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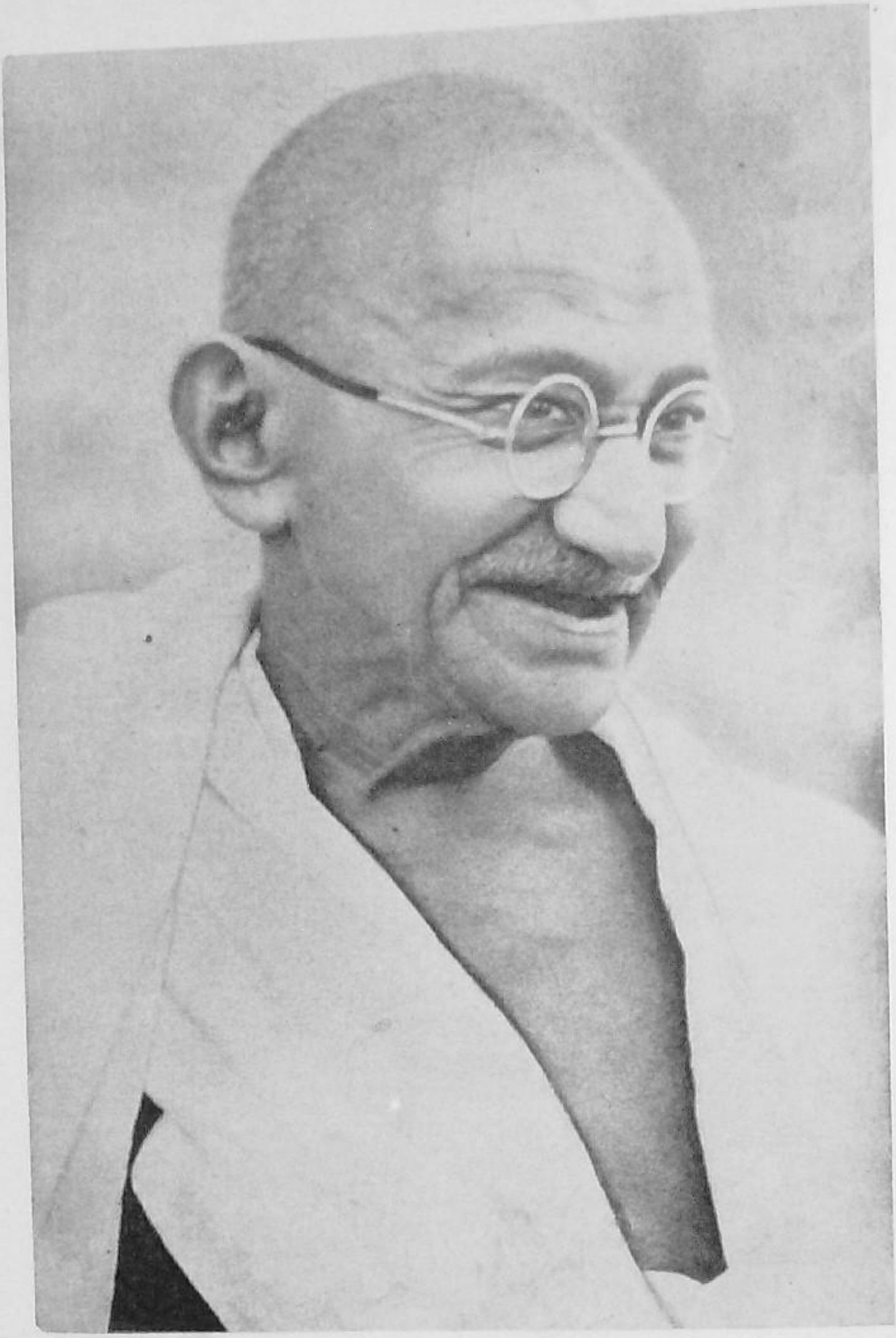

MAHATMA GANDHI

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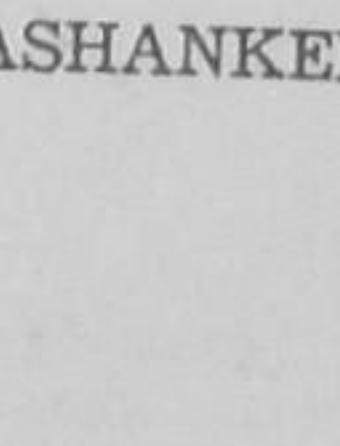
INCIDENTS OF GANDHIJI'S LIFE

by

FIFTYFOUR CONTRIBUTORS

Edited by

CHANDRASHANKER SHUKLA



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TO
THE MEMORY OF
MAHADEV DESAI

* * *

"None knew thee but to love thee,
None named thee but to praise."

(Letter from H. E. Shri C. Rajagopalachari)

My dear Chandrashanker,

I have just read two contributions and glanced over a few more pages of your beautiful book, *Incidents of Gandhiji's Life*, in proofs, and see the beauty of your conception and the successful manner in which you have directed the production, to use film production language. It will be a very good book and a most interesting contribution to modern English-Indian literature when completed.

Everything has two phases, what it is in reality and what impressions others take of it. God alone knows which is more real or which is more important, Gandhiji as he really was and Gandhiji as others saw him from time to time. Your book will be an interesting collection of the latter.

You have very rightly and I think successfully eliminated egotistic writing on the part of your contributors. In the nature of things this cannot be wholly eliminated. But the best of your contributors have very carefully avoided the error. This is a great thing in the production of symposiums such as you have undertaken.

You have also very rightly and successfully kept out mere eulogistic contributions. Against the background of our dismal failure in practice, panegyric literature describing Gandhiji's virtues is most dull reading. I am glad you definitely proscribed such contributions. I am sorry I have not yet read much of the first volume in proof which you so kindly presented to me at Baroda on the 24th October. But I felt I could not let my first impressions fade out before writing to you.

Gwalior,
25th October, 1948.

Yours sincerely,
C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

PREFACE

THE collection of articles, brought together in this volume, contains a record of the incidents of Gandhiji's life by a cross-section of his friends and co-workers in India and abroad, who were eye-witnesses of those events and have tried to narrate them in as objective a manner as possible, though pure objectivity is impossible to attain in this world of relativity. Memories are fading; death too is taking its toll; and much valuable biographical material is being irrecoverably lost. An effort needs to be made to rescue as much of it as possible from passing into oblivion. What has been recorded in some form or other will be published sooner or later. But what has been stored in men's memories will be lost for ever if not collected in time. It was this feeling which prompted me to launch upon this venture and which very probably induced the contributors kindly to collaborate in the effort.

The work of collecting the articles started about three years back, and proceeded at a slow pace because of the rapid march of events in the country. Political changes and disturbances also contributed to the delay. I went on postponing the publication in the hope of being able to collect a few more articles, particularly from those whose contributions, I felt, would be conspicuous by their absence. No one then imagined in his wildest dreams that a misguided countryman of ours was going to make a bid for sinister immortality by assassinating the Father of the Nation. Gandhiji's death has made the collection of these memories all the more urgent and imperative. This volume, after all, contains only a small fraction of the rich harvest that awaits to be reaped. There can never be too many of these recollections. The gifted Turkish lady, Madame Halide Edib, wrote after her visit to India in 1935: "He

(Gandhiji) is so important a happening in twentieth-century history, I said to myself, that every witness must leave as objective and honest a report as is humanly possible." It is the least that the contemporaries of Gandhiji, who had the rare good fortune to see the Master in the flesh and to bask in the sunshine of his all-embracing love, owe to the larger world and to posterity.

Gandhiji, as I mentioned above, was alive when the volume was planned. He was kind enough to bless the venture, if only because he could take an impersonal view of things, and also because the book was to contain nothing by way of appreciation or eulogy in which naturally he could not be interested. He also did me the favour of going through two of the articles then received, with a view to checking the correctness of facts stated therein. His blessings have in no small degree heartened me and encouraged me to persist in the attempt through a fairly long period.

I cannot adequately express my sense of gratitude to the distinguished contributors but for whose blessings, help and collaboration the effort could not have achieved any success. Two of them have left this world since then. Dr. Rufus M. Jones passed away last June full of years, after distinguished service in the cause of education, leaving behind a great legacy of religious and philosophical books numbering over fifty. The late Shri Tatyasaheb Kelkar, whom I took an opportunity to meet personally with a request for his reminiscences, at once put me at ease by saying that, though he had had his differences with Gandhiji in the political field, he had great respect for Gandhiji's personality. He then described to me, in a reminiscent mood, how he had worked with Gandhiji till 1925 when their paths diverged. He also said he was three years younger than Gandhiji, whom he was to precede in death by just a few months. He welcomed the idea of the book, and promised to send me a contribution which fol-

lowed soon after. The great patriot, whose life and writings have been an inspiration to many, thus provided a lesson in political tolerance and goodwill, which indeed we may learn today with much profit to ourselves and to our cause.

It was a part of the plan that estimates, eulogies, appreciations and panegyrics were to be deliberately avoided; and the contributors have been kind enough to accept the limitation which , I hope, has added to the usefulness of the book. In fact, in many cases, it would have been presumptuous to add any words by way of appreciation or eulogy. As the Prime Minister of India said after Gandhiji's death, "How can we praise him ? how can we, who have been children of his, and perhaps more intimately children of his than the children of his body, for we have all been in some greater or smaller measure the children of his spirit, unworthy as we were?" On us is laid the more onerous burden of carrying on his unfinished task in a spirit of service and humility. For, as the poet (Henry David Thoreau) has said :

'Tis sweet to hear of heroes dead,
To know them still alive;
But sweeter if we earn their bread,
And in us they survive.

Baroda, C. S.

26-12-1948

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

SHRI SHRIMAN NARAYAN AGARWAL, M.A. (Cal.), M.A. (Alld.), F.R. ECONS. S. (Lond.). (1912-)—Principal, Govindram Seksaria College of Commerce, Wardha. Member, Academic and Executive Council, Nagpur University. Works : *Gandhian Plan of Economic Development for India*; *Medium of Instruction*; *Gandhian Plan Reaffirmed.*

MR. HORACE G. ALEXANDER (1889-)—For over 20 years professor at Woodbrooke, Birmingham. Visited India in 1927-28, 1930, and 1942. Returned to India in 1946, at Gandhiji's suggestion, to work for the Society of Friends (the Quakers) and to be at Gandhiji's service for any work he would suggest. Works : *The Indian Ferment*; *India Since Cripps.*

HON. RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR (1889-).—Held various offices in the A.I.W.C. since 1930. Member of the Advisory Board of Education (Govt. of India) from inception to 1942, and again since 1946. Member of Indian Delegation to U.N.E.S.C.O. in 1945 and 1946. Acted as Gandhiji's Secretary for various periods from 1936 to 1946. Minister for Health, Govt. of India, since August, 1947. Work : *To Women.*

DR. BHAGAVAN DAS, M.A. D.Litt., (Hon.) (1869-).—Chancellor, Kashi Vidyapitha since 1921. Congress Member of the Indian Central Legislative Assembly, 1934-39. Works : *The Essential Unity of Religions*; *etc.*

SHRI G. D. BIRLA (1891-). Industrialist. President, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce, 1929. Member, second Round Table Conference, 1931. President, All India Harijan Sevak Sangh, since 1932. Gandhiji's host at Bombay and Delhi.

MR. FENNER BROCKWAY (1888-).—Journalist. Has been editor of *The New Leader* (London); and last joint editor of *India*, the organ of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress, till 1921. Prominent member of Independent Labour Party in Britain for 35 years. M. P. from 1929 to 1931, when he was suspended for a protest against the imprisonment of 60,000 Indians. Works : *Inside the Left*; *Socialism Over 60 Years*; *etc.*

DR. GEORGE CATLIN, M.A., PH.D. (1896-).—Professor of Politics, Cornell University, 1924-1935; Foreign correspondent in Moscow, Spain, Dimitrov and Nuremburg Trials, and in India at the Simla Conference in 1945. Professor, London School of Economics and Political Science. Works : *In the Path of Mahatma Gandhi*; *The Story of the Political Philosophers*; *etc.*

DR. C. M. DOKE, B.A., D.Litt. (1893-).—Son of the late Rev. J. J. Doke, the first biographer of Gandhiji. Missionary on staff of South African Baptist Missionary Society, Lambaland, 1914-21. Professor, since 1923, and now Head of the Department of Bantu Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. Works : Translation of *New Testament* in Lamba language ; *Lamba Dictionary* ; *Zulu Dictionary* ; etc.

MISS OLIVE CAREY DOKE—Daughter of the late Rev. J. J. Doke. Missionary for the last 32 years to the Lamba-speaking people of North Rhodesia, South Central Africa.

MADAME WANDA DYNOWSKA (UMADEVI)—Social worker in Poland. Lectured in several countries of Europe. Came to India, 1933. Studied Indian philosophy and religion. Works : *Bhagavadgita* (Tr. into Polish); etc. Has organised the Indo-Polish Library, which has published several translations of Polish works into English.

DR. WELTHY HONSINGER FISHER, A.M., Litt.D. (1880-)—Lived for several years in India, with her husband, the late Bishop Frederick Bohn Fisher. "One of the five best informed women speakers in America", and "a recognized authority on Far Eastern affairs". Works : *Frederick Bohn Fisher*; etc.

MR. S. K. GEORGE (1900-).—"An Indian Christian touched to life and religion by the re-embodiment in Gandhiji of the spirit of Jesus of Nazareth." Had to resign his post as lecturer at the Bishop's College at Calcutta, in 1932, for expression of sympathy wtih the civil disobedience movement. Now Adhyapak at Deenabandhu Bhavan at Santiniketan. Works: *Gandhi's Challenge to Christianity*; *Jesus Christ*.

RICHARD B. GREGG—American friend and co-worker of Gandhiji. Stayed in India 1925-27. Again visited, 1930. Works: *Economics of Khaddar*; *The Power of Non-violence*; *A Discipline for Non-violence*.

MISS AGATHA HARRISON—During World War I went into social work in factories. In 1921-24 went to China, and while there served on the Child Labour Commission of Shanghai. In 1925-28 worked in America on industrial and international questions. In 1929 came to India with the Royal Commission on Labour. Since 1931, closely associated with C. F. Andrews and, under Gandhiji's advice, helped in disseminating correct information on Indian affairs in Britain. Visited India several times since then.

MR. CARL HEATH (1869-)—One of the best known Quakers, nationally and internationally. Secretary, National Peace Council, 1909-19. Secretary, Friends Service Council, 1919-35. Chairman, India Conciliation Group. Works: *M. K. Gandhi*; *Pacifism in Time of War*; etc.

