pointedly referred to the British Government and distinguished it from its Bureaucratic Agents. He carefully drew attention to the fact that he was criticising the system of Bureaucratic administration not any race or community. He expressly stated that when power was in the hands of the people it mattered not who was the official. On a basis so sure he built his superstructure of the condemnation of the present system. A system cannot be condemned without its details being examined and criticised. Details in an administration cannot be examined and



## *Heroes of the Hour*

criticised without examining the conduct and bearing of the administrators. The fatal fault in a Bureaucracy is that the administrators believe they are the rulers and construe all that is said against themselves as being said against the Government and when one of the administrators combines in himself a judicial function as well he becomes thoroughly and personally interested. This was what exactly happened in the case of the Collector of Poona who, in his judicial capacity as a District Magistrate, tried Mr. Tilak under 108, 112 Criminal Procedure Code. He had absolutely no judicial frame of mind. If he had, an examination of the very points urged against Mr. Tilak carried their own condemnation. If he had read the speeches and the alleged points side by side he would have discovered immediately that the prosecutors had not only mis-stated Mr. Tilak but had substituted every where the British Government for its agents the Civil Servants and tried to misrepresent the whole situation. The counsel for the prosecution went so far as to protect the C. I. D. and make it a part of the British constitution in India meaning that an offensive remark against it was itself



sedition. True to the traditions of a Bureaucrat Mr. Hatch the Collector-Magistrate of Poona did not bother himself about the exaggerations of the Prosecution. He admitted the evidence of a man who had not made the translations of Mr. Tilak's speeches; because, as the Public Prosecutor himself explained, the man who made the translations originally was a man who in the opinion of the prosecution would not be a good witness to be submitted to the skilful cross-examination of Mr. Jinnah (a wonderfully strange and just reason indeed!) He relied entirely upon the reports of short hand-writers who had told the court point blank that it was impossible *they* could make mistakes and especially upon a portion of the report which was all confusing. He admitted that Mr. Tilak had distinguished between the Bureaucracy and the Government and yet read into the speech as a matter of general impression a dishonest attack on the British Government. For purposes of law he relied upon the Judgment of Justice Stratchey who defined disaffection as absence of affection and whose judgment in this respect was long exploded by judicial announcements. It does not require great prophetic insight now to

## *Heroes of the Hour*

guess without being told what judgment he gave. All Mr. Jinnah's splendid defence of Mr. Tilak was a sheer waste. The Collector-Magistrate upheld his own earlier order and demanded security from Mr. Tilak. Mr. Tilak had no other choice. He executed the bonds. The official hierarchy of Bombay could certainly silence him temporarily. Another event happened about this time which showed the spirit in which Mr. Tilak was persecuted. It is a well-known fact that during the six years incarceration of Mr. Tilak, Sir Valentine Chirol wrote a book called 'Unrest in India' and in it grossly libelled the Chitpavan Brahmins of Maharashtra generally and Mr. Tilak in particular. On return from jail Mr. Tilak with the advice of his counsellors decided to sue Sir Valentine in a proper manner for defamation. Action was taken in England on behalf of Mr. Tilak, and about the time he was persecuted in Poona under Security sections, it was in the knowledge of the general public that he was about to start to England in connection with the case he had launched. The official circles of Bombay seemed to take very great interest in the matter. The ordinary pass-port granted to all ordinary men who

## *Tilak Maharaj*

desire to go to England was refused to Mr. Tilak in the first instance. Naturally there was criticism enough of the act in the country. Then the powers that were, awoke to consciousness and undid what they had done and granted the passport. A question in the Bombay Legislative Council brought into light a more serious matter still. The Maharathi translator to the Government of Bombay had been lent to Sir Valentine Chirol to make for him translations of certain documents which were in the archives of the Government. No such concessions were ever dreamt of being extended to Mr. Tilak. Who was Sir Valentine Chirol? Was he not a private party? What connection had he with the Government of Bombay? If he had no connection with them how did he get into the happy position of securing the services of the Government translator and the use of secreted state-papers? Was there any judicial proceeding in which he had acquired a right for such a service? If there were such would the world be unaware of it? These were questions which filled the air. No satisfactory answer was forthcoming either from the agents of the Bombay Government or anywhere else. The inevitable conclusion people were obliged

### *Heroes of the Hour*

to draw was that the local Bureaucracy, to serve its own purposes and injure Mr. Tilak in all manner of ways, was helping the personal enemies of the great patriot and it was also suggested in some quarters that the prosecution of Mr. Tilak was practically designed to shut his mouth while in England and keep him from explaining the true state of matters in India to the British Democracy. To Mr. Tilak such tricks of the trade on the side of the Bureaucracy had become common and he evidently knew also the worth of these tricks. As usual he calmly put up with them and proceeded in his usual tenor.

On the 23rd of August 1916 he filed a revision petition in the High Court of Judicature at Bombay. This time of course the atmosphere was not electrical. As a chronicler who has already been quoted puts it, the very choice of the method, made by Government, of proceeding against Mr. Tilak had brought down the thermometer of feeling to the temperate point. The Judges of the High Court had a calm time of it and they went into the case most patiently and with an undisturbed judicial frame of mind. Justices Batchelor and Shah took the most dispassionate view of matters

and once in the history of India there was a trial in which the Judges were anxious to know specifically the mind of the accused when he made speeches which were alleged to be seditious. The judgments of the two learned judges were based, as expressly stated, upon points of fact and as such, much of technical law has not been established by this trial on behalf of *freedom of speech*. But the whole procedure adopted and the observations made by the learned judges must prove thoroughly useful to an accused in all future trials. Justice Batchelor has clearly pronounced that Government does not mean an individual or individual officers. Government is an abstract conception. Though holding this view, both the judges have not accepted generally that the condemnation of a particular service is not the condemnation of the Government established by law in India. The views they have expressed however are clear that no service can be identified with the Government established by law in British India. Justice Batchelor says.

“It was contended that the speeches could not in law offend against Sec. 124 A because the speaker's attack was made not on the Government *nominatio* but on the civil service.



## *Heroes of the Hour*

only. That, I think, is not *quite* so in fact. But assuming it to be so, it affords no answer to the charge, for the Government established by law acts through a human agency, and admittedly the Civil Service is its principal agency for the administration of the country in times of peace. Therefore where, as here, you criticise the Civil Service *en bloc* the question whether you excite disaffection against Government or not seems to me a pure question of fact."

Justice Shah is clearer still. He says,

"The Hon. Mr. Jinnah has argued that all the criticism directed against the Indian Civil Service generally described as Bureaucracy in the speeches cannot, under any circumstances, be treated as criticism against the "Government established by law in *British India*." I am unable to accept this argument. It may be that the various services under the control of the Government by law established in British India do not form part of the Government within the meaning of the section; and it may be that the criticism directed against any of the services is not necessarily criticism of the 'Government by law established in British India.' \* \*



But the feelings which it is the object of 124A to prohibit may be excited towards the Government in a number of ways. It would be a question of fact to be determined in each case with reference to its circumstances."

Though one can certainly understand the very sympathetic spirit of these observations, yet the situation with reference to the law of sedition in India cannot be held to have materially been helped by them. The agitation against the law in its present form must certainly be kept up and if it has to be tested in the manner in which Mr. Tilak has tested it we may have to sacrifice very many years of the life of such precious brethren as Mr. Tilak. Justice Batchelor and Justice Shah however have done the next best thing to judicially amending the law. They have once for all set aside the theory that everyone who is offensive or insulting to certain high functionaries must necessarily be presumed to be seditious. No crime attaches according to Justices Batchelor and Shah to Offensiveness or Insolence towards great dignitaries. The most important point in the Judgment of these two Judges has yet to be mentioned. They have truly and practically applied the oft repeated maxim in

## *Heroes of the Hour*

sedition trials that fair construction must be put upon the indicated matter paying more attention to the whole general effect than to any isolated words or passages. This was cant ever repeated by even the subordinate judiciary. Never hitherto was this practically applied in deciding. Always the magistrates and judges repeated the public prosecutor's list of offending passages and in view of them pronounced that the general effect was against the accused. The method followed by Justices Batchelor and Shah was itself a guarantee. They did not permit a hair-splitting wrangle over the meaning of terms nor did they browbeat Mr. Jinnah the defence counsel from going at length into the speeches and explaining the setting of certain passages considered objectionable. Justice Batchelor was so courteous as to say,

"Read all the speeches. I don't wish you to shorten your argument. If you want to read the passages do so! we are entirely in your hands." The judges actually found certain passages objectionable. They attached no great significance to them. Justice Batchelor said, "The impression left on my mind is that on the whole, despite certain passages

### *Tilak Maharaj*

which are *rightly* objected to by the prosecution the general effect could not naturally and probably be to cause disaffection."

Justice Shah said 'undoubtedly there are some *objectionable* passages in these speeches.

\* \* I am unable to say that the natural and probable effect of the speeches taken as a whole on the minds of those to whom they were addressed would be to bring into hatred or contempt, or to excite disaffection towards the Government established by law in British India."

It certainly is not the mere personal triumph of Mr. Tilak that is achieved by these pronouncements but it is really the triumph in part of the cause of free speech for which Mr. Tilak has had to stand so much tribulation.

By the time the High Court of Judicature at Bombay quashed the judgment of the District Magistrate of Poona, cancelled the bonds into which Mr. Tilak had entered and set Mr. Tilak's tongue free to serve its master in bringing home to the Indian nation its own responsibility, the year 1916 had drawn almost to a close. It was on the 9th of November that the happy news of Mr. Tilak's triumph and the vindication of British Justice flashed

## *Heroes of the Hour*

through the wires to all parts of the country. Congratulations poured in on Mr. Tilak from every nook and corner of Bharatavarsha and testified to the great esteem he was held in. Two days after Mr. Tilak was set free by the High Court, he addressed an audience on the question of 'the work before us' and gave the message of 'work, work and work.' He drew pointed attention to the timidity of certain people who mourned the decision of Maharashtra of having formed the Home Rule League and also of those who were prepared to give money, everything in fact, but would not help with their names. He appealed to the triumph of constitutional agitation and called upon men to join the Home Rule League in thousands if not lakhs before the Congress held its sittings. The stage of talking was past he said and their sphere now lay in action. With such a programme before him it need not be said that Mr. Tilak achieved in the brief time before him very very great deal indeed. Between 1914 and 1916 an amendment had been accepted by the Congress to its constitution which created a doorway to the Nationalist leaders to enter it. So in the cold weather of 1916 when the Congress met on the

### *Tilak Maharaj*

banks of the Gumti at Lucknow, what, eight years ago, the Bombay moderate leaders had expected was fulfilled in so far as it related to the gaining over of the Congress by the nationalists. The country sent up from all parts, men who were strong in their convictions to attend the Congress in large numbers and the Lucknow Congress in addition to being a United Congress, also proved to be the Congress which made a definite demand of Home Rule though the description of the demand was not under this exact name. The Congress Moslem League scheme of Reforms drawn up by the committees appointed was passed by the Congress and a mandate was given to the associations in the country including the Home Rule Leagues to agitate for Self-Government on the lines of the scheme during 1917. The Speech that Mr. Tilak delivered at the Congress on Self-Government was characterised by sober vigor. He put it 'the days of wonders are gone. You cannot feed now 100,000 people on a few crumbs of bread as you did in Jesus's days. The attaining of this object cannot be achieved by the wonders of the heaven. *You* have to do it.'

This message still ringing in the ears of the



### *Heroes of the Hour*

country, Mr. Tilak set about propogandist work. Even in public life, it is one thing to strut in the lime-light of city life addressing in the superior English language admiring crowds that are easily lured by an opportune advertisement of a catching nature. It is another to speak—speak to thousands and thousands it may be—to unsophisticated hearts in the tongue natural to the audience and the speaker as well, most often under the canopy of heaven. Those who know the difference realise that after all it is the rural worker that has the real enjoyment of his work while his more noisy brother the urban demagogue has probably a little compensation in the title he gets in public print and on formal occasions. It is unnecessary to journey into the interior of Maharashtra with Mr. Tilak. He was here, there, everywhere. The way in which he worked has however to be specifically noted. Pan Supari functions play an important part in the reports you have of Mr. Tilak's work. Sometimes these functions were substitutes for long formal lectures. Long formal lectures have a value of their own. But Pan Supari functions appear to be more social, homely and in greater keeping with the traditions of Indian



### *Tilak Maharaj*

life. It was there that Mr. Tilak was at his highest in touching the hearts of the populace and it was there that presents were made to him of offerings of platefuls of rupees for the cause of Home Rule. All this enhanced popularity of a leader who was already popular could not but affect the sensitive imagination of some Bureaucrats at any rate. Local Bureaucracy waited for a hint from Delhi and when that was given in the form of a mistaken circular they once more set the wheels of repression in motion. This time the Government of Bombay did not act. It was the Government of Punjab that dreamt a dream. It dreamt that Mr. Tilak, as also Mr. Bepin Chandra Pal, was going to Punjab to raise a revolt among the sturdy races of that province of the five sacred rivers. The moment appeared very dangerous in the dream. So the Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab whose antics in the Imperial Legislative Council have now become a bye-word in all circles of India sent an order to Mr. Tilak neither to enter nor to reside in Punjab. Mr. Tilak wired immediately that he had absolutely no intention of going to Punjab or Delhi and requested to be acquainted with the information the

### *Heroes of the Hour*

Punjab Government had acted upon so that he might do the needful in the matter on his own behalf. His representation received no satisfactory consideration. Except that the Punjab Government helped to heighten suspicion against Mr. Tilak in the minds of his enemies and to deepen the sense of love his brethren in the country bore towards him, this incident had no other effect. Mr. Tilak does not lose by his enemies being more confirmed in their folly. He certainly gains by his friends bearing more and more love towards him. The Punjab order has not yet been publicly cancelled though all other repressive orders passed by all other Governments have been cancelled in consequence of a broader policy now being pursued. It is significant however that Mr. Tilak's presence in Delhi for the deputations and interviews was not objected to.

The whole of the year 1917 was a year of very strenuous work for Mr. Tilak on behalf of Home Rule. Though others have shared with him the toil that has produced the splendid results we see in Maharashtra, there is absolutely no doubt that his inspiration it is which, given in the spirit of a Hindu Educationist (Brahman), has contributed most to the

### *Tilak Maharaj*

grand response from Western India to *the* pulsating movement of India.

His eloquent plea on behalf of Volunteering in the midst of Home Rule work has again proclaimed at once his patriotism for the country and his sense of duty to the Government.

"I shall give up the Home Rule movement if you do not come forward to defend your Home. If you want Home Rule, be prepared to defend your Home. Had it not been for my age, I would have been the first to volunteer. You cannot reasonably say that the *ruling* will be done *by* You and the fighting *for* You."

These words are still fresh to the ears of all hearing Indians.

Few incidents more have to be recorded. For one thing they are too near to be adequately appraised. For another it is certainly difficult to maintain their proportion in a short life-sketch.

The Indian population has to a certain extent felt that Mr. Tilak must have been their mouth-piece at the Home Rule Deputation but that is after all a minor matter. In spite of it, to-day the whole country accepts him the foremost leader though of course

## *Heroes of the Hour*

he himself has made the following words he addressed to the poor ryots the rule of his life.

"I am myself a poor man like you and I have no greater privileges whatsoever. I earn my livelihood by doing some business as you do. I do not see any difference between what is done on behalf of the rich and what is done on behalf of the poor. I have long been thinking as to what are the grievances of the ryots, what difficulties are ahead of them, what help they require, and what things are necessary to be done. I have been doing this as a poor ryot myself and on that account not only do I feel sympathy for you but I feel proud that I am *one* of you.

Do not be afraid of speaking out things which are plain in themselves. There might be some trouble but nothing can be had without any trouble. Home rule is not going to be dropped into your hands from the sky."

May the great Tilak Maharaj be with us long in health and strength to lead us loyally and patriotically to that goal which has consistently been his from the start—*Home Rule*.



DR. SIR S. SUBRAMANIA IYER



## DR. SIR S. SUBRAMANYA IYER

### I. INTRODUCTORY

SOUTH India has never been poor in talent, and among the contemporaries of Sir Subramanya Iyer may be easily mentioned men who, in different walks of life, have made an enduring reputation. Between the early days of 1869 when he was enrolled as a High Court Vakil and these historic times when he is playing so unique, inspiring and decisive a part in shaping the future of the country, men of acknowledged eminence as judges and jurists, of lasting renown as administrators, of unflinching courage and sturdy devotion as makers of public opinion, and of profound mastery of the literature of a foreign tongue have left their mark. Their names have become a part of South Indian history and their marbled monuments exist not in indifferent statuary, but in the silent homage paid to their worth and work as

## *Heroes of the Hour*

one mentions their names. Sir Subramanya Iyer, till yesterday, belonged to this category of what may respectfully be called the worthies of South India. But his intrepid heroism in a supreme hour of trial has entitled him to a place with men whose life has become a part of the heritage of the sons and daughters of all-India. Among the living he takes rank to-day with Messrs. Tilak and Gandhi in the contribution he has made to national enrichment.

Mr. Gandhi is of a type which the world produces once in a way, a type that recalls after long gaps of time the height to which the power of human will can take one, and the conquest which lies within the reach of a great moral manhood. It is a life worthy of meditation for all times. From him to Balwanta Rao Tilak is to take a turn and traverse a distance to find a career dedicated from its very commencement to the service of national self-respect. It is the life of a man who, identifying his own prestige with the prestige of the nation and finding the latter mortifyingly low, spoke time after time truths to the chagrin of the powers that be, and paid the penalty in the sentences to long terms of im-

prisonment served by him. It appears as though Mr. Tilak became unhappy outside prison walls and was only contented when he became a *tapasi* doing his penance, if necessary, in prison garb and on jail diet. He is a born hero, and created situations for himself unlike Mr. Gandhi who, faced by a tyrannous conjunction in a foreign land under the same sovereign power to which he was subject, illumined himself by a philosophy, religion and ethical code of conduct and overcame with their help the forces of unreasoning political power and prejudice. The greatest merit in Mr. Gandhi is that he has, after his return to India, kept himself steadfastly to those principles of life and living with the help of which he triumphed over his racial and political adversaries in South Africa. It is comparatively easy to rise to a moral altitude under the pressure of great emergencies; but to remain there, making a permanent abode of it, after those exigencies have passed away, not lapsing into currents of thought more congenial to the changed conditions, is indeed demonstrative of the hero that was always alive in Mr. Gandhi, although dormant, prior to the South African struggle. Especially

## *Heroes of the Hour*

when we take into consideration the elements trying to gain ascendancy by making every circumstance to contribute to personal prominence, it is a great relief, indeed to have in our midst a silent corrective factor in those principles which constitute Mr. Gandhi's life day by day. No doubt there was here and there a silent fear that some of his ubiquitous admirers or a few well-meaning friends of his, prompted by a perfectly humane consideration for a better standard of personal comfort to him, might be apt to draw him out of his chosen orbit of self-denial and simplicity. Human nature primarily is such that it more easily deviates from a thorny path of service on account of unconsciously deceptive solicitude of friends and admirers than on account of open hostility or detraction. It is not only princes who have their flatterers, it is not only high placed officials that have their sycophants. Persons like Mr. Gandhi are not exempt from both ; nay, they may have worshippers among big and small, and arch-priests who worship as much for the sake of the prominence that it gives them as such as for the sake of the heroism that merits worship. From such a danger Mr. Tilak is more exempt than Mr.

Gandhi—because he has had, if not an army of detractors, a cult of detractors. Of course, his followers he has always had, but to be known as a follower of Mr. Tilak has not been a passport even in all non-official circles. Whereas, in the case of Mr. Gandhi, the hallow of the South African triumph is still playing round his *pug-gree*, and his austere life since his settling down in India has established him as a monarch among men. He now belongs to the category of the ancient sage before whom the prince, descending the steps of the throne and laying aside his sceptre, bowed; and the man of meanest occupation felt drawn to unbosom all his trials and troubles. Of the genus of such, Mr. Gandhi's greatness will necessarily surround him with men some of whom, basking for the while in the reflected light and glow of the interpreter of *Ahimsa* in politics, may endeavour to make him somewhat of a great man after their own heart. From all such influences he has been absolutely free of taint; and he is a reserve power being outside parties and party politics and party machinations. The breath of politics is compromise, but there is compromise and compromise. There can be compromise for instance in the speed of one's progress.



## Heroes of the Hour

Instead of trying to finish a distance in ten hours, or instead of taking twenty hours, it may be agreed by compromise that the journey may occupy fifteen hours. But if one wants to go North and another West, there is no meaning in saying that as a compromise we should go one mile North and the next mile West. There can be no compromise in regard to the direction to which we want to turn our face. Mr. Gandhi could not be oblivious to compromise on lines that fetter further progress and muzzle us in regard to future demands. There are certain positions in politics which call for from the leaders almost an oath not to depart from an irreducible minimum of *mental rectitude*, and Mr. Gandhi is looked up to very rightly as a man of rectitude all in all. In Mr. Tilak the country has had a patriot first and foremost, and a politician next, during a long time when the country has had too many politicians without patriotism. In Mr. Gandhi, on the other hand, we have more than a patriot, an apostle to whom the prophets of the world now worshipped as the founders of the creeds known by their names, might repair to catch glimpses of real human greatness even in so

materialistic an age. In Mr. Tilak we find the hero as a patriot, in Mr. Gandhi—the HERO. Where he is a hero and where not, it will be idle to differentiate. For anything specific, self is necessary, is in fact indispensable. But “self” is a great circumscribing factor. It limits. Mr. Gandhi has worked the “self” out of his nature and he is therefore radiance that is not colored by “self.” India has produced within our own memory men who have cast the “self” from them ; the greatest example we can give of such a life is that of Sri Ram Krishna Paramahamsa. But the self-less Rama Krishna was “at rest” as it were. He was a great influence even at rest. But he was only at rest—whereas Gandhi is “dynamic.” “Dynamic,” having inhaled the agony and the suffering of men and women, moved by the pathos of a social fabric which keeps them unhappy, and incapable of making themselves anything but miserable. His active interest even in politics is of that impersonal nature which has its roots in the immortal Gita and the Gospel of Christ. “Think not of the morrow” is the greatest economic doctrine ever propounded ; but how few have understood its import ! For, what is the

## *Heroes of the Hour*

“morrow” but another to-day ! If we know what to do to-day, if we do rightly what should be done to-day, will not the morrow take care of itself ? Such is the spirit that seems to me to underlie and inspire Mr. Gandhi’s sense of moral, dynamic responsibility. How can we qualify by any descriptive epithet his heroism in *living* this doctrine as a Hindu alone can *live* a philosophic creed or a religious dogma ?