REV. DR. J. Z. HODGE—First met Gandhiji in Champaran in 1917. Retired after many years' stay in India. Works: *Salute to India*; etc.

MR. J. F. HORRABIN (1884-).—Journalist and artist. On *News Chronicle* (London) staff since 1911. Labour M. P., 1929-31. Vice-Chairman, India League Parliamentary Committee. Now Chairman, Fabian Colonial Bureau. Works: *An Atlas of Current Affairs*, *An Atlas of Post-War Problems*; etc. Illustrated H. G. Wells' *Outline of History*, Nehru's *World History*, etc.

MR. JOHN S. HOYLAND—Was for 16 years in India, chiefly as Professor at Hislop College, Nagpur. Since then Professor at Woodbrooke College at Birmingham. Member of the Society of Friends (Quakers). Works: *Gopal Krishna Gokhale*; *C. F. Andrews*; *Poems of Tukaram* (translated); Gandhiji's *Songs from Prison* (edited).

HON. SHRI JAIRAMDAS DOULATRAM (1892-). Member, All India Congress Committee, since 1917. Imprisoned several times during the Indian struggle for freedom. General Secretary, Indian National Congress, 1931-34. Governor of Bihar, 1947. Minister, Government of India, since 1947. Work: *Non-violent Revolution*.

DR. RUFUS M. JONES, A.M., LL.D. (1863-1948). Professor of Philosophy, Haverford College (U.S.A.), 1901-1934. Editor, *The American Friend*, 1894-1912. Chairman, American Friends Service Committee, 1927-28, 1934-35. Works: About 50 in number—*History of Quakerism*; *Studies in Mystical Religion*; *Pathways to the Reality of God*; etc.

DR. B. D. KALELKAR, B.E. (Bom.), M.SC., (Mass.) PH.D., (Cornell). (1911-)—Younger son of Shri Kakasaheb Kalelkar, one of the closest associates of Gandhiji. Spent boyhood at the Sabarmati Ashram. Travelled much with Gandhiji in India. A member of Gandhiji's batch in the Dandi March, 1930. Jailed several times. First Indian to win the University Fellowship at Cornell, and to be appointed a lecturer at the College of Engineering, Cornell. Made a substantial contribution to the development of one of the largest Radio-Aircraft Engines (5,000 H.P.) in the world, for the use of the American Air Force. At present Assistant Works Manager, Textile Machinery plant, near Calcutta.

SHRI N. C. KELKAR, B.A., LL.B. (1872-1947). Lokamanya Tilak's most prominent disciple and colleague. Editor, The *Mahratta*, 1897-1919. Editor, *Kesari* (Marathi), 1897-99, 1910-31. President, Bombay Provincial Conference, 1920. Elected Member, Central Legislative Assembly, 1923 and

1926. Member, Congress Working Committee for several years. Works : *Landmarks of Lokamanya's Life*; *A Passing Phase of Politics*; *Pleasures and Privileges of the Pen.* Also a large number of books in Marathi.

Shri P. Kodanda Rao, m.a. (1889-). Member since 1921, and for some time Secretary, of the Servants of India Society, Poona. Private Secretary to the late Rt. Hon. Shri V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, 1922-1932. Carnegie Scholar, Department of Race Relations, Yale University, U.S.A., 1934-35. Works : *East versus West*; *Cultural Conflicts* ; etc.

Acharya J. B. Kripalani, m.a.—Professor, G. B. B. College, Muzaffarpur, 1912-17. Secretary to Pandit Malaviya, 1918. Professor, Benares Hindu University, 1919-20. Joined the Non-cooperation Movement, 1920. Started Gandhi Ashram for khadi and village work, 1920. Professor, and later Principal, Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad, 1922-28. General Secretary, Indian National Congress, 1934-46. President of the Congress, 1947. Works : *The Gandhian Way* ; *The Latest Fad* ; *Fateful year* etc.

Dr. Bharatan Kumarappa m.a. (Madras), b.d. (Hartford), ph.d. (Edin.), ph.d. (London)—Professor of Philosophy for 4 years. Assistant Secretary, All India Village Industries Association, Wardha, 1935-45. Imprisoned during the freedom movement, 1932-33, 1942-45. Works : *Ramanuja*, etc.

Shri J. C. Kumarappa b.sc. Business (London), m.a. (Columbia)—Professor, Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad, in charge of the Matar Economic Inquiry, 1929-31. Imprisoned during freedom movement, 1932-34, 1942-45. Member and Secretary, Congress Debt Inquiry Committee, 1931. Secretary, All India Village Industries Association, Wardha, since 1934. Chairman, C. P. Industrial Survey Committee, 1937-38. Works : *Public Finance and Our Poverty*; *A Survey of Matar Taluka*; *Why the Village Movement ?*; *Practice and Precepts of Jesus*; etc.

Miss Muriel Lester—Founded, in co-operation with her sister Miss Doris Lester, Kingsley Hall (named in memory of their brother) for the service of the poorer people of the East End of London. Gandhiji stayed there during his visit to London in 1931. Miss Lester visited India several times since 1926 and has travelled extensively all over the world on lecturing tours and investigation surveys. Works : *My Host the Hindu*; *Entertaining Gandhi*; *It Occurred to Me* ; *It So Happened.*

Lord Lindsay of Birker, formerly Dr. A. D. Lindsay ll.d. (1879-)·—Master of Balliol College, Oxford, since 1924. Vice-Chancellor, Oxford University, 1935-38. Chairman of a Joint Commission to report on the Christian Colleges of India, 1930-31. Works : *Plato's Republic* (tr.) ; *The Philosophy of Bergson* ; *The Essentials of Democracy* ; *The Modern Democratic State*; etc.

Shri N. R. Malkani m.a., ll.b. (1890-). Prof. G. B. B. College, Muzaffarpur, for 7 years. Non-cooperated in 1920. Vice-Principal, Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad, for 7 years. Joint Secretary, All India Harijan Sevak Sangh, for 7 years. Jailed 4 times, in all for 5 years. Deputy High Commissioner for India in Pakistan, 1948. Works : Several books in Sindhi, including translations of Gandhiji's works and Nehru's *Autobiography.*

Shri Gurdial Mallik (1896-)—Worked for several years at Tagore's Santiniketan, with C. F. Andrews, and at Sharda Mandir, Karachi. Work : *Hound of the Heart.*

Sir Rustom Masani Kt., m.a. (1876-). Joint editor, *Gup-Sup* (Gujarati), 1897. Joined Bombay Municipal Service, and ultimately became Municipal Commissioner, the first Indian to hold the post. Joint Secretary, Central Banking Inquiry Committee. Active Member of several charitable institutions for education and social service. Vice-Chancellor, Bombay University, 1939-42. Works : *The Conference of Birds* ; *Evolution of Local Self-Government in Bombay* ; *The Religion of the Good Life*; *Dadabhai Naoroji*; etc.

HON. SHRI G. V. MAVALANKAR B.A., LL.B. (1888-).—Secretary, Gujarat Sabha, 1916-21. Secretary, Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee, 1921-23. President, Ahmedabad Municipality, 1930-33, 1935-36. Imprisoned and interned, 1930, 1932-34, 1940-41, 1942-44. Speaker, Bombay Legislative Assembly, 1937-45. Speaker, Central Legislative Assembly, 1946-47. Speaker, Indian Parliament, 1947-48. Chairman, Gujarat University Committee, 1947-48.

SHRI GAGANVIHARI MEHTA M.A. (1900-)—President, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, 1942-43. Member, Central Advisory Board of Eucation in India and several other Governmental Committees. President, Indian Tariff Board, Government of India, since 1947. Works : *From Wrong Angles*; *Perversities*; *The Conscience of a Nation or Studies in Gandhism*.

SHRIMATI MIRABEHN, MISS MADELEINE SLADE (1892-)—Daughter of Admiral Sir Edmond Slade. Her interest in music and devotion to Beethoven's works led her to Romain Rolland, which contact led her in turn to Gandhiji. Left Europe for India and joined Gandhiji at Sabarmati in November, 1925. Accompanied Gandhiji to London in 1931. Imprisoned, 1932-33, 1942-44. Established a small ashram and cattle development centre in the Rishikesh forest area in 1947, now known as Pashulok.

SHRI PYARELAL NAYYAR B.A.—Non-cooperated as a post-graduate student, 1920. Secretary to Gandhiji, 1920-48. Editor, *Harijan* and its several editions, 1946-48. Works : *The Epic Fast*; *The Status of Princes*; etc.

DR. SUSHILA NAYYAR M.D. (Delhi)—Personal physician to Gandhiji, 1939-48. Work : *Kasturba Gandhi*.

SHRIMATI RAMESHWARI NEHRU (1886-)—Member, Age of Consent Committee, 1926-27. President, All India Women's Conference, 1940. Vice-President, All India Harijan Sevak Sangh, since 1935.

H. E. SHRI M. M. PAKVASA B.A., LL.B. (1882-)—Solicitor for 30 years in Bombay. Imprisoned, 1932-33, 1940-41, 1942-44. President, Bombay Legislative Council, 1937-47. Governor of Central Provinces and Berar, since 1947.

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MR. HENRY S. L. POLAK—Gandhiji's associate and closest co-worker in South Africa, since 1904. Editor, *Indian Opinion*, for several years. Participated in, and imprisoned during, Indians' satyagraha in South Africa. Solicitor in London, since 1917.

MRS. MILLIE GRAHAM POLAK—Mr. & Mrs. Polak lived as part of Gandhiji's household for many years in South Africa. Mrs. Polak's book, *Mr. Gandhi the Man*, gives faithful and vivid pen-pictures of his life and work from 1904 to 1914.

DR. EDMOND PRIVAT—Professor, University of Neuchatel, Switzerland.

SIR PURSHOTAMDAS THAKURDAS, KT. (1879-)—Director, Reserve Bank of India. Delegate to the Round Table Conference in London, 1930-33. President, East India Cotton Association, Bombay. Chairman, Imperial Citizenship Association.

HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. (London) (1880-)—Medical practitioner, 1905-08, and since 1911. Congressman since 1914. General Secretary, Indian National Congress, 1922. Secretary, Tamil Nad Provincial

Congress Committee for many years. Imprisoned, 1922-23, 1930-31, 1940-41. Member, Central Legislative Assembly, 1934-36. Minister, Madras Government, 1937-39, and since 1947.

Dr. Rajendraprasad M.A., M.L. (1884-)—Associated with Gandhiji in political work since 1917. Member of the All India Congress Committee and Congress Working Committee for many years. Minister, Government of India, 1947. President, Indian National Congress, 1934-36, 1939-40, 1947-48. President, Indian Constituent Assembly, since 1946.

Mr. Reginald Reynolds (1905-)—Social worker in England. Secretary, No More Movement, for 4 years. Visited India in 1929-30. Carried Gandhiji's letter to Lord Irwin in February 1930. He and his wife (Ethel Mannin) have devoted much of their time and resources to personal efforts to relieve suffering in Germany and Austria, and to build up the goodwill destroyed by the war and the subsequent occupation by the victorious Powers. Works : *White Sahibs in Asia*; several pamphlets; etc.

Mlle. Madeleine Rolland—Sister of the late M. Romain Rolland.

Hon. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar—Mayor of Calcutta, 1934-35. Minister, Government of Bengal, 1937-41, and since 1947. Member, Governor-General's Executive Council, 1941-43. (Resigned in March, 1943 as a protest when, on Gandhiji's undertaking a 21 days' fast in the Aga Khan Palace at Poona, the Government refused to release him). Pro-Chancellor, Delhi University, 1941-42.

Shri Chandrashanker Shukla (1901-)—Non-cooperated as a college student in 1920, and then studied at the Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad. Member, editorial staff, *Young India* and *Navajivan*, 1921-23. Member, teaching staff, Sabarmati Ashram, 1924-27, and Gujarat Vidyapith, 1928-32. Gandhiji's Secretary for one year, 1933-34. Editor, *Harijanbandhu* (Gujarati edition of *Harijan*), 1933-40. Asst. Editor, *Harijan*, 1935-40. Registrar, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1943. Editor, *Hindustan*, (Gujarati daily) since December, 1948. Works : *Conversations of Gandhiji*; *Incidents of Gandhiji's Life* (ed.); *Reminiscences of Gandhiji* (ed.); *Gandhiji As We Know Him* (ed.); *Some Famous Interviews with Mahatma Gandhi* (ed.). Compiled several collections of Gandhiji's writings in English and Gujarati; 40 books in Gujarati (many of these translations from English).

Dr. P. Subbarayan M.A. (Oxon), B.C.L. (Oxon), LL.D. (Dublin), Hons. LL.B. (London)—Member, Madras Legislature, since 1920 with a year's break in 1946-47. Chief Minister, Madras, 1926-30. Minister, Govt. of Madras, 1937-39, 1947-48. President, Board of Control for Cricket in India for 8 years.

Dr. G. R. Talwalkar L.M. & S. (Bom.), T.D.D. (Wales)—Medical practitioner, for many years, in Ahmedabad, and now in Bombay.

Prof. Tan Yun-shan (1900-)—Graduated from the Hunan Teachers' College, 1921. Came to India, 1928-31, at Gurudeva Tagore's invitation, and organised the Department of Sino-Indian studies of the Visvabharati University. Came to India again in 1934 and 1936-45, and is in India since 1947. Organised the Sino-Indian Cultural Society under Gurudeva's auspices. Appointed by the Government of China as the first special cultural Representative in India, 1947. Works : *What Is Chinese Religion*; *Buddhism in China Today*; *Cultural Intercourse between India and China*; Gandhiji's *Hind Swaraj* (Chinese Tr.); *Saint Philosopher Gandhi* (Chinese); etc.

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GANDHI ANECDOTES

Shriman Narain Agarwal

I

WHEN I first met Gandhiji in April, 1936, at Maganvadi (Wardha), I felt greatly disillusioned—disillusioned not because I was disappointed, but because I found Gandhiji very much different from what I had expected him to be. I, like so many others, was under the impression that the Mahatma must be full of reserve and unchanging seriousness. But to my great surprise, within a few minutes of my first personal acquaintance, I found him to be eminently human, with an ever-flowing fountain of sparkling wit and cheering humour.

"What work will you like to do for me here?" asked Gandhiji.

"I am at your service, Bapuji. Please give me orders!"

"I know that you have recently returned from England and can do good literary work; but I will not give you that work. Do you know the science of the charkha? Here is my charkha which is out of order. Can you set it right?"

"I am afraid I do not know anything about the charkha. I shall have to learn its technique first!"