When we come to Sir Subramanya Iyer, we come to much less rarefied atmosphere. An atmosphere which magnetises a vast community and lifts it out of mundane calculations and craven contentment, and frees it from a vicious bondage to perpetual distrust. Who can succeed in so revitalizing a task ? Men like Tilak, who have made the penitentiary another home, sink deep in the public mind ; but they fail at a crisis to fire the imagination with a sudden resolve to dare and stand together. They fill the mind with a sense of injustice endured by them on behalf of their country. That is a great service no doubt. But, their very suffering renders them incapable of suddenly revealing themselves as if under a flash light, when a great cause lies to be strangled, to give with a swift and peremptory wave of a bared,

bony arm the mandate to proceed no further and depart from the scene while all eyes gaze in astonishment amidst a breathless suspense. It reminds one of the classic lore of India where power on the physical plane stood strangely devitalised for wrong-doing in the presence of spiritual authority. A voice, a glance, a passing shadow of the latter has time and again arrested the descent of the blow that had been aimed by the mighty against the forlorn. Gladstone's voice against Turkish atrocities was not a political voice—nor was it a voice in the wilderness. But it fell upon a political people; and although it reverberated through two continents, it took a long time to be of avail on the plane of political happenings. That is the nearest approach of a parallel we can find from England where a political situation excited from one of her greatest men the wrath of a prophet. Many others might have felt as Gladstone, and many others might have found perhaps stronger words. But from him the words sounded like a doom. And why? Entirely because of the Man. Of course here, there have been no atrocities under British Rule as under the Turkish. There never were. But it is not atrocities alone that provoke

## *Heroes of the Hour*

men's passion. There are men and communities to whom no hurt less than the loss of a limb is a hurt. There are also others to whom clear abuse of authority under conditions that lead to the irresistible conclusion that a national injury is contemplated is sufficient to provoke their appearance as an embodiment of the sense of honor that feels betrayed if not outraged. Many may be provoked in this manner, but the provocation felt by one man more than by the others can and does alone arrest attention. If that man will not and does not feel provoked—at the right time, feeling his responsibility solely to a power within himself, as the agent of a propelling moral impulse, and act as an *asthra* of an unseen force, if he does not feel and act so—the wrong remains. It is not planning in secret by a band of young men in despair and revenge that will succeed where protests from citizens and the accredited organs of public opinion fail. For such planning becomes and is no more than a form of guilt; guilt has nowhere conquered wrong and oppression. It may at best make the authorities concerned more wary—but it does not convert them so as to make them realise that they have miscalculated the forces they have



to deal with. It is not so much a case of right and wrong with the authorities as a case of success or failure of a policy. When their policy, however objectionable it may be, is opposed by a form of guilt, the authorities must feel bound to put down guilt in any form and for any purpose. So, reconsideration of the policy that has excited discontent is hampered by the resolution to stamp out a policy of guilty terrorism. At the same time, we have seen how the protests like those of an Indian public go unheeded. What is the remedy? The remedy lies in the moral consciousness of men esteemed by the Government and the country, *men who have been honored by the rulers of the land, and who enjoy the esteem of the public.* It is because these men have been overtaken by a moral turpitude, and look upon themselves as a race of human fairies afraid to tread the ground of their native land with a callous disregard of the moral responsibility that birth in a country imposes,—it is because of these men behaving as they do, that protests fail to achieve their object and discontent going underground forges remedies worse than the disease. Far be it from us to say that men should dispise the tokens of good will of

## *Heroes of the Hour*

Government. So long as Government does the duty of organised society, whether or not it is directly responsible to the people, it must be the source from which flow tokens of esteem for services to the state and the public. But every man who has been so honoured and rewarded ought to consider his moral responsibility to the cause of good government much greater than that of the man in the street. Much shall be expected of those who have more than the rest. If a man has the insignia of a knighthood, it is not to be condemned to the purpose of keeping him an adorned doll ever afterwards—a walking display of pieces of state jewellery lent for his life, along with the flashing brilliants of his own purchase, so aptly suggestive of an emasculating estimate of the obligations of citizenship. These ribbons are not meant for strangling one's manhood; on the other hand they must be regarded as emblems of manly distinction and higher leadership. It is this readiness to stand aloof from great issues with unconcern, because one has held a high office, or one has received a notable distinction, it is this that is the worst of our assets as a people. "How can I?" comes to them 'at every step

—as though it is for purchasing one's servitude that Government honors a man. What a waste of loyalty to the country lies in the cart-load of titled humanity that India has to-day—which believes itself legally and morally estopped from being a power for good, an entity in the progress of the country. These men constitute in fact a species of "foreclosed" humanity, not liable to be redeemed by the country that owns them !

If every one who has come by success in life would not consider that he holds that success in trust for the good of the country, to serve its highest interest at the hour of call, that all that falls to one's good luck or merit must be an asset to the country of his birth and that it will be a crime and a sin for him to disinherit it by ignoring its travails or better days and its trials at the present hour by burying his head in the affixes and prefixes to his name, then he is the greater enemy to the country than even the authorised or unauthorised wrong doers in public or in secret. For the first time in the history of India the one man who acted as though all he had from the Government were for the country, who acted as though he had invested in a bank

## *Heroes of the Hour*

to hand a cheque to a public benefaction, who behaved as one who in serving the Government did not part with his regard for the good repute of the Government, and who certain of obloquy from high quarters sprang forward to face the rulers with his past prestige and his present conviction—the first man to act in this manner in all India is Sir Subramanya Iyer. We do not forget the unforgettable Pherozesha Mehta. But he was at no time a servant of the Crown and the moral weight that attaches to high office in India and among Englishmen who deal with India was not present in his case. Furthermore, a lion among men as he was, and although he never lacked for the fraction of a second in his whole life time courage to face any mortal howsoever high and vindicate his high sense of self-respect—he yet lacked to some extent faith in his countrymen. This lack of faith held him back from countenancing many things other popular leaders have studiously encouraged, which he looked upon probably as dreams, if not shams. He no doubt never cared to enter into compromises, as he thought, of an unsound character either with Government or with his colleagues. He is believed to have deplored to the last day of his life the mistake of Gokhale

in compromising on the question of special representation to Mahomedans. He was beside himself with fear and anger that Gokhale might again "spoil" the South African settlement by his readiness to compromise. He stalked out of the Legislative Council as a protest against the way in which a Revenue Bill was sought to be passed by the Bureaucracy, rejecting every representation on the people's side, a step which Gokhale would not have taken in the first instance perhaps, but which he followed tendering if not an apology an explanation of personal regret. Still Mehta was furious at such propositions as boycott, swadeshi, national education and passive resistance as a political programme—because of his lack of faith in the people. In this respect also Sir Subramanya Iyer is a contrast to Sir Pherozesha Mehta. Not that he is unaware of what Sir Pherozesha was aware, but that he takes the view not of a political leader, but the view of a spiritualised disciple of the *Gita*. The *result* is not for *us*. Praise and dispraise, success and failure are not for *us*. Our responsibility is to act whether others do or do not follow, we would have done our duty by our own action,



## *Heroes of the Hour*

has always been his faith and the spirit of his conduct. In his view that is the sum total of the reward to which we are entitled. This is the faith, the doctrine, the outlook, the every day talk of the Vedantin, and Sir Subramanya Iyer's life is the life of a born Vedantin, in every respect—as a lawyer, as a judge, as a citizen, as a political leader. Let his faith in Vedanta depart to-morrow, he will become not an irreligious man, but a cold, calculating, sympathy-expressing, technically religious, conforming, careful man, ever regardful of his "position" and most solicitous of his "respectability." The spirit of the *Vedantin* is in his blood and it has been in every phase of his career asserting itself till at last he consciously came by his own nature as it were, after his retirement from the Bench. The Gospel of Vivekananda could have appealed to no one more strongly than it did to Sir Subramaniam when the Swamiji was in Madras. Later on, when he plunged into Theosophical literature, it was in the way of research and inquiry. The result was he had undergone a schooling in which the performance of a duty took no thought of impediments and consequences. When to such a man the hour of

test came, it found him true to his creed ; and his titles, his exofficial position, his personal acquaintance with the high and the great,—none of these stood as an impediment. He flung them aside as a perspiring man casts off his superfluous clothes. They were all right in their own way, but not for suffocating the man so as to lose him his manhood, so as to make him a creature of gew-gaws and knick-knacks. With the intrepidity of a man who is to leap into a current, he made a summary mental disposal of them all. What belonged to him he realised was his wrinkled skin covering his frail bones—was that too much of a dedication to the land of his birth ? Not so far as he was concerned. Be it success or failure, the time he thought had come to interpret in the spirit of the *Vedanta* the duty that had been accepted by him as the President of the Home Rule League, and it is this interpretation that makes him more than a South Indian worthy—a hero of the hour—rather *the* hero of *the* hour.

## CHAPTER II

### FROM SCHOOL TO COUNCIL

Between the celebration of Sir Subramanya Iyer's birthday on 2nd October 1917, at Adyar and the birth of his father in 1794, *i.e.*, between the father, and the son of to-day a period of 123 years lies before us. It is a period that represents the practical growth of British Power from the stage of struggle for British ascendancy to the period of struggle of the people for Self-government under British paramountcy. The object of British Rule in India seems to have been undergoing accomplishment during all this time, as the result of numberless influences of every conceivable variety converging after all in what appears to be as natural a result as a plant bringing forth the expected fruit. In fact, if the immediate forbear of the subject of this sketch should appear to-day on the scene, although he might be astonished at a good many things, still, he will think nothing more natural than that power should return to the people themselves, the sovereignty of England being retained. Those were days when although the people felt the need for the consolidation of a strong, central power, to secure freedom

from strife, they were as a fact much more accustomed to manage their affairs than we happen to be at the present day. Those who think and speak of British Rule as though it had always been by our side to keep us as a spoon-fed orphan left in the hands of a foreign matron, and stand aghast at the idea of our burdening ourselves with Self-government, have only to recall the state of Europe and England when the father was born and what it is to-day when the son submits his memorandum for the better government of India ! Then, Napoleon's first Consulate had not come into existence and ten years were yet to elapse for his becoming Emperor and shaking the peace of Europe as Wilhelm Kaiser alone has done after him. Now, the rule of the Romanofs has terminated and the Democracy of Russia is on the first adventurous voyage of most Democracies that overthrow Absolutism. In England at the time of the birth of the father, pocket-boroughs were in full prime, and thirty-five years had to elapse for cities like Manchester to obtain representation. Now, during the life time of the son, the House of Lords has passed into political sterility. In India, at that time, Tippu had

not yet been overthrown and the British were still fighting for recognition as the paramount power, whereas to-day, an Indian Prince has taken part in the Imperial Council with the representatives of Overseas Dominions, and an Indian who had sat in the House where Burke had pleaded and protested on behalf of India has gone to his rest, having almost continued the work of Burke as a born native of this country. The name of another Indian has gone into the history of an enfranchised British Colony. Nevertheless, this vast period is between the birth of the father and the life-time of the son who is the subject of this narration. We have been, as "English-educated" section, so much accustomed to measure time only by European events and Anglo-Indian achievements that these seem to have driven a wedge between our own period and that of our predecessors, and nothing seems to exist to our vision on the opposite side of the wedge.

Sir Subramanya Aiyar's father was a man of no mean powers of accomplishment in his own day in his native district of Madura. He was known by the name of "Suravally" "Whirlpool" Subbaiyar, an appellation in can-



did token of his ceaseless activities which showed the extraordinary power of devotion to any cause in which he was engaged, and the faith he had in himself. Born in 1794, he died in 1844 when Subramanya Aiyar, his last and third son was an infant, two years old. He was the Vakil of Ramnad Zemindar, Vakil in those days meaning not a legal practitioner but a kind of foreign minister for transacting business with the authorities of the East India Company. Every Ruler, and Zemindar and every great financier had his "Vakeel." Subbaiyar rendered signal services to the zemin at a time when its continuance and integrity were threatened and the old tradition, still surviving in the district, tells of his devotion to the cause of his master, regardless of insecurity of person and property of those days and with an intrepid courage which took no thought of possible personal risks. The integrity of Ramnad as a Zemindari to-day, is due to his services more than to any other single circumstance, and it may be stated in passing that neither Subbaiyar nor the then Zemindar ever choose to think of themselves as Brahmins or non-Brahmins in the sphere of secular and civic functions that devolved on

## *Heroes of the Hour*

them as the leading men of the day of their native district. The present Zemindar of Ramnad, in keeping himself clear of caste bias and antagonism in matters of civic and political importance, worthily follows the traditions of his house.

After the death of his father, the care of the child fell upon the mother who survived her husband for a period of 55 years, and the care of the family fell on the eldest son of Subbaiyar, Ramasawmy Aiyar by name who rose to be the Huzur Sheristadar of the district. When young Subramaniam came up to the High School standard in his fourteenth year—he came under the influence of a European Principal of the New Zilla School just then started, Mr. William Williams to whom Sir Subramanya Iyer even to-day attributes his love of classical English prose works. Those were days of the Crimean War. Although illustrated journalism had not then advanced much, still there were a few illustrated journals which Mr. Williams on receiving his English Mail would spread on his table and explain the events as though he was by his own fire-side in the bosom of his family circle. It was this capacity to make intellectual companions of the young that

the modern European staff totally disdain. Sir Subramaniam even to-day remembers how Mr. Williams would make English Grammar interesting with the help of examples from the speeches and writings of great Parliamentary worthies. For instance to show the difference in the use of *a* and *the* Mr. Williams would quote Fox's statement comparing Pitt with himself:—"I never wanted *a* word; Pitt never wanted *the* word" Subramaniam won a scholarship of Rs. 5 a month, then prize after prize, and passing an examination which had then been instituted by the name of the First Standard examination, had the pleasure of seeing his name in print, and that too in the Gazette. To be accurate, it was the Collector who noticed that a boy of Madura had passed creditably and on learning from the Sheristadar, who was no other than young Subramaniam's brother, he offered the boy of 17 a place in the Collectorate on a pay of 20 Rs. a month. He continued in this place with spells of long leave now and then, and with a sudden lift to a Tashildari for a brief period after he passed his B.L. in 1868. For nine years he divided his time in passing first a Pleadership test and then finding that

### *Heroes of the Hour*

it placed him absolutely at the mercy of the District Judge as the rules then stood, in passing his Matriculation, and F.A. in 1865 and 1866 by private study and his B.L. in 1868, also by private study, standing 1st in 2nd class. He followed up his success by an year of apprenticeship under an English Barrister Mr. Mills, Official Reporter, and settled down in Madura in the practice of his profession—with his professional independence secure from the high-handed interference of erratic Judges and Magistrates. Amongst the many suits at the earliest period of his legal practice two deserve prominent mention, one in which he was retained on behalf of the Ramnad Zemindary—continuing the work of his father in another sphere to that ancient *Samasthanam*, in the conduct of which the late Mr. J.D. Mayne as his senior found Subramaniya Aiyar quite capable of being left in sole charge of it upto the time of its trial in Madura. And the other was a temple suit in which the Dharmadhikaries of the Sri Meenakshi temple were sued to make good a large deficit of Rs. 40,000 and one of them was by the judgment of the Court ordered to refund the sum. Subramaniam was a Municipal Commissioner and a Devas-

thanam Committee member ; and in this double capacity the city of Madura owes to him a number of lasting improvements and additions to the activities of the city and its attractiveness. By 1875 when King Edward as Prince of Wales visited Madura Subramanya Iyer, then only in his thirty-third year by which time a Mofussil Vakil now aspires to become a Munsiff somewhat late in his career, had become the leading non-official citizen of the town and was chosen to present the People's Address to the Royal visitor. To be chosen for so signal a distinction at such an early age shews the remarkable zeal and intelligence and earnestness which should have characterised his work and impressed the public and the authorities. The fact is, even at so early an age, he never fashioned his work on behalf of the public for the favour of the Government and his attitude towards the Government was dictated by considerations of the lasting good-will of the people. "Mani Iyer of Madura" as he was then called became as distinguished a citizen as one could name in the presidency and when in 1884 he was nominated a member of the Legislative Council he was the first representative Indian to take his seat in the Council, the first repre-



## *Heroes of the Hour*

representative of the intellectual middle class of the country, who brought to the aid of the Government on a footing of dignified equality the contribution of the natural interpreters between the rulers and the ruled. In fact he was the first gleam of public spirit in the Legislative Chamber. The *Hindu* of the day under the ever memorable direction of Mr. G. Subramaniya Iyer commended his nomination in a sub-leader, not in a thanksgiving spirit of "Blessed be the name of the Lord"—but in that striking manner of public approbation of which Mr. G. Subramanya Iyer will ever remain so conspicuous a master. Its comment is worth producing as shewing the reason of the esteem in which Sir Subramanya Aiyar was held then and the manner in which nominations to the Council used to be made. Sir Subramanya Aiyar may well be regarded as the ancestor of the present non-official members who are his successors of the third descent. At the time he was nominated, the principle of nomination underwent a slight change in that the selection came to be from an ornamental one to a utilitarian one. The next stage arrived with Lord Cross's Act and the third with Morley's reforms. It is esteemed a unique good fortune

among Hindus, if an individual is alive to see his fourth lineal descendant born, and the fourth in decent to Sir Subramanya Aiyar's Council will be the one under the new Reforms—the Council of an autonomous India. How he has worked towards such an evolution steadfastly and with unfailing loyalty and courage need not be narrated—at great length just in this place. But Mr. G. Subramanya Iyer's leader in the *Hindu* on his nomination shews how the constitution of the Council stood then. Its observations ran as follows:—

“There is not another native gentleman in this presidency who understands the views and wishes of his countrymen and particularly the condition of the agricultural population, more thoroughly than the Hon. Mr. S. Subramanya Iyer, B.L., who takes the place of Mr. Gajapathi Rao in the local legislature..... By his hereditary influence, his ability, character and public spirit, his name is very widely known in Southern India. Nor has he been known on a single instance to sacrifice public interest for his own. In almost every public movement his co-operation has been invited and readily given. It is in recognition,

we believe, of his public spirit as much as his valuable service to his fellow citizens of Madura as the vice-president of the local municipality, that the Government has now invited Mr. Subramanya Iyer to join their legislative council. The appointment is of a kind altogether different from those that have been hitherto made. It shows that the days when the legislative council was openly treated as a sham are passed and that the remonstrance of the public against entrusting the responsible work of legislation to men of absolutely no qualification whatsoever, has come to be regarded as reasonable. The Hon. S. Subramanya Iyer is the first non-official member of the legislative council whom the public will be glad to recognise as a fair representative of themselves, and will be willing to leave their side of the question to be represented by him, so far of course, as one individual member can represent it. It will have to be remembered that his appointment is not, as in the case of some of his colleagues and predecessors, owing to his silks and satins or to the favour of the Secretariat; he owes his appointment to the high public estimation that he so deservedly enjoys."

*Dr. Sir S. Subramanya Iyer*

Soon after his experience in the Council Sir Subramanya Aiyar was one of those who assisted at the birth of the Indian National Congress at Bombay in the Christmas week of 1885 under the presidency of W. C. Bannerjee supported by Dadabhai Naoroji and Hume. He related his experience of the Council in the following part of the speech which shews how the President of the Home Rule League of to-day viewed thirty-two years ago as an accepted popular representative of the people by the Government an arrangement in which the Executive was everything and the popular element nothing when it differed from the Executive. If Sir Subramanya Aiyar writes and speaks to-day so strongly as to be mistaken for a vehement critic of the Government, it is because for decades he has seen the inutility of expecting the Bureaucracy to divest itself of its irresponsible power. Then, he thought the position had only to be stated in all *bonafides* and that the statement would evoke a cordial response and co-operation from the custodians of power here, and that an era of successive progressive accomplishments ensuing from mutual respect and trust will dawn to the benefit of India as a trust of

## *Heroes of the Hour*

the British Crown. But he has seen time after time the Bureaucracy playing a game of obstruction and what else can he do before his voice grows cold except be vehement in the expression of his innermost convictions on behalf of his motherland for which he has the love not simply of a patriotic citizen but of a man of faith in the great spiritual laws of his country? No man wants to see his country go to dogs, and when that country is what India is to a Hindu, let it be borne in mind that all his earthly loyalty is only a means for serving the cause of his country. It is this spirit that was manifest in Sir Subramanya Aiyar when he made his speech in the first session of the National Congress and it is this spirit that pervades the clarion call of his to his countrymen after a further experience of thirty years. The substance of that speech in his own words deserves to be reproduced here.

In seconding a resolution, moved by the late Mr. (subsequently Justice) Telang, Mr. Subramanya Iyer said:

“ Though my connection with the Madras Legislative council has not been quite as long as Mr. Telang’s in Bombay—I have been only a year in it—I think I may fairly claim to



*Dr. Sir S. Subramanya Iyer*

have had sufficient experience of its working to enable me to form an opinion as to their utility. I should not fail to admit, however, that the actual working of these councils is enveloped in somewhat of a mystery and to one outside it, it is a puzzle how it is that the non-official members are so little able to do good of any kind.

It was not till I myself became a member of the Madras Legislative Council that I saw how unjustly our friends in the council were censured in the majority of instances and what little influence they possessed in the council either for good or for evil. With the best intentions in the world, I may assure you, gentlemen, they find themselves in the *wrong* place, and so long as the present constitution of these Councils remains unchanged it is idle to expect that these non-official members will prove of any great use to the country..... If one carefully noted the successive laws that are enacted by these Councils, one would plainly see that the functions of these Councils are limited to registering the decrees of the executive Government and stamp them with legislative sanction.....Every suggestion that I made was received with great considera-

## *Heroes of the Hour*

tion so long as it did not trench on the principle already determined upon by the government. So far as that goes, I must do the Government the justice to say that they are not only anxious to hear non-official opinion, but they also try to adopt it as far as possible, consistent with the principle of the measure. The drawback then as I just now pointed out, is that the principles of the measures that are introduced into the Councils are previously determined by the Government, behind the back of the Legislative Councils as it were, and the difficulty of the non-official members consists in their not being able to modify them in any manner."

In the Council, Subramanya Aiyar addressed himself to a measure of practical importance and placed on the statute book an Act for securing compensation according to market value for tenants' improvements in Malabar. Mr. Subramanya Aiyar's solid contribution on behalf of Malabar tenants will ever remain a monument testifying to his religious devotion to the interests of the poor as against the claims of the rich and the well-to-do. Later on as a Judge of the High Court he conferred a judicial charter of security of holding on the

*Dr. Sir S. Subramanya Iyer*

Zemindari *raiyyat* which was made subsequently the main principle of a legal enactment during the Governorship of Lord Ampthill—one of the best Governors Madras has had. Mr. Subramanya Iyer's services in this connection were acknowledged by Mr. G. S. Forbes the member in charge of the Madras Estates Land Bill of 1905. Adverting to the status of the Zemindari tenant the Hon. Mr. Forbes said:—"I do not know whether it is really necessary at this time of the day to enter upon any critical examination of the status of the Zemindar and the ryot, seeing that the whole question has been so lucidly discussed and the rights inherent in the status of both so clearly laid down in recent years in well known judgments by the High Court under the able guidance of those very distinguished Judges, Sir Muthusawmy Aiyer and Sir Subramanya Aiyer. These Judgments lay down in effect that *qua* the public cultivable land of the estate the Zemindar is not a landlord in the sense of the English landlord and tenant, nor the ryot a tenant, but the former is an assignee of the Government land revenue and that the latter possess the rights of occupancy indefeasible so long as he pays the Zemindar's due. Nothing

has strengthened the hands of the Government in prosecuting this legislation so much as the expositions of the law which these judges have from time to time given forth on the questions which are fundamental in this bill, and if this bill passes, it is a deep debt of gratitude that the agricultural population of this presidency will owe to the memory of Sir Muthuswamy Aiyar and to the labours of Sir Subramanya Aiyer." Lord Ampthill as President of the Council put the matter in the tersest manner possible by stating in his speech—"I have heard it said that the ryot of Southern India will never know how much he owes to Justice Sir Subramanya Aiyer for having declared that 'the common law of Madras gives every ryot an occupancy right irrespective of the period of his holding.' It is this opinion which has been upheld in repeated declarations of Government which we wish to focuss and stereotype."

It should be made clear in this place that Mr. Subramanya Aiyar's fearless advocacy of the principle of occupancy right irrespective of the period of holding, which he entertained so strongly in favour of the Zemindari ryot was not confined to his benefit only. On the other

And Sir Subramaniam declared himself in favour of the same principle in regard to the ryotwari holder so far back as 1886. In seconding a proposition moved by Mr. D. E. Wacha drawing attention to the increasing poverty of the country, Mr. Subramanya Aiyar said :—" I believe the history of the ryotwari administration has led to the conclusion that it is better to have a system of Zemindari administration with all its faults than the ryotwari system. It may be said that the Zemindars, in some cases, screw out every farthing that they can from their tenants; but the Zemindars as we have seen, can be reached by a Tenancy Act whereas in the presidency of Madras, it is impossible to control by any Tenancy Act the exactions of the Revenue authorities. I should like to see a Government servant on our side of India who is prepared to admit that the right of enhancement ought to be defined and limited by Legislative enactment as against the Government." Since then, he has never missed an opportunity to declare in the most unmistakable terms possible that without some kind of permanent ryotwari settlement, the condition of agriculturists in Southern India could never be improved.