"Has all your education not been a waste, then? As the Hindustani idiom expresses it, your education has amounted to 'sieving out sands' *(Khāk Chhānanā),*" remarked Gandhiji with a hearty laugh.

"I agree, Bapuji," I smiled out.

"All right, then. I will give you the same work, in

a very real sense. Good sand has to be sieved out for the trench latrines here. Why not assist Sjt. M. S. in that work?"

"I will do the job with pleasure," was my prompt reply. "I have done a lot of gardening, and the work will, therefore, not be new to me."

"O.K.," smiled Gandhiji. And I did do the job on each Sunday for some months.

II

It must have been the month of March in 1937. Gandhiji was on his way to Madras for the session of the All India Hindi Sahitya Sammelan over which the late Seth Jamnalal Bajaj was to preside. Gandhiji always draws enormous crowds at every station. At that time the question whether the Congress would accept office in the Provinces was agitating the minds of the people in the country. The Grand Trunk Express by which Gandhiji was travelling reached Bezwada in the morning. There was great rush at the station for the Mahatma's *darshan.* One press correspondent somehow managed to shove his way through the surging crowd, and, perspiring, asked Gandhiji abruptly: "Bapuji, will the Congress accept office?"

It is evident that any remark from Gandhiji on that important question would have found wide publicity. Even his silence would have been interpreted significantly by the press. But Gandhiji is very clever at dodging press correspondents.

"Why, do you want to be a Minister?" was Gandhiji's prompt enquiry, with a chuckle of genial humour.

The whole crowd laughed, and the poor correspondent had no other option but to quietly and quickly recede into the background.

III

Gandhiji was kind enough to stay at my cottage at Wardha twice last year. When he came first in December, 1944, he used three pillows at night. Next time in February, 1945, I found that he had completely discarded the use of pillows.

"Bapuji, why don't you use pillows now?" I enquired with some hesitation.

"I had once read that *Shavāsana* induces sound sleep. So I am experimenting with that pose," replied Gandhiji.

"Bapuji, your life has been full of experiments. In old age, you should now experiment on others as well. Your health is too delicate and precious for such experiments."

"Oh no! My life itself is an experiment. My experiments will end only with my death," smiled out Gandhiji.

IV

When Gandhiji was to go on the Bengal tour last year, two third class compartments were reserved for him and his party. He found that two compartments were not necessary; his party could be easily accommodated only in one of them. So he called Kanu Gandhi and asked him to vacate one of the two compartments.

"But both have been reserved for us, Bapuji. The railway authorities have been already paid!"

"That does not matter at all! We are going to Bengal for the service of the poor and starving millions. It does not behove us to enjoy comforts on the train. Moreover, don't you observe the suffocating rush in other third class compartments? Under such circumstances, we should not occupy more space than what is absolutely necessary. Travelling 'third' with so much reserved accommodation these days will be a criminal joke!" observed Gandhiji.

No further arguments were necessary. The whole party moved out of one compartment, vacating it for other passengers.

And then alone could Gandhiji relax himself into sound sleep.

Wardha,
1-6-1946.

MAHATMA GANDHI AND SILENT WORSHIP

Horace G. Alexander

DURING the second session of the Round Table Conference in London during the autumn of 1931 the Society of Friends invited several members of the conference with whom they had personal contact to attend a weekly meeting for silent prayer and meditation that was held regularly each week at Friends House. It was hoped that these times of silent communion might instil a sense of quiet and unity, and that they might enable delegates and others who were striving for a successful issue of the conference to see the conference and its issues in the light of eternal values and not only from the angle of partisan interests, which are apt to loom large in the heat of discussion.

One of the earliest meetings was attended by Mr. Gandhi, Lord Sankey and other members of the conference, such as Dr. S. K. Datta. I believe Mr. Srinivasa Sastri attended on another occasion, and one time Maulana Shaukat Ali came. Mr. Gandhi was so much impressed that he expressed his intention of coming again, but for a month or more the pressure of his innumerable engagements prevented it. He was determined to attend the meeting during the last week of the conference, but he caught a severe cold, and we persuaded him that he should stay in that day and nurse his cold.

Then the conference was extended for a few days, so another opportunity came. But on the day of the meeting his cold was still bad, and he was coughing a good deal. The fact is, it was something more than a mere cold in the head such as we all pick up; he was under the intense strain of an intolerable isolation into which he had been forced by the developments of the conference. One day he himself said to me: "I am drinking the bitter cup to the very dregs." All this told on his health. His courage and serenity of spirit were remarkable, but his physical condition was being undermined. As his cough was so bad, we pleaded with him not to come. But he said: "No; I am coming. I ought to have come last week. I have been

given another opportunity. I may not miss it." And we knew he had made up his mind and that he would not change it.

A large number of Quakers and others were present, as it was the first week of December, a time when many Quakers from different parts of England assemble in London to attend their committees. As we settled into the silence of the assembled meeting Mr. Gandhi was seized by a severe attack of coughing, and I was distressed on his behalf, as no doubt were others in the room. But I realised that there was nothing to be done, or rather that the best thing I could do was to yield myself up to those workings of the eternal spirit, whose purposes and overruling power we had met to seek. As I thus surrendered my own will, I was conscious of an acute headache that seemed to pass across my brow, weighing upon me for a few moments and then passing away. Peace and confidence seemed to take possession of me, and the whole meeting seemed to be wrapped in solemn stillness for the remainder of the half-hour.

When the meeting broke up, I was conscious that some of the Friends who had never met or even seen Mr. Gandhi before might hope for an opportunity to be introduced to him. But they respectfully waited for him. He whispered to me: "Do we go now?" or something to that effect. I answered: "Yes, unless you like to stop and speak to any of them." "Then let us go," he said, and in a minute we were back in the car, returning to Knightsbridge, where he had his office. As soon as we arrived there, Dr. Datta came to me and said: "Mr. Gandhi seems to have a very nasty cough, and it is no better. I think he ought to see a doctor, or at least give himself some proper treatment and reduce his engagements." "Yes," I said, "I quite agree, and I think as you are a doctor you ought to go and plead with him to do something." So we went upstairs to his office, and the Doctor began to talk to him seriously about his cough. Presently Mr. Gandhi stopped him with that joyful yet almost derisive laugh which his friends know so well, with which he dismisses the solemn but unnecessary concerns that are often brought to him. "What?"

said he, laughing at poor Doctor Datta; "are *you* proposing to doctor me? How unnecessary! Besides," he went on, "there is no need. The cough has gone. It all disappeared during the meeting at Friends House." And so it was. Whatever the explanation may be, he had returned from the meeting a cured man. I have deliberately given the full details of what happened in the meeting itself, or at least my own experience, as I recall it after nearly fifteen years; not to suggest that my own part in the meeting was of any importance, though I can well believe that, if I had gone on worrying and fidgeting about Mr. Gandhi's cough, it would have hampered the workings of the healing spirit. No doubt it was primarily his own spiritual quality that worked on his body and healed it; but this may well have been helped by the united worship and close communion of all his fellow-worshippers. We know little of the power of spiritual communion for the healing both of mind and body. Probably the mental effect is usually greater than the measurable spiritual result.

This story has a sequel. It will be recalled that Mr. Gandhi and his colleagues were arrested very soon after his return to India at the end of 1931. Some time during the summer of 1932 I received a letter from him, from Yeravda Jail, more or less as follows (I have not the letter by me to quote it exactly): "Some time ago," he wrote, "I had letters from Sabarmati, which showed that there were difficulties in the ashram, and they asked me what should be done. Remembering our silent meetings in London, I suggested that they should spend a few minutes in silence at the end of the prayer-time each day. They have been trying it, and they find that it has had a good effect on the ashram life."

To make the story complete (or at least as complete as my knowledge goes), I must add one more thing. After my first visit to the ashram in 1928, when Mr. Gandhi had asked me to write and tell him if there was anything in the life of the ashram that I thought might be improved, I had ventured to suggest that it would be helpful to introduce a time of silence into the worship. But he had replied saying that such an idea would not suit them at all, and that it would not be understood. He added that

he had attended Quaker meetings sometimes in South Africa, but he had not been at all impressed. So it will be seen that he was by no means prepossessed in favour of such silent meetings for united worship and meditation before his visit to London. Great and wise is the man who will change his mind in the light of fresh experience!

Calcutta,
29-1-1946.

GANDHIJI THE TEACHER

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur

THE late Shri Gokhale was an honoured friend of my Father's and often used to stay at our home. I may say that the flame of my passionate desire to see India free from foreign domination was early fanned by contact with him. He once said to me: "One day soon you will, I hope, see a man who is destined to do very great things for India." With this at the back of my mind I seized the very first opportunity I could of being presented to Gandhiji. This was in 1915 at the Bombay Congress when Lord Sinha was presiding. It was the first Congress I had had the privilege of attending. Gandhiji was more or less an unknown factor in the political life of India at that time. The tumultuous ovation went to the great Tilak who had just returned from the Andamans. Gandhiji spoke a few words about Indians in South Africa. With no loud speakers in those days his speech was more or less inaudible except to those on the dais or in the front rows of the audience. But there was a quiet strength, an earnestness, and a deep humility about him that went straight to my young heart; and I feel I have owed allegiance to him and his way of life ever since even though circumstances did not permit my actually joining him till much later.

He came to Jullundur after the massacre of Jallianwalla Bagh. By then he was the idol of the people. The undisciplined crowds had trodden on him. At 6 p. m. he was suffering from a badly bruised foot and high fever. My doctor brother, who happened to be Civil Surgeon there, begged of him to postpone his journey by 24 hours. "How can I break faith with so many who are waiting for me at various places?"—came the quick reply. "And I assure you I shall be free from fever by 10 p. m. which is when my train leaves." I sent him a hot water bottle, and begged of him to take it with him for the journey. The next morning the bottle came back with a note of thanks written by Mahadev Desai in which he said: "You will be glad to know that the fever actually went before he left Jullundur; so he had no need of the bottle afterwards."

His second visit to Jullundur the same year brought him to see me because he had heard I was ill. He asked me to give all my 'foreign finery' to him to burn and take to 'khadi'. I stoutly denied having much 'foreign finery'. I said I now bought only Swadeshi. "That is finery too." I pleaded that burning was quite wrong. His reply was: "Not even when these things stand for the chains of our slavery? But if you will not burn, at least give it to me, and I will send it to poor Indians in South Africa, and you take to spinning and khadi." Alas! that his words, at that time, fell on more or less stony ground. I tried to wear khadi but found it too coarse for my fastidious tastes. In those days there were none of the fine Andhra or Bihar muslins such as there are today. Because his words carry power in them, however, I learnt how to spin and used to give my yarn to be spun for cloth for a poor child or woman. I began buying khadi for dusters, towels and any rough use in the house. Afterwards Gandhiji said to me: "Many people have used khadi as a door mat, but they do not realise how they have thus wronged it and all it stands for!" Later when the realisation of what khadi embodies dawned upon me I understood what he meant by calling any cloth that was not khadi as part of that which was contributing to keep us slaves. Years later when I came to live with him in Maganvadi he saw or sensed, perhaps, my inability to rid myself of some of the

comforts to which my sheltered life had accustomed me; and how understanding he was! He would not allow me at first to sleep on the ground. I was not made even to wash up my own plates etc. I was willing to do everything and pleaded with him to be allowed to do so—but Gandhiji, while he has the enviable capacity of drawing people to him, has also the even greater capacity of keeping them with him. It is because he leads gently over the rough places that he evokes complete loyalty from all and sundry.

It is in the very nature of things that all sorts and conditions come to him from the four corners of the earth. It is the old story of the maimed, the halt and the blind coming to someone who can give them succour. And just as I have seen and felt his gentle hand bringing relief to a fevered brow, just as I have seen him taking infinite delight in washing a leper inmate's sores or ministering to other sick folk—so do his words of love and sympathy bring solace to many a stricken heart. But those who are nearest to him sense in him also the hardest of hard taskmasters. Which of us has not come under the castigation of his righteous indignation? On such occasions tears do not move him. "Tears are not the expression of the sorrow that should be yours," he once said to me. "They are a token of the pride and anger in you. You do not understand the first principle of non-violence which is infinite humility."

It is from the trifles in one's daily life that Gandhiji teaches big lessons. My thermos had broken. We were leaving Delhi for Wardha, and Gandhiji had said he wanted to take his evening meal on the train. I had to take hot milk as well as hot water for him. It was difficult to manage with only one thermos which was left to us. Shri G. D. Birla, seeing my difficulty, gave me a brand new one which he happened to have got only the day before. I willingly took it. When I poured out his milk from it in the train he at once—for he has an eagle eye—saw that it was a new article. Had I bought it? I told him the whole story. He was bitterly disappointed in me for having taken the gift so readily. Was I a pauper that I should make anyone spend money on me? It did not matter that

the friend who gave it could afford to do so, but I should have known better. Money is a sacred trust with those to whom God has given it, and not a penny of it should be spent on him who has no need of it or on anything that is not needed. Mahadev, who was returning to Delhi from the next station, was told to return it. Afterwards it became Mahadev's property, and how often when I used to see that flask did I recall to mind the fifteen minutes' salutary lesson that it had given me!

"Never try to wean me from doing that which I like and which gives joy to others." This was in the early days of Sevagram when I felt that helping more than a dozen persons with food was too much for him. That he can no longer serve out the food or take a part in preparing it or now not even eat in the common room is a sorrow to him. "I must realise my limitations."

"Why *do* you waste so much of your time on the personal affairs of the mad inmates of your Ashram?" Quick comes the response to this oft-repeated question: "I know mine is a mad house and I am the maddest of the lot. But those that cannot see the good in these mad people are blind." I am again and again reminded, in his dealings with human beings, of the great prophet of Nazareth, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister. "They that are whole need not a physician but they that are sick."

"You are very unfair to your own people. If it is a case of Hindu versus Muslim, it is always the Muslim whom you favour. If it is either against the Harijan, you will be on the side of the Harijan; and as for women you will always take their side." No one had a heartier laugh than Gandhiji over this remark, made by a valued co-worker in jest and yet with so much truth in it.

Children have a special attraction for Gandhiji. He is as a child with them. "Little Kana, by insisting on making me tell him stories, is making me an expert in the art. For you know it is an art and a marvellous way of imparting all kinds of knowledge to children. All the instruction I was able to give to my own children was during my walks from Phoenix to Durban. I had no other time. I did not send them to school, and they have a grudge against me,

perhaps, for not having given them the opportunity for passing exams and receiving the so-called higher education. But I consider that I imparted to them far more than they would have got from school or college." That is the reason for Gandhiji's insistence on the quality of the teacher in his scheme of basic education. "Text-books are really not necessary if the teacher is, as he should be, a storehouse of knowledge."