### *Heroes of the Hour*

Before he settled down in Madras, Mr. Subramanya Iyer had, even as a Vakil practising in a Mofussil station, made his mark not only as an exceptionally able advocate, an acute and penetrative lawyer, a searching cross examining counsel, but as a member of the Bar who had a high regard for the privileges of his profession and would not abuse them for personal gain. Outside his profession as a member of the Municipal Council of Madura, he had done memorable service in the improvement of the water-supply, sanitation, the amenities of civic life and the aesthetical claims of the capital of a renowned former principality of South India. As a member of the Devasthanam committee he was instrumental in restoring Rs. 40,000 to the Temple Funds which had been misappropriated and he added to the revenues of the Temple by obtaining the co-operation of leading merchants, and more important than these he introduced a standard of honesty and public spirit in the administration of the Temple funds and properties. These labours coupled with his intellectual abilities led to his nomination to the Legislative Council where also he fully utilised his opportunities so far

there might have been opportunities under a system of a patronising nod of recognition to a people's man in a stifled atmosphere of silent courtesies and customary mimicries. When the Congress was started he was one of the acknowledged representative men of India acknowledged by the people and the Government alike, and presented to the heir-apparent to the Throne as a worthy spokesman on behalf of his countrymen when he was only 33 years old. In spite of all these, his speeches in the first two Congresses shew abundantly that he did not allow his convictions as a patriotic citizen to be in the slightest degree deflected from their strength of feeling or expression by these recognitions of the authorities, nor did he allow his strong feelings on behalf of his country to interfere with his recognition of what was due to them in the way of loyal and cordial co-operation from him whenever it was sought for. In short he was not less of a public man for his co-operation with the Government, nor was that co-operation less sincere because of his ardent public spirit.

## CHAPTER III

### FROM THE BAR TO THE BENCH

With the reputation he had created for himself both as a lawyer and public man, it was not to be expected that Mr. Subramaniya Aiyar would continue to stay in the mofussil, although it was such an important place as Madura. He transferred his "headquarters" to Madras in 1885 and found he had enough to do in addition to his professional work as a member of the Legislative Council, of the Senate of the University, of the Mahajana Sabha, and as one of the foremost leaders in all public movements. His work in the High Court on behalf of his clients was more in the nature of assistance rendered to the judges of the High Court in the administration of justice than in the nature of desperate, hard pleading, ingenious hair-splitting, or throwing legal dust in the eyes of the judges. Those who are competent to judge of him as an advocate have been struck with the moral fervour of his advocacy, which was not assumed for the nonce, but was so distinctly, a kind of second

nature in him. He had of course the qualities of a born advocate, clearness of grasp, warmth of conviction, flow of language, and intellectual penetration. But these qualities alone do not and cannot endow an advocate with moral fervour. That comes of one's own mental and moral mould. The same facts and the same legal provisions in the custody of one lawyer may be utilised in an effective manner by him and to no purpose, entrusted to another. The way in which facts and arguments may be marshalled and a conviction produced may differ with the mental equipment and forensic training of each individual—but the most competent and successful of them may yet lack that iridescent glow which one could not help noticing when Sir Subramaniam is on his legs as a lawyer of a client or as an advocate of his country's cause. In other words, Sir Subramanya Aiyar infuses into his advocacy his own altruistic nature. Out of him the facts and statements, the arguments and the law applicable to them come with a clear mark of the personality in whom they have had their origin. In fact, he seems to be appealing to a higher nature than the one to which other lawyers and advocates seem to

## *Heroes of the Hour*

appeal, and relying on the inherent righteousness of his cause rather than the legal sanction it may have, he seems to enforce an opinion not for the sake of a client but for the sake of justice.

One may call this an art, a capacity, a witchery, or anything else one may please to term it, but there it was in him and it distinguished him above all the lawyers of his day, some of whom in mere "legal legerdemain" might have been more astute and painstaking than Subramaniam was. If this characteristic has been found in him only as a lawyer, it may be said that he was simulating for purposes of professional success a certain kind of superior sentimentality or sincerity. On the other hand, it has been with him in every other concern in which he has taken part. It was with him when as a young legal practitioner he took legal steps for the refund of Rs. 40,000 by a Trustee of the Madura Temple who had misappropriated it. It was with him when as a nominated member of the Legislative Council, he exposed the inutility of the constitution of these Councils at the earliest opportunity when he attended the first session of the National



Congress. It was there when he decreed the occupancy right of the Zemindari tenant irrespective of the period of holding so long as the agreed rent was paid. It has been there in the statements he has made time after time that the ryot under the Government was worse off than the Zemindari tenant since no law could touch the Government's claim to enhance the assessment. It was there recently in a most striking and conspicuous manner when he replied in the press to the speech of Lord Pentland, throwing off all reserve, facing the Government as though he spurned to regard himself as a culprit hiding his most earnest convictions in secret.

In taking the risk of popular displeasure, he has been no less courageous. In the evidence that he volunteered to give in the case brought against Mrs. Besant in 1912 he did not mind the popular verdict so long as his own opinion ran counter to the popular view. But it is not in these matters alone which are so well known to the public that Sir Subramanya Aiyar has followed the bent of his mind, leaving it to the public and the Government to judge of him as they pleased. In one instance when personal feelings ran high, accentuated to some extent

## *Heroes of the Hour*

by "caste feelings" and when the parties on one side happened to be his personal friends and followers, he loftily stood aloof from the contest which went to a court of law, against all pressure from the former as a procedure that could find no response in him. To anything in the nature of personal unpopularity with an intimate circle of friends, or a larger public he has willingly submitted himself instead of proving false to his own personal opinions. He could not be one kind of individual in dealing with the authorities, another in dealing with the public and a third with a circle of personal admirers. He cared for no kind of stage effect, and could give no kind of implied or explicit undertaking prejudicial to his convictions. Such a man in the profession of law is bound to rise to a level of his own and secure the respect of the Bench. He was appointed to act as Government Pleader in 1888 and there also while he made a great reputation for efficiency and trustworthiness, he kept himself clear of the least suspicion of improving his chances by entertaining any kind of executive bias, or by adopting a course of refined sycophancy, or any kind of conduct unworthy of public disclosure. In those early

days of the Congress especially between 1887 and 1895 when he was raised to the Bench permanently, he was in closest contact with the *Hindu* and its stalwart conductors Messrs. G. Subramanya Iyer and M. Viraraghavachariar, and with the Mahajana Sabha, which was the premier political association in the Presidency. Yet, he enjoyed the confidence of the Government in no stinted measure. The Government knew that his advice would be sincere and honest, and the public knew that it would be patriotic and honorable and would stand the test of public knowledge. In this respect, of not losing the confidence of one party for gaining the confidence of the other, among men of distinction in India—his is one of the five names that would be universally accepted, namely, Dadabhai Naoroji, M. G. Ranade, Pherozesha Mehta and Gandhi. Men like Tilak and Lajput Rai have been of course beyond the pale of Executive confidence. Other distinguished men in spite of their meritorious service in one direction or another fell into a thermometer which shewed a double reading, if not uniformly, at critical times at any rate. This distinguishing feature in Sir Subramanya

## *Heroes of the Hour*

Iyer's character is well brought out in the Editorial comment of the *Hindu* of those days when in 1891 Mr. Subramaniam was first appointed to act as a judge of the High Court in place of Sir T. Muthusawmy Iyer.

There was not then, nor is there now, in the Public Service or at the Bar another Muthusamy Iyer to succeed the great man. Not a lawyer, but a law giver, not simply a great judge but an equally eminent jurist, Muthusamy Iyer sat on the Bench as an emblem of Justice personified, patient, farseeing, riveted to the facts, intent upon the law, with fear and reverence holding fast the sceptre of justice, ever mindful not of the office or of its dignity, but of the weight of its responsibility—with the faith of a man who has to render an account of the slightest miscarriage before the Throne of Him who judges the earthly judge and culprit alike. Sir Muthusawmy Iyer was known as a model of humility not in the presence of Europeans only as so many of our high placed countrymen in and out of office are, but even before the latest "native" recruit to the office of a Munsiff of the last grade. It was not an inducted virtue in his case. That humility grew out of his greatness. But exemplary as

he was in being so considerate as to be regarded as almost meek, in unblemished judicial rectitude, and unapproachable judicial independence, in the scrupulous disregard of all extraneous considerations that would deflect him from the course of justice undefiled, he was like an upright flame that bore evidence from Earth to Heaven. The Executive found in him a model of personal respect, but found that as a judge they had to be content to stand at a distance from him, since as they approached him, they lacked the atmosphere that was necessary for taking one's breath. When they were face to face with him in his capacity as a judge, they found they were in a vacuum where they could hardly breathe, and were glad to be away from the place. His incessant care and concern on the Bench was not to be over-reached by legal ingenuity on the one hand or to be biassed unconsciously by taking even a cursory cognizance of the susceptibilities of the Executive on the other. When the experiment of having an Indian as a judge of the High Court was first embarked upon in 1877, long after Bengal and Bombay had obtained the privilege, as the result of the courageous



### *Heroes of the Hour*

impartiality of the then Governor, the Duke of Buckingham, the second "glorious little man" who has come out of England to India, - little did the authorities or the public of that day think that the first Indian appointed to the place would even after a lapse of forty years remain the best judge by far and away appointed since then. To such a man to find a successor was difficult, but the option of the Government anticipated the verdict of the public in the appointment of Mr. Subramaniam to a temporary vacancy caused by the illness of Sir T. Muthusawmy Iyer. The *Hindu* wrote of the appointment as follows:—

"There is not another Hindu gentleman in this presidency in whom the community has greater confidence or who has more endeared himself to it not merely by his attainments, a highly engaging manner, but by invaluable service he has rendered to it. He is perhaps the only instance known for many years of a Hindu gentleman who has won the confidence of the Government as well as the public. Mr. Subramanya Iyer was appointed by Sir M. E. Grant Duff for the first time as a member of the Legislative Council in which position he made himself so useful to Govern-

*Dr. Sir S. Subramanya Iyer*

ment in its Legislative business that for the first time Government learnt that an Indian gentleman could be more than a figure head in the council and that by associating Indian gentlemen with itself in this important and onerous work, it conferred no particular obligation on anybody but was seeking valuable and indispensable help in the discharge of its duty. The service that was thus rendered by Mr. Subramanya Iyer was so much appreciated by Government and his great merits as an advocate and lawyer commended themselves so strongly to the High Court that when the place of Government Pleader fell temporarily vacant the place was offered to him ; and indeed in this fresh sphere of duty he shewed such thorough conscientiousness and assiduity that at the end of his acting term he was warmly eulogised by the High Court. Imbued with a high sense of duty, ever anxious to do good, highly cultured, modest and sometimes diffident, Mr. Subramanya Iyer has filled no position in which he has not won fresh confidence and distinction and has not displayed to advantage the great and rare qualities of his head and heart. Government as well as the public

### *Heroes of the Hour*

have repeatedly and in different ways testified to the regard and trust that he has always inspired. In addition to responsible and honored offices, titular distinctions have been conferred in him and deserved better by none. Mr. Subramanya Iyer is not one of those unhappy and conscience smitten men who believe and act in the spirit that to secure the confidence of Government they should keep aloof from all public unofficial movements and poison the ears of the high placed officials against those work for public good according to their lights and opportunities."

In 1895, when the vacancy became permanent by the lamented death of Sir T. Muthusawmy Iyer, Mr. Subramanya Iyer's appointment was taken for granted by the public, and it would have been a rude disappointment indeed had his name been passed over. During the time he held the high office [from 1895 to 1907, besides decreeing the occupancy right of the Zemin-dari tenant, Mr. Subramanya Iyer did a great deal towards restoring to the women of the Madras Presidency a far higher legal status than the English Judges with their narrower notions of woman's proprietary rights derived from English Law were inclined to do.

*Dr. Sir S. Subramanya Iyer*

Whenever occasion arose, he enlarged the sphere of woman's authority under ancient Law, whether the question was in regard to her capacity to hold property, in regard to the interpretation of the term *Sridhanam*, in regard to her right to treat what became vested in her—as her “own property, not limited, but absolute, exclusive and separate, in every sense and devolving as such or in regard to her rights of adoption.” In all these issues Sir Subramanya Iyer's decision weighed in favour of the rights of woman in accordance with equity and justice and was calculated to raise her status from the footing of a dependant to a footing of equality, as far as the circumstances of the case would permit. He did not depart from the spirit of the Hindu Law so as to destroy the identity of the structure of Hindu Society in any of these decisions, but when the question arose whether a woman's right was to be extended from a certain point to its logical sequence, he did not hesitate for a moment from the admission that ancient Law in spirit was not against such extension.