It is alleged that women talk more than men. At any rate, perhaps they gossip more. Commenting on this over-indulgence on our part one day he said to me: "Of course you know the English proverb 'silence is golden'. Have you ever probed into the depths of this truth? If you have, you will try to set an example in this regard to the younger members of your sex who surround me. I have long since realised that one should not utter one word more than is necessary. Even my jokes (and he has an endless fund of humour) are meant to bear a lesson within them. The moment one speaks more than is necessary one veers from the truth, and you know that untruth and violence are twin sisters. My own habit of weekly silence for 24 hours sprang just as much from the desire to discipline my speech as to give myself rest and more time for quick despatch of my work." Recently he said to me: "You do not know how I strain myself to keep my thought pure. I believe thought is more potent than speech. For achieving my object I have perpetually to dive down into the deep well of truth. That alone can wash away impurity." It had happened that that morning one of our party had said something to annoy him. "I should have corrected her, of course, for her error, but I had no business to be angry with her as I was."

Nothing annoys him more than being called a 'Mahatma'. "I should not be a seeker after truth if I had stopped growing." Vital decisions are taken overnight, as it were, and adhered to with all the courage and faith born of deep conviction. This was so when he decided to move to Sevagram. Hut or no hut, rain or no rain, road or no road, he went to live there in June. The same applies to the recent lightning decisions to start the nature cure clinic

in a village and to live in Harijan quarters in big cities. No entreaties can move him once the decision is taken, and since such are arrived at through worship of truth and non-violence they are basically correct.

To watch him at Uruli—his latest venture—conducting a roaring nature cure practice among all and sundry, men and women, rich and poor, is an invigorating exercise. Most people are frightened, after a certain time of life, of breaking new ground. But Gandhiji at his advanced age starts with all the vigour and enthusiasm of youth. His zeal is infectious, and when I see with my own eyes these men and women with simple faith in his healing powers I wonder why most of us are incredulous when Gandhiji prescribes *Ramnam* as the panacea for all our ills, whether physical or mental.

A foreign friend meeting him after many years asked: "What news of your family?" Without a moment's thought came the reply: "The whole of village India is my family." And I was reminded of an incident which Ba had related to me of how once when some sweets were being distributed to children in Sabarmati Ashram she had given an extra portion to two of her grandchildren and had properly earned the wrath of Gandhiji whose love is too universal to admit of comparisons or differences in his mind, however much those near him may indulge in petty jealousies.

Woe betide any inaccuracy in work by those who are working for him. He will take all the pains possible to teach, he gets work out of everyone according to his or her capacity, but I am sure many like myself have often incurred his displeasure for looseness or lack of thought, for he cannot bear inaccuracies or thoughtless speech, writing and action. I had accompanied him to a meeting, and he had given me a slip of paper which I had been commissioned to give to —. I did as I was told, and the person concerned read the same and talked to Gandhiji about it. On arrival at Sevagram I was asked for the slip. I said I had handed it to — who had read it, said what he had to say, and imagined he had either kept or returned the same. I thought my responsibility had ended with handing it over to —.

The next morning I received the following letter:

"चि. Amrit, an ideal secretary keeps her chief straight where he is going astray. She hovers round him and watches all the movements about him, picks up his papers even torn—lest he might have torn important ones in mistake, collects all she had given him if it is to be found anywhere. Therefore she leaves after him and seeks what he has left behind and, if not owned by anybody else, collects it. Now I was right in correcting you yesterday, but wholly wrong in showing disappointment or irritation. Forget the wrong and treasure the right. What I have said is by way of indication. Follow the spirit of this note, and you will be an ideal secretary.

"This is my birthday present which goes loaded with all the good wishes that I am capable of conceiving. Love, Bapu."

I doubt if anyone can possess a more unique and treasurable birthday gift.

Nothing is more delightful than to hear from Gandhiji first hand of many incidents in the early days in England and South Africa. They are probably all related in his Autobiography. Many are stories against himself related with roars of laughter, but he makes them live again by his graphic description, and his narrative always has a bearing on the matter being discussed in order to give practical instances. "It has been a rule in my life never to ask anyone to do anything which I have not tried out in practice myself."

I had the privilege of being with him when the sad news came to him of Shri Chhotelal having put an end to his life. It was a cruel blow that one who had given up his belief in violence and served faithfully for so many years should end his life by a violent act. And while Gandhiji restrained his tears the wound was deep, and he was in quiet thought for some time. Was it a heart-searching as to why he had failed to keep Chhotelalji from violence? He has often said: "I can never forget Chhotelal." I was with him too when Jamnalalji went. We arrived there very shortly after the sad event. The family was naturally distraught. The blow was sudden, the loss irreparable.

But with the arrival of Gandhiji a deep calm came over the mourners. "What room is there for tears when we know that death is but a passing into life?" Nevertheless while he has schooled himself not to weep, he is human enough to enter into the sorrows of others and strengthen them with his love and sympathy. At prayers in the Ashram at Sevagram that evening he talked of the loved co-worker, and told us how he would miss one who had brought him to Wardha and to whom he turned for everything he wanted. "I feel today as if my right hand had been cut off."

Truth to tell, however, Gandhiji has the capacity to carry on his work with or without his immediate helpers. This was amply brought home to each one of us the other day when he suddenly felt that he should go to Simla unaccompanied by any of his staff. "I want to be alone with God as my sole support. I am going on very important work. I am preaching every day to people that God is our only help. I am making them to rely on *Ramnam* and not on medicines for the curing of their ailments. I must put my own faith to the test. And why should you worry? There will be many others who will look after me and who know my wants." A similar decision was taken yesterday in regard to going from Mussoorie to Delhi in a 'bus rather than in the comfortable car in which Shri G. D. Birla had sent him up there. All pleading on our behalf that he would be less tired in the car, that he needed all the rest he could get in view of the heavy work and the heat awaiting him in Delhi, met with the stern rebuke that not one of us was able to understand the inner meaning of his decision. With Gandhiji it is ever a case of scaling more and more difficult heights. I am reminded again and again of the true pilgrim's progress towards that self-realisation which is the goal of all high endeavour.

The harder the task the greater in form does it find him. While honourable and reasonable compromise is in the very marrow of Gandhiji's bones, the grim determination never to cede principles is always there. "Fear of consequences may never deter the believer in non-violence. For non-violence knows no defeat." Sometimes when he

has not been able to bring his point of view home to co-workers, he has said: "I must be content to plough a lonely furrow rather than resile from a position which I am convinced is the right one." I remember so well his saying this to Mahadev on returning to his hut in Sevagram in 1939 on the outbreak of war after a meeting of the Congress Working Committee. But failure to carry conviction invariably makes him turn the searchlight inwards. "There is something wrong in my presentation of the non-violent aspect and not the fault of those who will not agree with me."

"How are you feeling in spite of the heat and the strain you are undergoing these days?" "I am very fit as you can see. Everyone is really jealous of me. But I am not as well as I should be because I get irritated very easily, and that is a sign of ill health. In me raised blood pressure too is often a result of anger."

To the thousands that come to him for solace and advice Gandhiji gives a listening ear with all the understanding of a man able to put himself into the shoes of another person. "I felt, if I was to be a guide to friends, co-workers and seekers, that I must cultivate the art of listening."

And so, those of us who live with him find in him a teacher who instructs big things from very small happenings, who chastises as "a father the son in whom he delighteth" and who inspires one and helps one to grow. And this applies equally to old or young, man, woman or child. It is the power of handling aright individuals and groups that contributes to success in the everyday life of the Ashram or village no less than in the big events that concern the country.

"I want to live to be 125, if I am able with God's help to live as I should to attain that age. I want to live so long not merely to see India politically free but also to see how I can help to bring about the Ram Rajya of my dreams whereby she can make that contribution for which the world is looking to her."

May his wish be granted!

New Delhi,
May/June, 1946.

REMINISCENCES OF MAHATMA GANDHI

Bhagavan Das

WHEN did I first meet Mahatma Ji? Let me see. I am eighty years of age, and memory has become weak, slippery, deceitful. I must think. I think I first saw him in first week of February, 1916, in which foundation of Banaras University was laid by Lord Hardinge on fourth of that month. Mahatma Ji was present at the ceremony. No, he was not. At least I do not remember seeing him at the function, amidst the brilliant gathering which made Lord Hardinge say: "This is a miniature of the Delhi Durbar!" But I certainly saw him on the 8th of that month, when he put to flight the whole host of Maharajas, Rajas, high Government officials. How was that? It was this way. Malaviya Ji, ever intent on catching pennies as well as guineas for Banaras University which he was developing out of Central Hindu College that had been founded and built up by Mrs. (afterwards Dr.) Annie Besant and her colleagues, among them this humble reminiscent. So he had called a meeting of all and sundry, which gathered on 8th February, on the great platform of the very valuable fine site generously given away for building up the Central Hindu College, by the then Maharaja Prabhu Narayan Sinha of Banaras. Curiously, 4th, a Vasanta Panchami, was very hot, while 8th was cold as Christmas week. Late Maharaja Jaisingh of Alwar was there, and Nabha, and Bikaner (? was he, I am not sure) and Banaras—no, he was not, nor Kashmir, perhaps Dhar was and one or two others, late Rameshwara Singh of Darbhanga etc.—and Banaras Commissioner, and Mahamahopadhyaya Hara Prasad Shastri, and many other big-wigs. Malaviya Ji asked one after another renowned speaker to speak and beg for his University. As his ill-luck would have it, he requested Gandhi Ji also. Gandhi Ji got up and, in the course of his talk, compared Maharajas and Rajas and millionaire zamindars and of course the then British Indian Government, to a troop of monkeys who invade fields in Gujarat when crops are ripe, and villager-tenants and their families, men, women, children, rush into those fields and

begin beating upon kerosene cans and any other pots and pans they can lay hold on, with sticks of wood or metal, as he (Gandhi Ji) and other compatriots had begun to do, to put the monkeys to flight. Therewith the troop of Maharajas and Rajas etc. was put to flight. Malaviya Ji cried to Gandhi Ji: 'What are you saying?', and he replied: 'What have I said? Have I not said the truth? Are you and your fellow-Congressites not trying to say the same thing, though much more politely?'; and the British Banaras Commissioner, sitting beside me, muttered loudly: 'We must stop this man from talking such rot!' And Malaviya Ji ran after the routed Maharajas shouting: "Your Highnesses! Your Highnesses! Please come back! We have stopped him!' etc. But panic had gripped their souls too effectually, and none returned. Malaviya Ji rushed into that true patriot, dear good Shiva Prasad Gupta's car which he commandeered, and most unfortunately dragged me along with him, and ordered the chauffeur to Maharaja Banaras' Mint House where Alwar was housed. Fortunately he left me behind in the car; otherwise I should have been frozen to death. More fortunately, Shiva Prasad had left behind his very double-caped and double wool-lined surtout in the car, and been left by Malaviya Ji to fend for himself against the biting cold of that night, as best he could; but Shiva Prasad had the protection of his own heavy quilt of fat evenly spread all over his body! Alas! Banaras misses his genial presence and the whole country his original ideas very much. He was the parent of the enthusiasm for Hindi in press, on platform, in law-courts—not Gandhi Ji nor Nagari Pracharini Sabhas. He was the originator of that magnificent temple to Bharat Mata,—31 ft. square relief map of Mother India, in hard white Makrana marble, done to scale, with Himalaya-heights and ocean-depths all to scale, by Banaras stone-masons, under the constant instruction and guidance of that 'admirable Crichton' and equally patriotic Durga Prasad of Banaras, sculptor, painter, musician, mechanical toy-maker of life-like singing birds, astronomer, philatelist, watch-repairer, and archaeologist reading Harappa and Mohen-jo-daro and Elam inscriptions and coins—which

Temple, open to all communities, Mahatma Ji opened in October 1936, in company of Khan Abdul Ghaffar, Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Purushottam Das Tandon, and representatives of all provinces, communities, and both sexes.

When did I next meet Mahatma Gandhi Ji? In 1920? No—in Congress week in December 1916, in Lucknow. I was there also, lodged in the same small tent with Shiva Prasad Gupta. Weather was exceptionally severe. In the morning, we used to see dew-drops frozen into hard icicles on canvas-surfaces of tents. Surendra Nath Banerji—I think I saw him there first—addressed that Congress; and Lokamanya Tilak too, whom also I saw there for the first time. And the unhappy pact between Hindus and Muslims, for reservation of seats, was decided on by the Congress there in an unfortunate moment, which pact has led on step after step, from reservation of seats in electoral bodies, (first cunningly devised according to the world-old principle of *divide-et-impera* by Viceroy Minto, benevolent-looking midget though he was), to the horror of reservation of areas and vivisection of India into two pieces. Well, I saw Mahatma Ji in his tent—or perhaps it was a thatch-and-bamboo contraption—one morning. He was reading a great big volume—of Government Gazette, I noted by peeping. I sat still, till he finished looking down on and turning over the large pages. He had no private secretaries then, and I had gone in unannounced, or rather announcing myself with 'May I come in', either in English or Hindi, I forget which, at the open door of the thatch and bamboo cottage and received a silent nod of consent in answer with eyes still fixed on Gazette. When he looked up at me, after finishing with the Gazette, I made *namaskāra*, folding hands, and he replied same way. Then I asked: "Mahatma Ji! the circular you sent round some time back—was that intended for '*āpatkāla*', 'time of misfortune', or for '*sampatkāla*', 'happy time of good fortune'? He replied '*āpatkāla*'. I said: "I have nothing more to ask," and left after exchanging *namaskāras*. That same evening, at a meeting of the A.I.C.C. I saw him and Lokamanya, Surendranath, Motilal Nehru, my beloved mother Annie Besant, and Gokarna

Nath Mishra, leader of Lucknow Bar (afterwards Judge of Oudh Chief Court), and General Secretary of Congress for the year, in sole charge of Congress Session there, and other big-wigs. I knew G. K. Mishra as a Trustee of the Central Hindu College well. As I was not a member of the A.I.C.C. I was peeping in at the gathering from a 'suture' between the tent walls of canvas, till someone saw me, and smilingly beckoned me in—it was Motilal Nehru or G. K. Mishra. So I went in and took seat in a corner. Then I saw Mahatma Ji standing behind the first row of seated members. He was in typical Kathiawadi dress of that time—all changed within a few years, very rapidly. Well, just then two grandly dressed Taluqdars came in, and nearly jostled against Gandhi Ji. One of them said: 'Myān, yeh kaun dehāti (village clown) yahān ā gayā hai?' (Hullo! who is this village-clown that has strayed in here?) The other whispered into his ear: 'Are! Mahatma Gandhi!' The other's eyes bulged, and jaws fell agape; and both quietly glided off to another corner. I have said above: 'Annie Besant was present too.' She had broken a quarter century old convention of the Theosophical Society—that its International Convention should be held in alternate years at Madras and at Banaras—in order to attend the Lucknow Congress, and, as President of T.S., had held the Convention at Lucknow that year, though it was due at Banaras. The new generation forgets, in the tremendous rush of events, that it was not Gandhi Ji but Annie Besant, who first taught 'Passive Resistance and Civil Disobedience' to India. She started the Home Rule Movement here, and was rewarded therefor by the benevolent British Indian Government with internment in the T.S. Bungalow built by Col. Olcott, the preceding P.T.S., for summer use. Her fellow-prisoners were B. P. Wadia, and the late P. K. Telang, son of that very distinguished Bombay High Court Judge, Kashinath P. Telang—as learned in both Samskrit and English as Lokamanya—and the three hoisted the Home Rule Flag on that bungalow, every time it was pulled down by the police-guard. They were let go after three months for various reasons.