## CHAPTER IV

### SINCE RETIREMENT

Owing to a persistent trouble in his eyes Sir Subramanya Iyer had to retire from the Bench eight months before the full period to entitle him to the maximum pension of a High Court Judge. Had he continued in service for this very short time he would not have had to forgo Rs. 5,000 per annum after nearly eleven years service on the Bench. In fact Sir Arthur Lawley felt the rigour of the technical requirement of the rules and would have cheerfully permitted Sir Subramaniam any latitude if he could have continued as a judge, doing such work as he could have done without positive injury to his eyes. His colleagues on the Bench and the Chief Justice would have suited themselves to his convenience with pleasure and with a sense of loyalty to one so uniformly esteemed by them. But Sir Subramaniam felt that he could not escape the imputation of one who stuck to an office to avoid pecuniary loss while he was not physically competent to discharge its duties. He knew that whether



the imputation would be made or not, he would deserve it and in any case he could not escape it from himself. The very consciousness of keeping himself glued to a seat, lest he should have to forgo a part of his annuity should have reduced him to a mental plight from which he would have revolted despite the strongest inducements to stay on from friends, and followers. But in retiring under these circumstances, he won in fact the esteem of the public even in laying down his office as he had won it in making himself eligible for the place and in fulfilling the expectations of the public while continuing in it.

He felt he had done with the secular side of his life after the 65th year, and after recovering from acute trouble on account of the complaint in the eye, he threw himself into work on the religious side. The formation of a *Parishad* for interesting the Hindu orthodoxy in social and religious questions and the institution of the Dharma Rakshana Sabha for securing better management of temples, *Mutts* and religious, charitable trusts were his work in the way of organisation. The issue of books in the *Suddha Dharma Mandal* series was his work in the way of diffusing a religious

### *Heroes of the Hour*

literature—bringing home to the English knowing Hindu section of the community—the treasures which would lie hidden from their view if not made familiar to them with the help of the English language. During all this time he was undergoing his psychic practices and with the help of competent Pundits he was finding his way into rather abstruse realms of Hindu Philosophy. Religion and Philosophy had always a strong attraction to Sir Subramaniam from so far back as 1882. In fact his fight of the Temple trustees soon after his enrolment as a Vakil was but an outward indication of the inherent reverence for religion in him. He was a devotee in every sense of the word, but a devotee who strove to go underneath forms rituals and symbols. However, he at no time despised forms—as being no more than forms—for he knew well that forms are necessary; at the same time he was not content with forms alone. Nor was he averse to recognising merit where form had been deliberately discarded by competent persons for worthy purposes.

Always of an enquiring spirit, his love of psychic research had free scope after he

*Dr. Sir S. Subramanya Iyer*

obtained freedom from secular occupations. A Theosophist from 1882, he was in the field much earlier than Mrs. Besant, having read Madame Blavatsky's works, and satisfied himself that the principles of Theosophy in no way clashed with his faith as a Hindu, and that it might possibly be of help to his understanding Hinduism somewhat better for his being an "English-educated" Hindu. Even in Theosophy what has appealed to him most is that side of it which deals with the Nature of Man as a being capable of spiritual development and the steps by which he comes to understand his limitations and the means of gradual illumination of his footsteps as he tries to leave those limitations one by one behind him. These subjects have a fascination for Sir Subramaniam beyond everything else, and he is as trustful as a child in seeking enlightenment on such problems. People have wondered at his loyalty to Mrs. Besant, thinking that he is led by the nose by a masterful lady of enticing eloquence and that he surrenders his discretion anticipating her wishes. Nothing can be a grosser or less informed interpretation of his true nature. He has looked upon Mrs. Besant as a fellow-

### *Heroes of the Hour*

worker in a field which to him means the field of final salvation individually. She is a foreigner and took to Theosophy as a mere accident when she happened to review the monumental work of Madame Blavatsky. She could not have been predisposed in its favour—so uncompromising an agnostic as she was. When such a woman became a Theosophist some years after he had become one certainly one must expect a man like Sir Subramaniam to shew her the utmost consideration and regard as a most welcome fellow-worker for the good of the country as well as of humanity. Sir Subramaniam's faith in Theosophic doctrines was strengthened at one time not by any European, but by an Indian Theosophist, a man well and deeply read in Western Science and Philosophy, and with a keen analytical perception of the merits of Hindu psychic Injunctions, the late Mr. T. Subba Row who died in 1890 and when he was only 33 and deeply deplored by all sections of the public. A man of vast powers of intellect, of transparent sincerity and perfect equanimity of mind, it is to Mr. Subba Row that Sir Subramanya Iyer even to-day confesses his acknowledgment for

his faith in Theosophy. When after the loss he sustained in Subba Row's death, he had the good fortune to become an associate with so remarkable a lady as Mrs. Besant, nothing can be more natural than that he should appear as her associate in all matters of moment affecting the country or the future of Theosophy as even in being Theosophic, he has been only patriotic. Had the late Charles Bradlaugh embraced Theosophy as Mrs. Besant his colleague did, he could have found no more staunch friend to stand by him than Sir Subramaniam. What it is that he exactly values in Theosophy not found in Hinduism is not a matter that can be easily described, but if he finds in Theosophy all that he finds in the essence of Hinduism, as a good Hindu, he cannot but be a good Theosophist as well. Others may not care to go out of their own religion to find anything valuable in Theosophy. But if one does it, he need not be considered to have lost his individuality thereby or to have even merged it in that of another. Rather, he contributes his own individuality to it. We have had to refer to this subject, because Sir Subramanya Iyer's devotion to Theosophy has been regarded as emanating from a kind of



## *Heroes of the Hour*

external influence exercised over him. On the other hand it is the outcome of his spontaneous, and long cherished deeply rooted conviction that the principles of Theosophy if followed are calculated to make for a higher type of the individual and a better conduct in the discharge of obligations. If some Theosophists are not the better for it, that need not detract from the testimony of one who feels convinced in all conscience that he has been undoubtedly the better for it. And as in everything else, Sir Subramaniam's devotion to Theosophy has stood firm finding it worthy of his constancy just as he has stood firm in other obligations he incurred with a free, open and critical mind. When he became Chairman of the Congress Reception Committee of 1914, it was as though he had taken a fortnight's holiday from his religious and Theosophic routine, for he had undergone a transition from secular to religious life. In 1915 when he became Honorary President of the Home Rule League it was on the understanding that he was not to be expected to do active work that] he connected himself with the organization as a matter of his earnest sympathy with the

movement. In 1916 when the Press Act was applied to "*New India*," Sir Subramaniam, convinced that the object of the Executive attack on *New India* was to handicap it as a Home Rule organ, came forward to signify his protest against the application of the Act to the paper. In 1917 when Lord Pentland's speech of 22nd May threatened action against Mrs. Besant, he it was that replied to Lord Pentland's call for public co-operation with an unconcealed earnestness that shewed at once that if the Government proceeded to take arbitrary action against Mrs. Besant he for one would not quail from all constitutional remedies open to him to get that action reversed. If the Governor had read that letter to purpose, and if he had known what kind of man it was who wrote it and how he had come by the influence he exercised, the Press Communique that was issued by the Governor would not have been what it was. On the other hand taking his counsel, if he took any at all, of men who had no part in the public life of the presidency since the Congress was started, *i.e.* of people who had remained strangers to the world outside their residence during an entire

## *Heroes of the Hour*

period of political transformation, in other words of men who had remained political babies in fact, he ignored the protest that by a reflex action as it were proceeded from Sir Subramanya Iyer. Lord Pentland did not know that when he was thirty he took the risk of ridicule and unpopularity by suing the Temple trustees of his own place; that his nomination to the Legislative Council during the more irresponsible *regime* of Sir M. E. Grant Duff did not prevent him even during his tenure from pricking the bubble-constitution of the Council—which no nominated member to-day will consent to do unless he has entered by an open vow of renunciation a political seminary for the rest of his life. He did not know how Mr. Subramaniam's appointment as a Judge was welcomed as a vindication of the policy of finding merit in the *bonafide* critics of Government and not as a reward for past and future subserviency. He did not know that Sir Subramaniam was not a man of such "consequence" as to speak one word in the ear of confiding authority and a plaintive period to the anticipated applause of a public audience. He preferred other men to be spoken

to for about 60 minutes, specially sent for to the giddy heights and from there to be entrained down the valleys to the hot and indignant plains below, to keep unruffled in the sight of an agitated public when the hour demanded a fearless sounding of the gong of public liberty. There are men who come by the esteem of the authorities only, men who possess the regard of the public alone, and a few who are esteemed by both Government and the people. To what class did the men of whom Lord Pentland took counsel belong? If he thought that they enjoyed the confidence of the public, it is time that he discloses their names so that he may say "here are the men who approved of my intentions, and if these intentions were wrong, the fault is not mine, but theirs." Public life in Madras would get purified if his Lordship would condescend to do so much reparation at last. First, influenced by a circular of the Government of India whose contents we do not know, secondly helped by a council all of whose members became officials when they became majors, and have grown, notwithstanding their perpetual infancy in politics, political advisers to the head of a province, and last of all encouraged by

the misleading prognostications as those of Macbeth's witches, and the flaunting ill advisedbravado of journalistic schism-mongers, the Government treated Sir Subramaniam's reply to Lord Pentland as the impetuous manifestation of his fanaticism for Theosophy! Had he not been a Theosophist at any time, we dare say that his letter might have carried greater consideration than it did. But was it to go in vain, simply because he was a Theosophist? When some Local authorities wanted "Mr. Mani Iyer" as he was then called to give the cold shoulder to Lord Ripon's Local Self-government scheme, he took it up as a matter for active propagandist work. If there had been a hint to him in 1884—during the regime of one who was *facile princeps* in making his charge a home for administrative scandals, that his nomination was to impose upon him allegiance to the defects and drawbacks, the mistakes and blunders of Government, he would have respectfully declined it as a task beyond his powers. But under Lord Pentland's Government his letter which enunciated the freedom of the subject under the British Crown fell for the time on indifferent ears and the Press



*Dr. Sir S. Subramanya Iyer*

Communique of the Governor was the last word—followed by action—the orders of internment.

This was on June 16th. From that date to 5th September for 65 days, Sir Subramaniam became the soul of what may be called a Liberation movement. The meetings at which he presided, the letters he wrote to the press, the calls he received at home, the proceedings of numberless gatherings in the mofussil with which he kept himself in intimate touch, the immense volume of correspondence he had to attend to, the distribution of funds which he had to supervise need not be detailed here. But—all these in his 77th year, with both his eyes incapable of making out his own signature or the place where he should affix it, with physical drawbacks partly due to infirmities of age and partly congenital! Requiring the kindly help of some one else at every physical step of his, incapable of reaching with his hand an object at his elbow, liable to be affected by the slightest vagaries of the weather, he yet bore with work which two men of half his age would have found too great a strain to go through day after day, and hour after hour—barring the very late hours of the evening. His letters from abroad in English, Tamil and

## *Heroes of the Hour*

Telugu from men, women and youngsters had all of them to be read out to him and his reply in his own words communicated to each. He was always accessible to all men with all kinds of suggestions and proposals and requests and requisitions. He had electrified the atmosphere and transformed the face of South India in the space of a fortnight. The wisest thing that Mrs. Besant did when she started the Home Rule League was to make Sir Subramaniam the Honorary President, —i.e., a President without having to render the services of a President. But even her moments of unerring imagination could not have disclosed to her that, with the defacto president of the League disabled to carry on her work by a fiat of the Executive, the "Honorary" President would step into the breach and fight her battle, rather the battle of the country, as though the whole period of 65 days constituted but a single hour of determined resistance to the claims of the Executive to dispose off the liberties of British subjects as they did. His action evoked an immediate and splendid response. Mr. C. Vijayaraghavachariar of Salem whom Mrs. Besant had injured unwittingly in her ardour to support the

present President of the Servants of India Society in his election to the Imperial Legislative Council, under the supposition that Mr. Vijayaraghavachariar was less patriotic because he did not come into any scheme of party politics, men like Mr. Vijayaraghavachar made it clear that they looked upon the action of the Government as a catastrophic mistake. One who has all along with innate aversion fought shy of personalities, of any kind, Dewan Bahadur M. O. Parthasarathy Aiyangar who could have easily found his place on the High Court Bench if he had chosen to come up to the expectation of the Executive as a District Judge during the memorable days of the Unrest of 1907, but who, without a pang and with a winning smile of satisfied conscience welcomed his supersession just as he accepted his promotion to the District judgeship with a courteous bow, felt impelled to write with his identity thrown open to the public asking why a titled citizen who had held a high place—won by public agitation for three decades—why he kept a sealed mouth as regards the action of the Government, when the harness of office was no longer on him. That question put

## *Heroes of the Hour*

through the columns of the *Hindu*, dedicated from its commencement to national service and ever winning new laurels in it, remains unanswered still. But it shewed the temper of those whose opinion ought to have carried weight with Lord Pentland, had he not been so woefully misguided by men who were near if not dear to him. Dewan Bahadur V. K. Ramanujachariar, another public servant who has retired after an honourable record of service,—none too highly appreciated by a Government which has a separate measure for the worth of an Indian in service,—came forward to make his confession following the footsteps of Sir Subramaniam ; and, in the crusty spirit of men of action of a bye-gone age, keeping his chin unshaven and holding it at an angle of opposition, was to the fore not so much to put heart into the country as to counteract a policy of suppressing the attitude of the public from the knowledge of the more responsible authorities. Even then the Madras Government failed to read the signs of the times, and would not think of a feat of honourable retreat at its own initiative. On the other hand, it stood by and gazed on petty attempts at strengthening the

policy of repression by securing signatures of men who have never counted as a force for progress and who, leading a life of self-sufficient isolation, have found in the handshake of a European official the beatitude of earthly existence. It gazed on petty prosecutions of those who put up "flags"—as though these flags were a standard of revolt against the Crown of India. Like the fanatical *Vishnavite* lady who began purifying the place where a *Saivite* had sat in her house and unconsciously uttered the name of *Siva*, and thereafter falling a victim to the malicious humour of the follower of the Trident, who cried out "Siva to the pial, Siva to the pillar and Siva to your head" poured a thick and copious solution of cow-dung on all these objects not excluding herself—like this sectarian fanatical "female"—wherever a piece of bambo with a red and green cloth tied to it was hoisted, the zealous loyalists, ready to profit by timely service, pounced upon the occasion as though they were putting to route a Turkish contingent that had made its way from Mesopotamia into the thick of the southern presidency. These were the ways and means by which the political atmosphere had become unnaturally



## *Heroes of the Hour*

heated—and the Madras Government, without moving its small finger against these endless oddities of the official and pro-official world, seemed in fact to believe that it was all “business as usual.” When administrators and officials with power of patronage and power of prosecution and trial in their hands become politicians, and make use of their powers and opportunities for purposes of political effect, no Government can fail to reach the bottom of its prestige. Lord Pentland might have been told that like Dr. Faustus Dr. Subramaniam had sold his soul, not to the evil one, but to Mrs. Besant. Did he care to have a talk with him if it was really so—instead of believing all that he heard? And be it borne in mind that Sir Subramaniam had acted thrice as the Chief Justice of Madras and had read the Peoples’ Welcome Address to two Heir Apparents to the Throne! Well, let us alone Sir Subramaniam. Salem Vijayaraghava-char is neither a Theosophist nor a member of the Home Rule League. He had been long in the Local Council; he had been in the last session in the Imperial Council. He is a seasoned hero, a granite column of true independence, against which the Exe-

cutive and party-manipulators in the name of the "Nation" may alike knock their heads to move it from its adherence to unblemished political principles, held with an utter disregard of what the manipulators or the executive may say of him. When he spoke against the action of the Executive, did Lord Pentland think there might be opinion worth having outside a charmed circle? There was another man who had openly resented being called a convert to Home Rule, Mr. V. P. Madhava Row, C.I.E. not a party-politician, but a believer in popularising the bases of Government, whose title to be consulted in such questions of policy cannot be impugned on any tenable ground. Could he not have been asked about all that had been set on foot? *At what stage, before being asked to reverse their order by the Government of India, did the Madras Government reconsider their policy?* A mistake is not the worst thing that a Government could commit; for, all Governments are liable to it, and more so a Government with the limitations and temptations of the Indian Bureaucracy. But to fail to see the mistake, in spite of clearest proof, is certainly a circumstance that makes a reputation for incapacity

## *Heroes of the Hour*

to cope with the problem of a growing feeling of nationality, by no means inimical to British Ascendancy. And this persistence in this mistake was shared by the Government of India also! They did not interfere until their attention was drawn to it by a Radical Secretary of State—who succeeded to the office vacated by a conservative nerveless politician under whose general sanction the measures had been taken.

All these Sir Subramaniam foresaw excepting the change at the India office and the reversal of the mistake in consequence of it. After the internment, he was certain that the step could not have been taken without the warrant of the Government of India and the approval of the Secretary of State. All protests seemed like a howl in a desert. It was even doubted whether they would be permitted to reach the Prime Minister—when inland telegrams were held up in this very country. There were many who believed that it was a policy of jam and cane, of repression and enlargement of liberties hand in hand, and that the cane had been first applied to obtain silence during the time the jam was to be distributed. That meant of

course that at the end of the War the jam would be produced and till then the cane was to be in operation. Morley at any rate at every breath said that the jam was getting ready and was known to be caning the authorities to avoid delay in producing the jam. But here in this case the jam was to become visible not before the conclusion of the War—and, when the War would end and what kind of jam it was to be when the War ended, no one knew; but those who cried for it before would be caned one after another and sent to bed. Sir Subramaniam, knowing how the situation stood and least anticipating the part of Providence in the affairs of men, fell back upon the injunction of the *Gita* that the result was for God and that his part was only to act with clear conscience and undaunted constancy. By shewing himself to the risk of displeasure of the authorities, he gathered round the movement for liberation a force that gained in volume and intensity day by day. But he did this, not awaiting any suggestion from Mrs. Besant, because to think that as Honorary President of the Home Rule League, he would have needed any appeal from Mrs. Besant is to be ignorant of the entire nature of the man and

### *Heroes of the Hour*

his whole career. It is wrongly believed in some quarters that he wrote a letter to the American Public and the President of the United States at the instigation of Mrs. Besant, or at a message communicated to him by her to that effect. The facts of the incident are that Mr. Hotchener, a journalist of repute in America had been staying here with his wife, a talented lady—both of them Theosophists and in deep and earnest sympathy with the political aspirations of India. When Sir Subramaniam happened to meet them, during the political turmoil that had been created, at a periodical Theosophic function at Adyar—in the conversation that ensued, the idea almost like spontaneous combustion flashed that Mr. Hotchener might do something to rouse public interest in his own country towards the Indian situation which had come to be overtaken by such a dark cloud. It must be borne in mind that Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Chelmsford and Lord Pentland were all practically rowing together; and unless a change was decreed over the heads of all these three, there was not likely to be a difference. Well, they were of course not going to have a single constitutional remedy untried in India. But constitutional agitation in India would derive



not a little strength by the friendly American nation expressing its sympathy with the Indian people in its efforts for national betterment. If any country needs sympathy from all quarters it is India more than any other. Was there anything wrong in asking for the sympathy of America—our Allies in the War, an English speaking race, a Democracy pledged to the ideal of peace and expansion of popular liberties. Nor was it as a perpetual policy in a permanent scheme of Indian agitation, but for the purpose of riveting the attention of the British nation to the wrongs endured by India at the discretion of the Bureaucracy at a great critics. Mr. and Mrs. Hotchener would carry the message and why should not the cause of India receive some perfectly legitimate accession of strength by the sympathy of the American public? Were the lady and gentlemen such as to compromise our position by the complexion of their politics? Not so far as he knew. Pacifists and progressives to the core, people who set little store by national or individual selfishness, inspired and upheld by the sentiment that to do unto others as you would be done by is a golden international law,—they were helpers in every

## *Heroes of the Hour*

good cause by an appeal to the higher nature in man. Sir Subramaniam did not of course discuss step by step; but talking to them when there was little to hope for from the authorities he concluded that it was his duty to avail himself of their instrumentality to send a message through them of India's loyalty to the British Crown, of its readiness to furnish even a million men for the War, and of its demand to be allowed to control its home affairs as every people ought to be allowed according to the admissions of the United British Nation and all its allies. He said that the Bureaucracy would not listen to such a demand, and the sympathy of the American people would go a great way in obtaining a more responsive attitude from their kinsmen and allies across the Atlantic. He dictated the letter and wanted to make it an open, responsible official communication to the President, so that the President might officially consider it as representing a great nation in alliance with England and with every good cause. The letter might have been cast in a different way; it might have been worded differently in some places or throughout; but in the fact of appealing for sympathy there is no betrayal of our obligations to the British Crown,

and there was absolutely no hitting below the belt. So long as the world is governed by the moral force of public opinion as well as by physical strength, in invoking the moral aid of friends of England, there is no moral or political obloquy.

Of course, we cannot expect such transcendental disregard of expediency of every leader, but we need not be so weak-kneed and weak-visioned as to complain that it is too bright—improperly bright for the vision of all and sundry. The letters were taken, the letters were delivered. It has transpired that the letter to the President was handed over by him to the British Ambassador who in his turn is said to have forwarded it to the Prime Minister. But that the cancellation of the internments could not have been due to this letter is quite evident. Mr. and Mrs. Hotchener left Madras about the end of June, 25th probably. The internments were agreed to be cancelled on 5th September. But by 20th August, Mr. Montague's announcement and course of action had been determined upon. So, it is clear this communication had no share in effecting a change. However, the incident is pregnant with lesson to shew to what extent confidence had been shaken by the

## *Heroes of the Hour*

action of the Bureancracy. The incident is referred to here, only because wrong versions of it have been in circulation. It has been said that Mr. Hotchener is Mrs. Besant's son-in-law; that it was at Mrs. Besant's pressure that Sir Subramaniam with great reluctance, and after refusing to comply with the suggestion, ultimately succumbed to mandates from Mrs. Besant, having no option. All these versions are completely wrong. Of course, one is free to hold that Sir Subramaniam did wrong or right in dictating such a message. There are people who believe that he was wrong in accepting the Honorary Presidentship of the Home Rule League; there are others that believe he was crazy in becoming Vice-President of the Theosophical Society, others who hold that in founding the Dharma Rakshana Sabha he has been trying to alter a kind of second nature with the help of Law and through a Registered Association, others again that in spending part of his time, energy and means in issuing the publications of the Sudda Dharma series he has been helping the disease of religio-mania—from which the country has suffered rather a little too much already. Every one of these classes of men is entitled to the freedom of its opinion. But

whether one is "right or wrong" in doing any of these it is worse than idle to dispute about. For we lack a common standard of judgment—there is no rod to measure and no scale to weigh in such matters. The important test in all these matters is "what for does he do these and how will they affect the country's interests ultimately?" Does or did he do any of them for personal glory or gain, or to injure a cause or community, or to uproot order and law, or has his action tended to stifle public spirit, throw back the country's progress and to leave his countrymen worse? He dictated that message without even intending that it should be known or that he should be given credit for it; and he did it in the service of the country to strengthen the cause of the British Crown in India. As for the result, although he has entitled himself to the fullest measure of executive displeasure, it must open the eyes of the Government as nothing else possibly can. It must show them that they will be in an unwise paradise to believe that India can always remain enveloped in Anglo-Indian beneficence. There is no means of ascertaining in what way the letter influenced the heart and judgment of the American public—it is reasonable



### *Heroes of the Hour*

to infer that it would have in no case prejudiced India. About the "political side" of it, differences may be felt, but Sir Subramanya Iyer would not have been himself if he had failed to utilise Mr. and Mrs. Hotcheners, return to their country for a little sympathy to India from their countrymen so as to make the eyes of England turn towards this land at a time when in her preoccupation the Bureaucracy had taken in hand the destiny of India so as to say that we should put out of thought to their dictation most dearly cherished hopes of having a voice in our own country. However, when the Governor-General and Mr. Montagu came to Madras it was on this letter that Lord Chelmsford fastened himself the moment Sir Subramaniam stepped into the room. For about a week previous to the interview Sir Subramaniam had been bed-ridden by an acute trouble of an old-standing complaint. He had been harassed and enfeebled by it and he had worked at high pressure in submitting four Memorandums anent the Reform Scheme. For a man to do all these with his infirmities and deprived of his sight must be an incredible feat indeed. He had made no secret of his adherence to passive resistance if necessary when that