Next I saw Mahatma Ji in November 1920. He had been advising, just before, students of Aligarh Muslim University to non-cooperate; and the Aligarh Management had asked him to advise his co-religionists of the Banaras Hindu University first. So he came post haste to Banaras. Malaviya Ji, quite rightly, did not permit him to speak on Banaras Hindu University grounds, or in Central Hindu College premises as he had previously refused (mere) accommodation, quite wrongly, for A.I.C. Committee members in preceding February. So students (and a very few of staff) arranged a meeting for Gandhi Ji on a plot immediately adjoining Central Hindu College play-ground. There was a fair gathering, of almost all students and a few hundreds of citizens. I sat on dais in a corner behind leaders, Motilal Nehru, Abul Kalam and others. Gandhi Ji spoke to this effect: 'Let none think I am leading you astray wilfully against your good. I am father of four sons, so I know what is due to sons, and you are to me as my sons'; and so on. Acharya Kripalani, now very well-known, non-cooperated with about 30 students. I took up quarters in a rented house at Assighat, with the non-co-operant students, and a few teachers; and started the Kashi Vidyapitha there (in February, 1921) for which Shiva Prasad Gupta made a trust endowment of ten lakh rupees. Kashi Vidya Pitha was formally opened by Gandhi Ji in presence of Motilal Nehru, Abul Kalam and others. Tre-mendous crowd this time. City Kotwal, under orders from District Magistrate, made the first arrest in a public meeting, in Banaras, on high road outside meeting-ground which was private property. He was trembling all over, mortally afraid of being torn to pieces by crowd which was pressing us all round. With difficulty Gandhi Ji and lead-ers were carried away on motors to their respective lodg-ings. Same evening, another public meeting was arranged on Town Hall grounds—for which permission was obtain-ed with difficulty from loyalist Chairman. Again vast crowd and vaster noise and movement. Shiva Prasad, our Sten-tor, added to uproar by his mistaken efforts to quiet crowd. However, in about quarter hour, they subsided. Gandhi Ji made brief speech and was hurried away with greater

difficulty than in morning. I was body-guarding him on car which could proceed at only snail's pace in that packed crowd. Public enthusiasm was so great, persons insisted on *touching* him, not content with vociferating 'ki jai', and when they could not do so, lunged forward with long thick bamboo lathis, ends of which poked against his as well as my head—nearly cracking them! If not touch with hand or foot, do so at least with end of stick! Such is Hindu superstition and indiscipline! Has Congress done anything to remedy these? We must sadly answer: "Very little if at all; only made things worse by preaching the word Swaraj, without any meaning—which was emptied out of it when Nagpur Congress of December 1920, decided to drop out of its Creed the words 'On Colonial lines'.

Well—I next saw Mahatma Ji in Bombay in June 1921, at an A.I.C.C. meeting, as a member. Lokamanya had passed away, and I saw not him, but a life-size and life-like marble statue of his in Sardar-griha, where I put up with Shiva Prasad Gupta. Shaukat Ali, 6' 2" tall, as much round, said after the meeting—at which old Vijayaraghavachari presided—when refreshments had been provided: "Let us eat as much as we can of these good things, for we will not have the chance for some years now." He had inkling of coming long jailing in Karachi.

Vast gathering on Chaupati sands in afternoon. Brief five and ten minute speeches by leaders, Chittaranjan Das, Motilal Nehru, M. R. Jayakar and others, Mahatma Ji included; he was always brief and to the point—no superfluous word, no rhetorical and oratorical flourishes or straining after effect, just as much or as little as was absolutely necessary to express his purpose. Burning of all foreign clothes, rightly, was resolved on; holocaust of which took place duly next day in mill-area. Next day, I saw Gandhi Ji at his residence, in a third storey room in a fine house. Many A.I.C.C. members were present. I asked him: "Mahatma Ji, 'Self-government on colonial lines' had some meaning. The mere word 'Swaraj' has none; or whatever each person chooses to put into it. Hindu thinks Hindu-raj; Muslim thinks Muslim-raj; zamindar thinks zamindar-raj; capitalist capitalist-raj; labourer

labourer-raj; and so forth. All which means fearful class war and civil war instead of unity which you preach." He said: "If anyone asks you, what Swaraj means, tell him—Ramraj." I rejoined: "But this would be explaining less difficult by more unintelligible. And if you think everyone was happy and none poor in Ramaji's reign, that would be great error." I quoted to him some episodes from Valmiki's *Ramayana* which would be too long to quote here. He turned to other members. I came away.

After 1929, I saw him in 1931, I think. Horrible communal riots in Banaras and elsewhere had just abated. Gandhi-Irwin pact had been just proclaimed; he had called off satyagraha, and shortly after, a meeting of A.I.C.C. was called. All members were housed in Kashi Vidya Pitha buildings. Generous Shiva Prasad as usual was host to all. Abul Kalam only went to a hotel. Mangoes were extraordinarily abundant that year. Mahatma Ji was trying one of his experiments for Truth. Truth here means Food; and the experiments at times ended in failure. Though pure *sweet* thin mango-juice—a 40 days' course of it—is recommended by Ayur-Veda as one of the finest *Kaya-Kalpa aushadha* ('alterative rejuvenating medicines'), owing to some mischance, Gandhi Ji began to suffer from diarrhoea in the night. I gathered all the best seniormost doctors of Banaras early next morning. They all came—of course no fees!—eager to serve; respectfully examined him; declared there was really nothing wrong with him! His ascetic ways had readily defeated the passing illness. I happened to say in the presence of the doctors: "*Mahatma Ji kupathya karte hain*" (does intemperance!) He naturally misunderstood, and said: "*Āp aisā kahte hain*"! ('You say so!') I explained: "Not ordinary *kupathya*! But you fix interviews up to midnight; and then after *two* hours only begin massacring your sleeping secretaries and dictating endless letters to them! That is the *kupathya* I mean!" His annoyed look was replaced by a smile, and all were happy.

Banaras,
5-4-1948.

GANDHIJI : 1940-1945

GL·41

G. D. Birla

IT was May 1940. Gandhiji was on his way to Simla to meet the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow. He halted for a few hours at Delhi to take his bath and walk before embarking on the train to Simla. May in Delhi is generally warm, but the nights are cool. On this particular night we had a small shower which made it still more pleasant. Gandhiji often remarks that he can do without food but not without his daily prayer and his daily walk. So we started on a stroll in a leisurely fashion.

The war was still dragging on lazily. The real trial of strength had not yet begun. But perhaps Simla had already got the ominous foreboding of the future. Hitler's strength was underestimated in the beginning, but the big summer swoop that was to come had already cast its shadows.

India was quiet on the surface, but a subterranean fire was burning furiously which might any moment set the whole country ablaze. And so the Viceroy wanted to get the mind of Gandhiji.

We walked together in the moonlit night. I was full of expectation at the impending Simla talks. How could Britain be so foolish as not to appease India in such a critical period when she had not hesitated to appease even the false gods, the Fascists and the Nazis? But Gandhiji hardly devoted any serious thought to the impending talks. He was completely indifferent. What the Viceroy would say was immaterial to him. He knew what he had to say in all circumstances.

Such a psychology is peculiar to Gandhiji, which I have observed on many other equally important occasions. The master of Jujutsu never takes an offensive move himself. He deals with the attack, when it comes, in the fashion most suitable at the time. So Gandhiji deals with the situation as it arises.

In 1931 Gandhiji was in London to attend the Round Table Conference. It had caused a great stir all over Europe because for the first time H.M.G. were going to

parley with the "naked fakir" as Churchill had described him. A few days before the opening day I reminded him of the importance of his first speech, which he would have to deliver on the opening day, and asked him whether he had considered the points that he was going to elaborate.

"Yes," he said, "I feel I must think out what I have to say."

The following day I again reminded him. But he had no time to think.

Next day we were driving together to St. James's for the Conference. "I suppose," I said, "you have thought of what you have to say."

"No, unfortunately, I had no time. So many things kept me tied up till late last night. The same thing happened again in the morning after the prayer. So I am absolutely blank. But perhaps God will help me in collecting my thoughts at the proper time. After all, we have to talk like simple men. I have no desire to appear extra-intelligent. Like a simple villager all that I have to say is: 'We want Independence!' "

I was a bit disturbed. He was going without any preparation, and the occasion was not to be treated lightly.

The speech was delivered. It came out flowing like a gushing stream. It was heard with rapt attention. And it was the best speech of the day!

Gandhiji does not plan a few years ahead. He plans—if one can use the phrase—for thousands of years. That does not mean ignoring the needs of the day and planning for centuries ahead. But one who believes in wide principles of truth, non-violence and the like, hardly needs to change his position widely, be it for today or for a hundred years hence. Judged from this angle, he is more of a prophet than a politician in the narrow sense.

But such an attitude of mind also gives him a new kind of strength. He is free from speculation, worry, anxiety and excitement, while his opponent is at times perplexed at Gandhiji's queerism. Gandhiji was, therefore, without any plans as to what he would say to the Viceroy.

"How could the British neglect to do the right thing in

such circumstances? The circumstances must compel them to act. In a way this war is going to right many wrongs; and India, being one of the aggrieved party, must be benefited in this war," I remarked.

"Do you believe that any wrong can do any right? War after all is an evil. How can any good come out of an evil? In any case, it is sinful even to expect to derive benefit out of anyone's distress. We should depend more on the righteousness of our own cause and actions rather than on the shortcomings of others."

I was fully reprimanded.

It was again in Delhi. The year was 1942. War was in full rage. Germany like a huge tide had long before swept over the whole of the Western European continent and had unsuccessfully knocked at the gates of Moscow the previous year. Though Germany could not enter Moscow, her fury had not subsided. Countries like Belgium and France, which surrendered without giving much fight, had escaped destruction, while those like Russia who stood the onslaught were being pounded. All the fine creation of the three Five-Year Plans in Russia was being reduced to fine dust.

If the position was critical in Europe, it was no better in Asia. Japan like a giant steam roller was advancing with amazing speed and was crushing all resistance. Citadel after citadel was falling before the Japanese onslaught like a house of cards. The invincible Singapore had already fallen, to the dismay of the whole world. Everybody was anxious to know what next.

Every home that could afford it had bought a radio set and tuned it several times during day and night to listen to the important stations. Invariably it spat out ominous news.

When Marshal Chiang Kai-shek suddenly flew to India, the object of his mission left people guessing. Had the Marshal fled for refuge to India? Such was the whisper often heard in those critical days.

Then followed the visit of Sir Stafford Cripps. This was an important event in the history of India. Every mind

stood on tiptoe guessing and anticipating the results of the Cripps Mission.

Gandhiji was invited to Delhi.

He had his own views about the Cripps offer. It is his habit to judge bigger events by the smaller ones. The text of the offer, therefore, did not matter to him so much as the day-to-day happenings in India. And he drew no hope from these.

The Government as everyone could see was simply arrogant and utterly oblivious of public opinion. Even on petty things the Viceroy always took his own decision. By bringing imported experts on even unimportant subjects and filling posts with Englishmen when Indians were available, he was insultingly showing utter disregard for public sentiment.

"I can certainly build something constructive on the foundation of this offer, but I have no enthusiasm," remarked Gandhiji busy spinning.

"If that is so, why not try? Why should you lack in enthusiasm and allow the opportunity to slip away?"

"Well, I see no honesty. How are the day-to-day events in India to be reconciled with the professed desire of H.M.G. to grant independence to India? In America some papers have reported me as having remarked that the Cripps offer was a post-dated cheque on a crashing bank. I had, of course, said nothing of the kind. But the criticism on the score of its being a post-dated cheque is absolutely correct. Churchill evidently argues in his mind: What is the object of fighting and winning the war if we have to abandon India voluntarily? In fact, there could hardly be a world war if India and other Asiatic countries achieved their freedom. It is better, so perhaps Churchill argues, to lose India after a struggle rather than abdicate. With this psychology there could be no chance of an honest deal. The whole approach—the reluctance to rectify the past and the present, and the emphasis on the future—leaves one cold. However, there may be some good in it. Who knows? Jawahar is dealing with the matter. I am taking a detached view." And he lapsed into his mood of calm indifference.

But soon a new subject came up for his attention. It immediately shook him out of his pensive mood. Some domestic issues of the Ashram were to be debated and Gandhiji fell headlong into the discussion. All the big problems were shelved for the time being as if they never existed. The lack of enthusiasm in "constructing something on the Cripps offer" was in complete contrast to his keen interest in the smallest details pertaining to the Ashram. Has not Gandhiji said so many times: "What is in *Pinda* is in *Brahmānda*"?

Small details are more important to Gandhiji than any big abstract formula or principle. Means matter more than the end.

So the discussion continued with great concentration for nearly two hours. The discussion concluded. Gandhiji was rather fatigued. Further bad news about the war. Gandhiji drew a deep sigh.

"How funny that we should be discussing petty matters when a huge empire is crumbling to pieces!" he remarked.

"Are you sorry?"

"Yes, I am."

"But I did not know you were ever fond of the empire."

"No, I never had any fancy for it, but equally I don't like the end of an institution which took so long to build. I want to end its bad features. I want to mend it. But here it is ending under the impact of another empire perhaps worse than this one. I am always for mending things and not for ending them, if I can."

1942 has become memorable in the history of India. Japan swept the whole of Eastern Asia by its victory march. Cripps came with his famous offer and returned disappointed, failing also to fulfil the expectations of India. But another eventful chapter was now in the making.

India was bitter after the Cripps failure.

At the beginning of the war India was getting less hostile towards England. Past bitterness was gradually loosening when the Congress became the Government in many provinces in 1937. Although there were daily pin-pricks and small quarrels between the Congress Govern-

ments and the Governors, on the whole the machinery ran smoothly after the Congress assumed power.

While the relations between England and India were thus getting less unfriendly after the Congress assumed power, the Congress Governments, on the other hand, like any other government, were coming in more and more for criticism and seemed to be less popular with the people. Hindus resented various actions of the Congress; and the Muslims, in spite of all the indulgence extended to them by the Congress Governments, were engineering new grievances almost every day. None of the provinces had a Muslim League ministry. This naturally created a disgruntled element which was gradually on the increase.

Had the Governors and the Civil Service shown more friendliness towards the Congress, perhaps the history of India would be different. Similarly, had the Congress taken due note of the way Muslim opinion was shaping, the history of things might have been different. But that was not to be.

In this critical period, the Khaksars started creating an embarrassing situation in the U.P. The most anomalous position was that their jathas made Delhi their starting point with the apparent connivance, if not consent, of the Central authorities. All these jathas, immediately they entered the U.P., had to be arrested by the Congress Government. The public naturally interpreted this paradox as open warfare between the Government of Lord Linlithgow and the Congress. The day the Congress resigned, the Khaksar trouble began subsiding under the heavy hand of the U.P. Governor's Government. The public drew their own conclusion. Grave allegations against permanent officers of the I.C.S. were made.

In spite of all the storm and stress, and the trouble from the Governors and the Muslim League, the Congress had carried on its administration with the utmost patience and impartiality. But this was not to continue for long.

The war came, and the newly written chapter was abruptly terminated. Lord Linlithgow had an arrogant estimate of himself, his own wisdom, and the virtues of British rule. His contempt for public opinion was in

inverse ratio to his regard for his own views. He thus always acted in a most arbitrary fashion from the very beginning of the war, and the conditions grew from bad to worse. Relations that were cordial at the start of the war grew extremely bitter by the beginning of 1942. The Cripps offer was the last straw on the camel's back.

Gandhiji was in Bombay to guide and attend the eventful meeting of the A.I.C.C. in August 1942. He took very scanty nourishment in those hectic days. I found him as never before engrossed in serious thought.

"You are taking very little food these days," I remarked.

"Yes. Bombay has plenty of ozone in the air, and the metabolism is so low that one does not need too much of food here. If I take full meals, I shall fall ill. But there is another reason. My mind is more busy these days than ever before. You can't think too much and yet eat much. It is safer to keep light."

True, the factory of the mind was working furiously. The talk of some sort of satyagraha was in the air. But Gandhiji had no plan of any satyagraha.

The provincial leaders were arriving from their headquarters one after another and relating to him the situation in their respective provinces.

Describing the position of his province an important leader said: "I will relate the position in Puranic language. Once Narada went to Vishnu on a casual visit. Vishnu enquired: 'Narada, I understand rain is badly needed for the crops. What are the chances of its coming in the near future?' Narada pored over his astrological books and said: 'None, I fear; that is at least what my books predict.' But when Narada walked out of Vishnu's abode, he covered his head with an umbrella. 'Why this precaution,' Vishnu remarked, 'if there is no eventuality of rain?' 'But I related only what my books predict, not what you desire. After all events will be shaped not according to my books but according to your will.'" Summing up, the leader said, "Don't ask us what the masses think. Tell us what you think, and the masses will follow." Such was the tension in 1942.

In Birla House, Bombay, we have a small patch of lawn encircled by a paved pathway. Gandhiji gets up at five, says his prayers, then takes some liquid nourishment, performs his ablutions, and starts his walk.

When in Bombay, he does not go out to public places for his walk. If he did, he would be mobbed by the admiring public. In this little circular track in Birla House, Gandhiji takes walks of desired length. In a way it is more convenient than a short road since one has to turn back every time the end of the road is reached.

But in order to avoid walking always in the same direction, Gandhiji spends the first half walking clockwise and the second half in the reverse direction. Gandhiji is so fastidious even about these small things that while he may be discussing the most serious problem, after he has walked half his time in one direction, he takes a right about turn and starts the walk in the reverse direction. This ensures balanced exercise to the body, he explains.

It was an August morning—the seventh of August. The Working Committee had passed the famous resolution, and now it had to be adopted by the A.I.C.C. There was a kind of subdued excitement in the whole atmosphere. People thought of big events after the A.I.C.C. had confirmed the resolution. Somehow or other I was not quite easy in my mind. I had ominous forebodings of the consequences.

But Gandhiji wore his formal calm expression. There was no unusualness, no excitement about him.

While he was walking, I asked him: "What is the next step? Is the Congress going to launch any big movement after this resolution is confirmed by the A.I.C.C.?"

"No, not at all. We have no desire to take any hasty action. I have yet to see the Viceroy. He is my friend, and he will not be hasty in his interpretation of the resolution. India cannot defend herself against a foreign invasion unless she has the heart and the enthusiasm to resist. That enthusiasm could be created only by converting this into a people's war. Unless India is mistress of her own home, she cannot have enthusiasm enough to resist foreign invasion. Hence the Congress move can be treated as a friendly move, if there is common ground about resisting

the Japanese invasion. I will try to convince the Viceroy of our stand, and I am not altogether unhopeful."

"But suppose he remains adamant and refuses to budge. What then?"

"Well, we shall have to start some form of civil resistance then. I have not thought of it so far. There are no plans, and it is not my habit to prepare elaborate plans. The next step is enough for me, and that is to see the Viceroy. If I fail to convert him, perhaps we may start something like the salt satyagraha. I want to go very slow. There is no fun in embarrassing the embarrassed."

I was overwhelmed. Even when we talk of fight, could there be any consideration for the "embarrassed"? But that is Gandhiji.

I kept quiet for a moment. But I could not be easy in my mind. Has the Viceroy any correct appreciation of the position or of Gandhiji's mind? Here was the author of the resolution, talking of meeting the Viceroy, going slow and not "embarrassing the embarrassed". But there in Delhi maybe the Government is making panicky preparations to lock up all the leaders pretty soon.

I felt Gandhiji was underestimating the possibility of misinterpretation.

"Will you not keep the Viceroy well posted about your intentions? It is possible they in Delhi may not have been fully apprised of the true position and the Viceroy may take some hasty action."

"I don't think he will. After all, he knows me. I know him. He will not do anything until he has met me. In any case, I will write to him perhaps tomorrow. My mind is already rehearsing the draft. But I have not yet got the correct language. After the resolution is passed, I shall have ample time to think of the letter."

I felt assured. But only momentarily.

The Resolution was passed. I was not quite happy. I went to bed with a feeling of uneasiness. I had an uncanny feeling that the big leaders would be arrested at the dead of night. Gandhiji had been arrested many times before and always perhaps about midnight.

What if Gandhiji is arrested? He was in jail often in the past, but then he was not seventythree. His health now, though quite good, was no longer robust. The consequences of his arrest would be terrible for India and Britain. There would be more bitterness and new complications. I prayed to God that a meeting between Gandhiji and the Viceroy might materialise.

But I doubted. At eleven I got up to see that nothing untoward was happening. There was quiet and calm. No police to be seen. Again at two in the morning I peeped out of my window. It was again calm. At four again I got up. No change. I heaved a sigh of relief. If up to four there was no police, then the danger had passed. There would be a meeting between the two and some method would be found for a solution.

I went to bed again with a sense of full reassurance. I had hardly got a wink when I was aroused. The police had come to arrest Bapu. I was stunned. It was the arrest not of Bapu but of the soul of India. Others must have been already arrested, I fancied. I cursed the British nation for its stupidity, the Viceroy for his arrogance, and the Indian Members for their supineness. With a depressed heart I went to Gandhiji's room.

Gandhiji was not prepared for this false move from the Government. In his speech to the A.I.C.C. he had said nice things about his relations with the Viceroy. He had declared that he would seek an interview from Lord Linlithgow. With this background, the Viceroy's move of wholesale arrests could be interpreted only in one manner. The Government wanted to crush all opposition and criticism.

Whether the Congress was right or wrong did not matter. An inconvenient element during the war must be removed. And so they acted.

Gandhiji received the news with equanimity.

"When are we to leave?" He asked the Commissioner of Police who had come to arrest him and who was visibly nervous in the performance of his unpleasant task.

"At six."

"Oh, there is plenty of time."

Gandhiji had his formal drink of hot water and honey, said his prayer, took his thin bamboo stick and luggage, and accompanied by Mahadevbhai walked out of his room. The Commissioner was waiting outside.

"I hope I am punctual," said Gandhiji smilingly.

"Oh, yes."

Everybody was moved to the core. At the footsteps the ladies of Birla House made the auspicious vermilion mark on his forehead. Gandhiji took his departure.

It was in the Aga Khan's Palace. A small man, very weak, extremely emaciated, clean shaven, was lying huddled in the bed under a warm sheet. This was Gandhiji on the nineteenth day of his fast. Two more days had to be passed before the fast would terminate. But none had any anxiety now about his health.

About the tenth day of his fast, his position became very serious. The whole country was tense with depression. Frustration, resentment, indignation were in the atmosphere. Every party leader and non-party leader ran to Delhi and gathered in conclave. Speeches were delivered demanding Gandhiji's release. But none desired an approach to the Viceroy. He was ruled out as a person without heart, imagination or even wisdom. The demand fell on deaf ears. It failed to move the powers that be.

In his bed Gandhiji was surrounded by a few of his nearest. He was extremely weak and could talk only in whispers. But he was cheerful and all-smiles as ever. I touched his feet and bowed. He gave his blessings.

I asked about his health. "Oh, quite good." But he was more interested in the health of others than his own. How was so and so in my family? Who was where? It was not a casual enquiry. He must have minute details of everything. He was indifferent to his weakness. Though he talked in whispers, he was full of interest in everything except politics.

As usual, he was taking a wider view. His eyes were on a long term pattern which essentially could not change. The petty happenings of the day did not matter. The straight but long course was also the shortest cut.

"Is it not strange that you, an apostle of non-violence, who by his thoughts and actions should have created an echo of friendliness in every human heart, should be at present the most dreaded, distrusted and hated among his opponents? Is there a fallacy in the theory, or is it a defect in your technique?" I asked.

"Don't I know that I am distrusted? But there is no fallacy in the theory. It is perfect. Ahimsa need not show its results quickly. It takes time. But it acts with certainty. You need not trouble yourself over it. All those who are my so-called enemies today will be converted into fast friends before I die. If not in my lifetime, then at least after my death. But take note that, if even after my death my opponents continue to think of me as their enemy, then you must conclude that I have failed to be really non-violent. I must have been under some illusion. Ahimsa never fails. The fault is not of the theory but of the practitioner. However, time will show. Let us not be prejudiced against those who are our opponents."

The haters should not be hated.

1945. Gandhiji was in Poona.

He talked of living up to the age of 125. Not that he was sure that he would live up to that age.

"I am desirous of living up to 125 years. There was a time when I was indifferent. Even now I am indifferent as to when death knocks at my door. But all my efforts are now to live a long age, if possible up to 125. To achieve that object I am making serious efforts. I am conserving my energy. I take full sleep. I am more regular than I ever was. I take my massage regularly. I have curtailed my work. Thoughts are more powerful than action. Even, therefore, when I am silent, seemingly passive, I am acting. But I shall live 125 years only if I become *anāsakta,* that is, reach a high level of detachment. Not otherwise. And if I die earlier, it must be concluded that I failed to achieve complete *anāsakti.*"

"But are you experiencing an increase of *anāsakti* in you?"

"Yes, I do. I feel it mentally as well as physically. In any case, if God desires me to serve for 125 years, He will sustain me."

May God grant him the 125 years. We need him for as long as God will keep him in our midst.

Pilani,
3-2-1946.

MY PERSONAL MEMORIES

Fenner Brockway

STRANGELY enough, my first personal contact with Gandhiji was financial. With Dr. Syed Hossain, I was the last secretary of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress, before it was closed down in 1921. There was some delay in making the payments which were due to us, and finally I wrote to Gandhi. By return of post I received a cheque from him. I found it strange to see his signature at the foot of a cheque. I had never associated him with a banking account—not even a banking account of Congress.

During the years which followed we sometimes wrote to each other, and I learned from him that he was following with close interest our work against British Imperialism in India. In the winter of 1927 I visited India as a fraternal delegate from the Independent Labour Party to the Indian National Congress and the Indian Trade Union Congress. To my great disappointment I was involved in a motor accident just prior to the opening of Congress in Madras, and was not able to attend. I was deeply moved by the fact that each day when Congress was sitting, Gandhi came to see me in the General Hospital at Madras. On one occasion it was his Silence Day, but he seemed to appreciate at once that I was not so well. He jotted down a few lines of enquiry on a piece of paper, and I told him that I was not sleeping at night owing to pain. He took my

hand, and an extraordinary calm came over me. That night I slept without a drug for the first time.

On another occasion I discussed with Gandhi the effect of drugs. He was very interested in a personal experience of mine. Under the effect of the drug I thought that I had left my body and was looking down on it. The body which I had left on the bed was violently physical and was expressing feelings and desires which I did not know existed within me. When I woke up I found that a doctor, a hospital orderly and two nurses were trying to hold me down in bed. I gathered from Gandhi that he was not in favour of the use of drugs, believing that mental and spiritual powers could be used to bring about sleep and conquer pain, but he was interested in my experience as an indication that it was possible to separate the higher and lower characteristics in the human personality.

My next meeting with Gandhi was on the boat at Dover when he arrived to attend the second Round Table Conference in London in 1931. I still have in my mind a vivid mental picture of him. He was surrounded by well-dressed Europeans and by the ship's officers in braided uniforms. Yet this slight little man, wearing only his loin cloth and shawl, was more impressive than all of them. A smile was on his lips, and from his face radiated good will and affection. One could almost feel his spiritual influence in the atmosphere.

We travelled to London by car. There was a great reception for him at Friends' House which was crowded with 1,200 people. He spoke in the simplest terms about the fundamental need for not merely love between human beings but for a sense of absolute identification. When we felt that other men were ourselves, the impulse to harm others would cease. He spoke without any oratory, but the effect of his words was tremendous.