*Dr. Sir S. Subramanya Iyer*

question was discussed in the last week of August during the Special Provincial Conference in Madras. His reply to the Manifesto against passive resistance is a masterly verdict delivered in a perfectly judicial frame of mind and would for a long time to come occupy a permanent place in the political master-pieces of talented Indians of age, experience, and a magnificent record of work on behalf of the Government and the people. Lord Chelmsford, apparently without a previous personal knowledge of Sir Subramanya Iyer, and not knowing that he had left the bed of an invalid to be at the interview, and when Sir Subramanyam had gone to submit his views on the Reform Scheme least suspecting that the interview would turn upon the letter, opened fire on this topic. He is reported to have done it in a spirited way, and Sir Subramaniam flashed back in an equally excited manner. In Sir Subramaniam's own words, it was "a stormy interview." Loud was the voice of both. Put on his defence, Sir Subramaniam came out of it caring only for his innermost convictions and making it plain to the Viceroy to what extent the Madras Government had gone wrong in their policy of alienating the

## *Heroes of the Hour*

confidence and attachment of men honored by their predecessors and esteemed by the people. It may probably be thought by some that Sir Subramaniya Iyer might have declined to enter into the topic on the ground that he was there to be interviewed on the Memorandums. But that would be liable to be considered not only grossly improper but taking refuge in a circumstance of an entirely technical kind, instead of saying what he had to say in vindication. His is not the nature to hold back, to prevaricate or make amends for what is right in a mood of enforced penitence suddenly convinced of the impropriety of a thing in the presence of high authority. Being incapable of any of these, he defended the step he had taken by a portrayal of the situation that had been created by the Government in Madras—with a warmth of feeling which he could not have helped and was partly due to the very commencement of the interview at a high temperature. "Lord Ampthill a man of innate sympathy with India and Indians, with an inborn freedom from racial assumption of any kind, with a sense of absolute fair play between country and country and man and man,

*Dr. Sir S. Subramanya Iyer*

writes of Sir Subramanya Iyer out of his personal knowledge—in his Foreword to Sir Subramanya Iyer's biography written by Rao Saheb Raja Ram Row as follows :—

“I regarded him as the soul of honor, as a man who had absolutely no personal ends to serve and who devoted his great abilities solely to the public good.”

Lord Ampthill describes him as “a great gentleman in the truest and best sense of that time-honoured English word.” No man could have obtained such an encomium without a keen sense of self-respect, and Sir Subramanya Iyer's idea of self-respect excludes any conscious unworthy action. Whatever Lord Chelmsford might feel about it all, he must now feel convinced, that since the departure of Lord Hardinge there has been a veritable chapter of blunders on account of an initial misdirection in policy—as has been made plain in a masterly retrospect of the change in the Indian situation by Sir Valentine Chirol in *The Times*. But confining ourselves to Madras even after Lord Hardinge's departure, if Madras had been under Lord Carmichael, things would have been different. Even under Lord Pentland, had the Indian Member

of the Executive Council been in touch with the non-official community, and had he sought to discharge his duties regardless of his desire to stick to the office when the prestige of the Government was certain to be seriously affected, the course of events would have been different. Had Dewan Bahadur Rajagopalachariar simply said, "If you want, you may have my vote, but my advice is don't—by no means don't—*don't* for all that I may happen to be worth in your estimation—" if he had said this, very probably, things would have been different also. But, far from such a diagnosis, he actively associated himself with the repressive policy and in fact went so far as to bespeak Sir Subramanya Iyer himself on its behalf. Evidently Mr. Rajagopalachariar knew as little of Sir Subramaniam as he knew of the current of Indian politics. There are very few occasions for an official of to-day in India to exercise political sagacity. Give him an order he will try to execute it by hook or by crook, but ask him for a policy when a genuine political situation arises, he will unhappily continue to be an official—or he gets into the hands of other officials. With undoubted



ability, Mr. Rajagopalachariar has after all shewn that he is so much of an official that he is very nominally an Indian. For, with his ability, if he had cherished a robust sense of patriotism, he would have been saved from the pitfalls of pur-blind officialism. Had he believed that people could be patriotic from high unselfish motives, and had he known his countrymen, he could not have made a mess in reading the opinions of men like Sir Subramaniam, Dewan Madhava Row, Salem Vijayaraghavachariar, M. O. Parthasarathy Aiyangar, not to mention thousands of the articulate section of the community many of whom in every way as capable as he of discharging any responsibility. Of course, he wishes well of the country, but that kind of wishing well will do no doubt for a Nambudri landlord, but is totally inadequate in one occupying a position of national trust who must represent the self-respect, and the progressive instinct of the people whose trustee he is. When Lord Pentland asked us to put out of thought an early grant of Self-government, he must have said "No my Lord, it is a nation's right to aspire, and it is Great Britain's glory that my nation should. If however any aspirant

### *Heroes of the Hour*

commits an offence let him be punished. Not for the aspiration but for the offence." If he had said this, Lord Pentland as a Liberal and as a man of rank in politics, would have changed the tenor of his speech and the objective of his policy.

Lord Chelmsford has tripped, on the other hand not because he had no competent counsel by his side but because, unlike Lord Hardinge who treated Sir Syed Ali Imam as though he were his Home Member, Lord Chelmsford very evidently relegated Sir Sankaran Nair to writing minutes of dissent. We shall illustrate by one notable incident. In the Cawnpore riot just some weeks before the War was to break out, Lord Hardinge and Sir Syed completely out-generalled a dangerous Moslem opposition. Not only were the ignorant and inflammable elements quieted, but the deputation to England for the redress of a wrong had to return for want of a grievance. Even a boy can now realise how serious the situation would have been and how utterly awkward the position of the authorities if the Cawnpore trouble had been allowed to develop into a great communal sore when the War broke out. In Lord Chelmsford's case, he does not lack,

according to the opinion of the country, a Sir Syed Ali Imam ; but Sir Sankaran Nair lacks, and the whole country has lacked a Lord Hardinge. Nearer home, however, Lord Pentland has been absolutely sinned against. Since Sir Harold Stuart's departure an avalanche of advice has decended upon him and left him nowhere, and the worst of it was the Indian Member had long got out of touch with the growing mind of his own countrymen. The one man who could have helped him failed in his grasp and patriotism alike. Mrs. Besant outwitted them all. And when a wrong blow was wrongly aimed, after a wrong speech far too wide of the mark, and when in spite of clearest proof that the Government had taken a false step, instead of gracefully retracing their steps all of them shewed they were in a mood to look for fictitious support from here and there, then indeed we must know to what extent they were prepared to go and how gloriously patriotic has been Sir Subramaniam's service to the Motherland. There are some who believe that but for the safety which old age guarantees, Sir Subramaniya Iyer might not have been as regardless of consequence as he has been,

They forget that as an old man he could have found the practice of the sacred *Gayatri* a more congenial occupation instead of inviting official displeasure. They forget he has possessions and progeny to care for, that he has risen above the leaden weight of both, and has acted like a *Sanyasi* who has neither. They forget above all that there has not been another old man, although there are many old men, patriotic too, who has found "safety" in his old age as Sir Subramanya Iyer has nobly found. The true explanation of his heroic recklessness lies in the fact that with his innate spiritualism he looks upon the Motherland as a sacrificial altar on which at the hour of call each man must lay with pride and faith all that he may reckon as his. Between steadiness of vision and readiness for action is the frame of the hero encased, and Sir Subramaniam has not only seen life steadily and seen it whole, but has acted as his steady and whole vision impelled him from time to time. Truly, the country seems to have grown younger for his old age.

The child is father of the man is no half truth in the case of Subramaniam—generous to foes, helpful to a fault to friends, loyal to the

*Dr. Sir S. Subramanya Iyer*

marrow to a cause that he comes forward to lead, Lord Amphill's description of him "as the soul of honor" cannot be improved. When the educated Indian is maligned to-day in congenial company, Sir Subramaniam's own account of himself as an educated representative in one of his Memorandums is an unconscious explanation of the motive power of a career that will for a long time to come illumine the province of his birth. In concluding that Memorandum he writes as follows:—

"One like myself—who supported the cause of the raiyats from the year 1877, before the Famine Commission, right on to the day when from my place on the Bench, I did my best to effectuate their rights and thus materially contributed to their victory in their difficult contest with their wealthy opponents—cannot be disposed of as a self-seeking Brahmin inimical to the masses, and my strong advocacy in favour of the particular reforms recommended by me in my former Memorandum was due solely to the reasons respectfully submitted by me therein. I crave permission to conclude with the remark that, only when those reforms have been granted by Parliament and have become accomplished facts, only then can the



masses—for whose well-being extreme solicitude is pretended to be evinced by the inventor of the novel phrase about the imaginary oligarchy—only then will they be able to look forward with some hope of realisation, for the freedom from these evils and misfortunes to which they are undeniably subject at the hands of the class so loudly professing friendship to them and to which class the inventor of the unscrupulous phrase himself belongs.”

—This passage breathes the spirit that runs through his career—the spirit of national service—and shews how in his 77th year he stands locked with the Indian Bureaucracy in a constitutional combat of the greatest consequence to the country since its transfer to the Crown.

# INDEX

	PAGE.		PAGE.
<b>A</b>		<b>H</b>	
Africa, south—position of the		Hotchener ...	268
Indian immigrant ...	12	<b>I</b>	
Garkar ...	94	Indian immigrant, position of,	
Age of consent bill ...	103	in South Africa ...	12
Justice's judgment against Tilak.	129	— Opinion ...	26
<b>B</b>		— Women in South Africa ...	47
Basant, Mrs. ...	255	— And Boer War ...	24
Boer War and Indians ...	24	Internment and Sir S. Subra-	
<b>C</b>		manya Aiyar ...	255
Ciplunkur, V.K. ...	95	<b>K</b>	
<b>D</b>		Kelkar, N.C. ...	102
Deccan Education Society ...	100	<b>M</b>	
<b>F</b>		Madhava Rao, V.P. ...	265
Fergusson College ...	100	<b>N</b>	
<b>G</b>		Narayanasami a deported youth	41
Gandhi, M. K. ...	1	<b>O</b>	
— Birth and parentage ...	4	Orion ...	105
— English Education ...	8	<b>P</b>	
— Deportation ...	39	Parthasarathi Aiyangar, M.O. ...	261
— First visit to South Africa.	17	Partition of Bengal ...	131
— Mother's death ...	9	Passive Resistance ...	33
— Nursing of the Zulus ...	29	Phoenix Settlement ...	27
— Passive Resistance ...	33	Plague among Indians in South	
— Return to India ...	21	Africa ...	27
— Second visit to South Africa	22	Polak, Mr. H. S. L. ...	39
— Started Indian opinion ...	26	Prince of Wales's visit to Madura.	223
— And Phoenix Asrama ...	29	<b>R</b>	
— And Plague ...	27	Rajagopalachariar, Honourable	
Ghale, H. N. ...	102	Dewan Bahadur. ...	273
Ghale in South Africa ...	43		

	PAGE.
Ramanujachariar, V. K.	... 262
Ryotwari Settlement	... 233

S

Self-Government, Tilak on	... 136
Sivaji celebration	... 117
South African Union	... 42
Subrahmanya Aiyar, Dr. Sir S.	199
--- Early Education	... 220
--- Father ...	... 218
--- After Retirement	... 248
--- As an Advocate	... 236
--- As Judge of the High Court.	244
--- As Theosophist	... 251
--- Nominated to the Legisla-	
tive Council ...	... 223
--- Presents the people's	
address ...	... 223
--- And the Congress birth	... 227
--- And Mehta compared	... 212

T

Tilak-Maharaj...	... 35
--- on Self-Government	... 136

	PAGE.
--- on Volunteering	... 197
Tilak's Evidence before the De-	
centralisation Committee	... 137
--- first imprisonment	... 100
--- security cases	... 178
--- Tilak and Congress	... 109
--- and famine	... 113
--- and plague	... 115

U

Union Immigration bill	... 43
Union of South Africa	... 42

V

Vedas, researches into the	... 105
Vijayaraghava Acharyar, C.	... 260
Volunteering, Tilak on	... 17

W

Williams, Mr. Williams	... 20
------------------------	--------

Z

Zulu Rebellion...	... 19
-------------------	--------