One incident at this meeting remains in my mind. My little daughter presented him with some flowers. He buried his face in them, placed his hand on his head, and she looked up into his face with a natural trustful smile which showed how completely he had won her affection. I felt that a man who could enter the heart of a child in this

way had a goodness about him which very few possess.

The last time I met Gandhi was during the second Round Table Conference. I had got his permission for a friend of mine, Clare Winston, to paint his portrait. Her easel stood in a corner of the room while he sat on the floor with his spinning wheel talking to the visitors who came to him. They included important statesmen, authors and intellectuals, but Gandhi received them all alike, continuing to turn his wheel and talking to them in his simple, fundamental way. I visited him more than once and particularly remember going with the chairman of the War Resisters' International, Runham Brown. Gandhi was very interested to know that there were pacifists in most of the countries of the world and that, during the first world war, thousands of them had faced imprisonment and even death rather than engage in the violence of war. He said that when he was relieved from the responsibilities of the Indian struggle for freedom he would like to take part in a world movement for non-violence.

London,
16-3-1948.

A TALK IN SIMLA

George Catlin

THE incident in the life of the Mahatma which I have chosen here is not so much one having that human interest in which his life-story abounded—although I appreciated the honour he did me by receiving me, when in his bath, on that fifth and last meeting, so that we should have the maximum time for talking. It is the record of a conversation in Simla, at our fourth meeting, of which there is doubtless also a transcript in the *ashram*, which I believe to be of great importance in finalizing the interpretation of his teaching. I am extracting it from my book *In The Path*

*of Mahatma Gandhi.**

"In 1946, on the heights of Simla, on the terrace of a villa overlooking the High Himalayas, I had seen the Mahatma. I had attended his prayer meeting, there and in Delhi. I had paced the terrace with him white robed, and with the Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and Agatha Harrison, as I put my questions to him, the father of India, *pater patriae.*

"What were his views on the matters that were concerning men most? Could there be an effective United Nations Organization? And did this involve a world police force? It was not for me at that moment to trouble him about Indian constitutional issues which I had already discussed with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, with S. C. Bose and, passingly, with Jawaharlal Nehru. I could only, without intrusion, ask him about subjects that were of interest to all humanity upon which some of his views were well-known, but not the entire clarification.

"The answer came, deliberate and without stumbling. 'We must always hold fast by principles. The right principle is that of non-violence. Who are we to be judges of what is aggression and what is not?' The thought went through my mind: Was Germany an aggressor when Britain and France declared war on her? Surely 'yes' when she had declared war on Poland. Or was this provoked war? Are the Soviets aggressors or are they not? What is the framework in terms of which we define this term 'aggression'? Is it not 'refusal to accept arbitration'?

"I continued, 'If, however, we could have an impartial tribunal, what then? The aggressor is he who will not submit to arbitration....'

"'By the time,' came the reply, 'that men have been educated to be impartial in the use of force, they can be educated in non-violence.'

"I wondered whether this was true. For *most* men, certainly yes. But did this amount to saying that by the time you can educate mankind into establishing a tribunal on which a few men will be impartial, you will have been

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* *In The Path of Mahatma Gandhi* (Higginbotham, Mount Road, Madras). Half the Indian royalties of this book go to the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Fund.

able to educate *all* men, even the criminals and aggressors, into non-violence? And was that true?

"Then, by one of those unexpected turns of phrase which infuriate the Western politicians who have had to deal with the Mahatma, he added: 'If, of course, we *could* get a really impartial body, then we would all welcome a world police force.'"

When I last saw him in Delhi he spent his time stressing the amount of make-believe that existed in international affairs, the departure in diplomacy from respect for truth owing to love of power, and that non-violence never did harm to anyone. But in a letter from Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, received by me after the Mahatma's death, the Simla message came through again quite clear. "He says he has no difficulty in accepting that police force against those who will not submit to due process of law."

This had followed an earlier letter from Rajkumari in reply to a letter of mine in which I had asked how anyone in the West could best follow in the path of Gandhiji. "He asked me to send you his good wishes and to say that the true soldier against evil fights the evil force at his door. For him there is no question of where he should 'begin'."

Gandhiji was concerned, when he was among us, to reconcile the Sermon on the Mount and the *Gita*, and these with the living of this practical and political life. His task was the old one of reconciling the living and moving charity of the saints with the justice of the judges who have a public function and the duty to uphold what is also a final value. How to do this is the profoundest moral issue of our troublous time. I believe that the above conversation gives some clue to how Gandhiji effected this reconciliation. To learn this was the major motive behind my two pilgrimages to India of 1946 and 1947, as well as to greet those with whom I had worked in the cause of Indian independence and of an Asia Charter of freedom—a freedom which we must seek to have inspired by the gospel of that great soul who has aroused, with his fire, Hinduism and Christianity alike.

London,
14-4-1948.

RECOLLECTIONS OF MAHATMA GANDHI

C. M. Doke

I WAS a boy of fifteen when I first got to know Mahatma Gandhi—Mr. Gandhi as he was then called—back in 1908. He was a frequent visitor at our house in Smit Street, Johannesburg, during the height of the Passive Resistance Struggle. I well remember, on coming home from school one day, being warned to enter the house quietly, for Mr. Gandhi had been brought home severely injured in an assault in town. He was lying very ill in my little room off the upstairs verandah: I was proud to vacate the room to him for the days he was with us. For more than a week the house was thronged with visitors and enquirers—mostly Indian; the dining-room was a mass of gifts of choice fruits sent from all parts of the Transvaal, Natal and even Lourenco Marques; and our next-door neighbours, who had been very friendly hitherto, cut us off when they knew we had taken in a black man to our home. Those were great days!

I can see Mr. Gandhi, now, propped up with pillows, his lacerated face swathed with bandages, unable to speak, and writing answers to questions on a slate before him. Strangely, many of his visitors wrote the questions down on the slate too, not realising that he could hear, even if he could not speak. The scene was reminiscent of a silent pantomime.

One night, when he was feeling very weak, we gathered outside his door, and sang to him some well-known Christian hymns; "Lead Kindly Light", his own request, was one of them; and it seemed to give him great satisfaction.

The healing of his wounds was slow, and he got impatient. He told my father that, if he could get a plaster of "clean mud" on his face, he was sure it would help. So off I was sent with spade and bucket to clean away the top-soil and get uncontaminated lower earth for the plasters. This I dug on a vacant plot of ground where now the leading Jewish Synagogue stands. We made the mud plasters, and my mother applied them. Well do we remember the

consternation of the doctor when he found what had been done. He threatened to wipe his hands of responsibility for his patient—but in two days Mr. Gandhi was sitting out on the verandah in the study arm-chair and eating fruit. We have that chair in our home now, and we always call it Mahatma Gandhi's chair.

The next scene that comes to my mind is one of our friend trudging up the hill to the Fort (Johannesburg's gaol) beside a policeman. He was not hand-cuffed—they trusted him too well for that indignity—and my sister and I walked parallel to him on the other side of the road that runs on the west of the hospital. We tried to attract his attention without letting his escort see us, but his face was straightforward. It was not until he reached the prison gate that he turned, saw us, and waved a hand, before the heavy doors closed on him for another spell of imprisonment. We admired him. He was to us an example of the greatest self-sacrifice.

Next, I picture him in the crowded Baptist Church, as it was then in Plein Street, Johannesburg, when he had travelled up from Durban specially to pay a tribute at the memorial service to my father, who died away in Rhodesia on August 15th, 1913. With words full of emotion he testified to the work of his friend on behalf of the Indian community in the great struggle. The tribute he then paid to his friend, all felt, came from a heart actuated by the same principles. He said: "Mr. Doke's was a life of perfect self-surrender. He had dedicated his all to his Maker. He would now rise with a glorified and better body for the service of his Maker." The impression of that Memorial Service centred in the tribute given by Mr. Gandhi.

There is one sentence in a letter I received from Mahatma Gandhi, written from India on 13th December, 1921, to me in England well worth quoting. It was in answer to one from me written after the troubles of those months. He wrote: "I assure you I am doing nothing without prayer." In all the hurly-burly of political strife, this side, the devout prayer-life of Mahatma Gandhi is often

overlooked. He did not see eye-to-eye with us on religious matters. As he himself confessed in the memorial address to my father in 1913, "he, as a Hindu, believed that the fullness of Christianity could only be found in its interpretation in the light and by the aid of Hinduism. But Mr. Doke was not satisfied. He missed no occasion to bring home to him (the speaker) the truth as he (Mr. Doke) knew it, and which brought him and his so much inward peace."

In another letter, dated 26th July 1944, just after Mrs. Gandhi's death, Mahatma Gandhi wrote to me: "I had your sweet letter whilst I was a prisoner. From there I wrote no letters. Ba is ever with me though her body has been consigned to the flames. Though I see this truth through the reason and the heart, world-wide sympathy I have prized. It has made me realise the goodness of God as never before....As I write all the old associations revive and make me glad."

Johannesburg (South Africa),
29-4-1946.

REMINISCENCES OF M. K. GANDHI

Olive C. Doke

MY earliest recollections of Mr. Gandhi were when I was commissioned by my Father, the Rev. J. J. Doke, to take a letter to him at his office in Johannesburg, where Mr. Gandhi was a lawyer at the time. That was in 1907 towards the end of the year.

What struck me very forcibly was that he had a large and very beautiful portrait of Christ, hanging over his desk. He was his ideal Man. How often we longed that he knew Him as his Personal Saviour too: but alas! he could not reconcile the lives of professing Christians with the teachings of the Christ. Nevertheless he endeavoured to take for his guide the teachings of the Sermon on the

Mount as portrayed in St. Matthew's Gospel chapters 5 & 6, and put to shame the majority of Christians.

In the events that subsequently followed in quick succession during the difficult period of the Passive Resistance movement in South Africa how often these fundamentals came out in his character! When he was reviled, he reviled not again. When they smote him on one cheek, he turned to them the other, metaphorically and literally. He realised that true Christianity *must* be practical and a state of living closely to the Master and living out His every command and teaching.

Young girl as I was at the time I was conscious that that was how he lived, and consequently his gracious, patient, loving character gave him an inestimable influence with his fellow men, which has persisted throughout his life. "Not everyone who saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that *doeth the will* of my Father, which is in Heaven." *Faith* and *Works* go hand in hand.

At the height of the great struggle of Passive Resistance we had the great privilege of receiving Mr. Gandhi into our home to care for him after he had been assaulted in the streets of Johannesburg. It would have been difficult for his people to have contact with their leader at that critical time if he had been taken to the Hospital. So the privilege was ours. How well and vividly I remember that morning when Father drove up in a cab with him and he was carried into the house! The doctor quickly followed and put in the necessary stitches, and he was made as comfortable as possible. He was unable to talk as his head was swathed in bandages, but his eyes were eloquent, and a slate was brought into use.

He was anxious to use one of the Indian remedies to hasten the healing process—a mud poultice! When it was suggested that it might interfere with the doctor's treatment, he still insisted, saying that he would take full responsibility if the doctor was wrathful. And well he might knowing the efficacy of a mud poultice!

Mr. Naidoo, I think it was, or Mr. Vyas, who prepared it, for there were many willing friends, and it was put on over the stitches! Lights were turned low hoping the patient would rest, but first there came a request from him that Mother and I would sing "Lead Kindly Light" for him. So outside his bedroom door we softly sang the beautiful hymn which has been such a favourite of his all these years. I have just turned up a letter to me written by Mr. Gandhi in 1927 when he was at the Ashram, Sabarmati, in which he refers to this incident in these words: "How I would like.....to hear you singing 'Lead Kindly Light'! You may not remember the scene. I do, and I could paint it if I were a painter, so vivid is the recollection." Later on he sent to me his two youngest sons, Ramdas and Devadas, twice a week to learn to sing some of the beautiful Christian hymns. I felt this a very great honour and privilege, and we had many happy times together.

The poultice did its work, and the doctor's face was a study when he was told. However he had to admit that the wounds were no worse, in fact were healing nicely!

That remedy I have never forgotten and have used it here in Central Africa, especially with Quinsy, and it has been the means of saving life.

During Mr. Gandhi's days of convalescence he became as a hero to us children, and we marvelled at the quiet influence his gentle personality had on one and all.

A year or so later we were able to accept an invitation to Tolstoy Farm, Lawley, near Johannesburg, and there we saw Mr. Gandhi with his "big family" living the "simple life" which was the ideal one in his opinion. Ever a gracious host he made that day a memorable one for us.

But it was his speeches at the various banquets and receptions given in honour of this one and that who was prominent in the movement at the time, that to me were most fascinating. Ever simple, explicit and to the point, driven home by his unconscious personality, they were telling and convincing and won many friends by their justice and fearlessness.

Vivid in my recollections are the times when great welcomes were given to Mr. Gandhi on his arrival back at

Park Station, after having been away on behalf of the cause, or else on the arrival of distinguished visitors. Flowers and garlands were always prominent on such occasions and made things very colourful as various friends received the honour of being garlanded, whilst the crowds surged around waving and articulating their welcome. These were historical days, and Mr. Gandhi in all his humility was the central figure.

I count it an honour and a privilege to have known him, not only as a historical figure but as a friend.

Kafulafuta (N. Rhodesia),
12-5-1946.

PS. (5-4-1948)

This afternoon the picture that has persisted in my mind is of the various occasions on which I saw Mr. Gandhi garlanded. At Johannesburg station excited and patriotic crowds, both Indian and European, met him when he was released from Volksrust prison where he had been serving his time for having broken the law by crossing the Natal border during the Passive Resistance movement. As the train drew in and he stepped out, great garlands of the most beautiful flowers were thrown around his neck until he could hardly move with them, and the station officials, yes, and the police looked on in amazement. He never liked this publicity, but accepted it gracefully and humbly as he was piloted down the platform to the waiting cars at the entrance. I have seen Park Station, Johannesburg, wonderfully decorated in his honour as time and again he arrived after some big crisis in the Passive Resistance movement.

Then the banquets held in his honour, or to honour some colleague in the movement, were a never-to-be-forgotten experience. Everything of the best, and no trouble spared to entertain the hundreds of guests who were invited. As we sat at the long tables down the middle of the room our eyes were turned to the table across the top where the Guests of Honour sat all garlanded in exquisite flowers, and as Mr. Gandhi rose to speak there was a great hush and one could feel the influence of his personality pervading all. Although frail of body and small of sta-

ture, when once he commenced speaking, all that was forgotten and the power of his personality was felt. How he loved India, and how he used every power he had to bind them together in the just struggle. Always gentle and gracious, yet withal powerful.

One day he invited us as a family to visit his Settlement at Tolstoy Farm, Lawley, just outside Johannesburg, and we deemed it a great privilege. Arriving by train we were taken to the Farm and were very interested to see his experiment of the 'simple life' at work. He himself had discarded European dress, and was clothed in a homespun and took his turn in all the chores. They grew their own vegetables and produced as much as they could for their necessity, everyone in the big family helping. He had had some disappointments but was hopeful that the experiment would prove a success. From that time on I believe that he always worked along those lines and was one with the people.

EVEN WHEN YOU DIFFERED—

Wanda Dynowska (Umadevi)

HAVING given to Mr. Chandrashanker Shukla a promise to write something about my experience with Gandhiji, however difficult it may be, I have no escape. It is especially difficult because I cannot help being personal—and I dislike it—yet without it the facts which I have to record would be incomprehensible.

I spent the first year of war in Europe. I saw the Nazis at work. I was facing the horrors not yet known or imagined by other nations. There was not the slightest doubt in my mind that the Allies, with all their sins, cruelties and misdeeds (Britain in India, others elsewhere), were *on the whole* on a far higher level than the Nazis. The utter degradation of humanity, the perverted, sadistic, devilish methods used in German camps, the fury of Nazi per-

secutions of Jews and Poles, were so much beyond all that one knew that in *comparison* with them the Allies looked almost as examples of nobility and righteousness. Their victory seemed the only salvation from hell.

After one year I returned to India with one anxiety, one burning question: Where will India be? Will she throw her power quickly, willingly, spontaneously on the side of the 'better ones'—in spite of the fact that her own oppressor was among them?

I discussed the matter with Gandhiji. No need of repeating his opinions, they are well known. I was not convinced. All my heart was full of the agonies of the peoples of Europe; all my mind full of memories of horrors and barbarities against humanity itself. I felt the cause of mankind was at stake.

I was against Gandhiji's 'individual Satyagraha', feeling it could only add to the mass of hatred; I was against all 'direct action' in the midst of the gravest war, as the Cause of Humanity seemed to me to be also the Cause of India, and I could not imagine the two being dissociated.

My feelings were burning. Not being able to see Gandhiji in 1941-42 and discuss with him fully the matter, I wrote one, two, three letters. It is immaterial whether I was right or wrong. I wrote with utter frankness, but as the feeling was strong so were the words; used in my habitual blunt way, they were almost hard.....I got one, two replies. My last letter reached Gandhiji in August, 1942, a few days before his arrest.

I can now turn to his reactions. The answers to my letters were exquisite; loving, kind, deep; "Even if we disagree, Uma, our mutual affection must not suffer from it." (I am quoting from memory, the originals being for the moment out of my reach.).

Almost on the eve of his arrest, in a talk with our common friend, Maurice Frydman, he mentioned my letters with sadness. Amidst all the tremendous problems, preoccupations, griefs and toils—the A.I.C.C. session, the historic resolution, the upheavals in the country—he had enough interest for the feelings of a distant, insignificant person, to concentrate for a moment his attention on her, to

give his kind consideration to an individual, so far away, in those days, from the field of his immediate overwhelming activities.

Was it not marvellous in itself? Who else would have shown such a concern for an individual? What other leader would have been willing to devote even a passing thought, and without the slightest grudge, to a friend opposing him?

He went to jail.

Many things changed in the meantime. The Allies were more and more affected by the poison they fought. I began to realise something of Bapu's point of view. Then he came to Juhu.

I went to the prayers. It happened to be Monday, the day of his silence. I approached and saluted him after the prayers were over.

Oh this smile, this warm cordial embrace! Never before nor after have I felt so vividly the warmth of his love. Half jokingly he wrote: "Uma, are you still angry with me?"

"I never was," I retorted.

"Come here every day, we shall discuss things together."

I came, and we had long, wonderful talks; he tried to explain his point of view, his line of conduct, his opinions, his feelings.

Who else would have done it?

Not a trace of grudge, not even of disappointment, at my seeing his actions differently than he would have liked. It seemed that his affection deepened, his kindness was more like sunshine. Never had I experienced so many signs of his kind consideration as in those days in Juhu.

When I once stood behind the volunteers' row, he stretched out his hand, seized mine and dragged me inside —"Come here, come, you are one of us!" All this was showered on a 'rebel', daring to criticise him, to oppose, to 'revolt' against his line of action.

In our days, when not only powerful tyrant-dictators, but even leaders on more restricted fields can neither bear nor accept the slightest criticism, the faintest opposition to their views; when to oppose even our equals

means to lose instantaneously their friendship; this unique trait in Gandhiji's character is more striking and worthy of deep reverence than ever. He is indeed, in his very being, in his everyday behaviour, the very opposite of everything petty, narrow, ugly, mean. Was not his attitude towards me the sign of the broadest tolerance, the greatest respect for the feelings of an individual, the sign of real magnanimity?

* * *

My next experience worthy of record was in 1945, during the tragic rising of Warsaw, when the heroic capital of Poland, incited by the Russian frantic appeals and the Allied promises of air and parachute help, rose in a tremendous revolt against the Nazi occupants, and, deceived, betrayed by both the Soviets and the Allies, sustained for 63 days the desperate, hopeless fight. Bapu was then in Bombay. I saw him frequently. He enquired with a touching anxiety about the last news; he cheered me up; he never 'condemned' the armed, 'violent' struggle of the Warsaw people; he was rather calling it—just like the Polish resistance in 1939—'almost non-violence'. It is then that he wrote the wonderful message for the bleeding Warsaw, which I included as a foreword to a book on the epic fight under the title—*All for Freedom*. The message written in his own handwriting, on a day of silence, was: "Warsaw's grief is Poland's, and Poland's is all afflicted World's."

His compassion, his deep understanding of my country's agonies, was revealing the greatness of his heart, which was able to embrace the whole world, if it could feel the griefs of a distant land like those of his own. And the far-sightedness of his judgment was proved to me by his warning that Poland would be further betrayed by the Allies and 'sold out' to a cruel enemy. One year more and his 'prediction' came true. Poland, against the will of her people, against her frantic opposition, was cynically 'delivered' to Russia as an inanimate object. Gandhiji had no illusions as to her fate under the Soviet occupation. He knew the activities of the Communists in India as well as in other countries. When we discussed the matter in 1945, on my return from Punjab with some documents, he exclaimed:

"I know, I know so well their devastating activities. But you remember, Uma, we can win not by actually fighting them, but by constructive methods, emphasising the power of love, of respect for individuals,—so disregarded by them —by working for *real* freedom, by serving God. Try to do it as I am doing."

I understood the lesson Bapu gave; was he not re-stating the words of Buddha, of Christ: "Evil cannot be overcome by evil, hatred cannot be extinguished by hatred"?

Surely Gandhiji belongs in his teaching and his practice of it, not to India alone but to the whole suffering humanity.

Bombay,
15-1-1948.

'YOU MUST NOT GRIEVE'

Lionel Fielden

I HAVE been trying to think whether I could add anything to what I have already written about Gandhiji in *Beggar My Neighbour*, and I honestly do not think that I can. I picked out in that book the recollections I had of my meetings with him, and they are all there. I notice that I have kept one letter written in his own hand to me, and possibly this may interest the readers. It was in response to a sort of "last appeal" from me, saying that my task of building radio for India would become impossible if both the Government of India and the Congress *and* the Press attacked me!! I think I kept this letter because I felt, after I got it, that my job *was* hopeless—and in fact I wanted to resign in 1937 but was dissuaded. But after this letter I always felt that AIR was doomed to failure. I quote the letter below:

Segaon, Wardha, 3-1-1937.

Dear Fielden,

I welcome the confidence you have given me. My sympathies are with you in your troubles. But you have to take them philosophically if you must stick to the post even though it be to the good of the country. Any attack on your personal character is a vile thing. But every society has its share of blackmailers. These you should laugh at. Then there are the critics. You must not expect informed criticism. Very few write for the public good: most write for money. Then there is the third class who don't come to you as you would have them do. They don't in spite of themselves. Those who know you would like to avail themselves of the facilities you may give them, but they know that the harm done by such co-operation will be greater than the good intended. Take Rajkumari herself. Even she could go only a certain distance and no further. You must not grieve over this but take it as inevitable in the circumstances surrounding us.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi.

London,
27-12-1945.

GANDHI — MAN OF GOD

Welthy Honsinger Fisher

MY husband, the late Bishop Fred B. Fisher, loved and understood India and her people more deeply than any American I have known. He began to study the country, its literature, its philosophies and its people fifteen years before he met Mr. Gandhi, for as a young man of twentytwo with a passion to "win the world for Christ in this generation", he went to live, teach and preach in Agra.

That was in 1904 when the whole world was quiescent under an overpowering, impregnable imperialism.

Brought up by a mother of civil war underground railway tradition, whose mother had protected in her own home negro slaves trying to get freedom in the North, Fred Fisher resented every ill-treatment of the Indian by the white man, and he saw many injustices that burned their mark deep into his soul. Indeed, within twentyfour hours of his death in 1938 he spoke to a large audience giving a vivid interpretation of India's need for self-determination and the contribution she ought to be making as an independent nation to the world order.

It was in 1917 that my husband first met Mr. Gandhi, the year when dark and ominous clouds hung heavy over the world. Men of faith, however, discerned some silver linings and limned them: America's entrance into the war might hasten its end; Wilson's slogan "make the world safe for democracy" was capturing minds in all continents, giving colonial peoples their first ray of hope for a possible future independence; the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms were stirring India's political lethargy; and last and brightest of the silver linings to Fred Fisher was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi himself.

In the autumn of that year these two men rode together on a train into Calcutta when Gandhi's significance to India and to the moral forces of the world began to overwhelm this American who had long loved India.

In Gandhi, he saw not only a great national leader. True, the train on which they rode crawled through stations because masses of white-robed people overflowed it. They surged up like great waves, then broke like human surf over the cars, the caboose and even covered the engine. They made ladders of their bodies so that each might see the great new leader who was to pull them out of their political doldrums. But Gandhi transcended the role of national leader even then. The young American missionary, who had not become disillusioned or disheartened as he realized the world would not be won "for Christ in his generation", beheld in Gandhi a new light. He saw Gandhi as a co-worker with him toward the Regnancy of God in the world; and as the American prayed: "Thy

Kingdom Come, Thy Will be Done on Earth....," he knew that Gandhi too prayed and worked to this end.

Gandhi had made his first great experiment in non-violence in South Africa, but he had so believed the first world war to be the end of all wars that he had even helped the British to enlist Indian soldiers, and he had returned to India to work for a developing programme toward freedom within the empire.

He lived too near to God to be a mere national rebel. What was the explanation of his strength of character? Gandhi told my husband of his Vaishnava mother and of her influence on his life. My husband saw farther than Gandhi knew, for he too had a Puritan mother whose good opinion he craved even as a grown man and a Bishop of the church. Gandhi's trained legal mind, his astute statesmanship, were not the crown of his greatness, according to Fred Fisher. It was that unusual vicarious ability to put himself in another's place, and thus he became the spokesman for the common man, the forgotten man. As Gandhi brought the principles of ahimsa and satyagraha from the limbo of India's religious past, to be used as a natural weapon in the present, Fred Fisher began interpreting these principles to large audiences in America in the hope that Christians throughout the world would work with Gandhi for a world without war.

It was not until the Kanpur National Congress in 1925 that I met Gandhi. The Bishop and I had just returned from South Africa where we had studied the condition of the Indians there which similar conditions Madame Pandit has recently presented so powerfully on the rostrum of the United Nations. There, in Africa, we visited Manilal in the Tolstoyan Colony at Phoenix, and lived over with him the story of the Indian Colony as established by his father and mother where caste and outcaste, Moslem, Sikh, Parsi and Christian lived and worked together as Indian brothers.

At I sat with Gandhi in silence at that first meeting in Kanpur (it was Monday) I sensed for myself the quality of his vicarious love for people. I knew that he was a man who had given all he had of his possessions and mind and

body, and was therefore the freest human I had ever known. Guided by the God of truth and love he was still working toward the Regnancy of God.

I was to see him many times thereafter and always with increasing admiration. When we lived in America and my husband would receive his letters, he shared them not only with me but with his American audiences throughout the country. In 1931 when Gandhi was in London, Fred Fisher called him by telephone from Minneapolis to invite him to come to the United States. It seemed to a group of Christian clergymen that America was ready to listen to Gandhi's message; but, "No," Gandhi answered, God had not guided him yet to accept an invitation to America. After putting up the receiver and finding out what it had cost to telephone across the Atlantic, Gandhi wanted to know how Fred Fisher could have been so extravagant as to drop $150 into the sea for a three minutes' conversation. Then he sat down and wrote a letter from London, in which he said among other things:

".....When real peace and disarmament come they will be initiated by a strong nation like America, irrespective of the consent and the co-operation of other countries. An individual or a nation must have faith in one's self and in the protective power of God to find peace in the midst of strife and to shed all arms by reason of feeling the loving power of God and His protective shield; and I hold such peace to be impossible so long as strong nations do not consider it sinful to exploit weak nations."

One of the most intimate periods of the friendship was a week-end spent with Tagore at Santiniketan where Gandhi and C. F. Andrews were also house guests. I was invited but was detained in Calcutta by a sprained ankle, I remember to my sorrow, but I insisted on a detailed recital of the conversations:

"We all arrived at different times," began Fred, telling me about it. "Charlie got there some time ahead of Gandhi and me. I'm all for Indian clothes in this weather, Han. Gandhi was the most comfortable of us all, naturally. Charlie was next, for he wore a thin silk Bengali shirt with tails flying to the breeze. Gurudev (the poet) kept

to his graceful flowing gown. I went vestless, but somehow I just couldn't take off my coat. Shoes, of course, came off. We are convention-bound, we western men. I realized it in awful contrast these hot days."

"At the sunset hour we took our several walking sticks and walked cross-country towards the sunset. Gandhi's staff was almost twice his height and was nothing but a rough branch of a tree.

"We made an odd assortment—legs and sticks, striding off towards the sunset. I believe Gandhi could beat us all—if we had been in a walking race. That little giant's ninety pounds has every muscle counted and at work. He likes to talk while he walks and he gets into the rhythm of it; but the poet likes to stride on alone, so I walked with Gandhi. He sent his love to you and hoped your ankle would soon be strong enough to keep up with me!"

That was like Gandhi. He never forgets people. In the midst of great political stakes, he remembers people and with love!

Fred went on, in a lighter vein, telling me intimate things about Gandhi. "He sleeps on Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience*—'makes an excellent pillow,' Gandhi laughed.

"We passed one of Tagore's cows from his new agricultural experiment station for the villages. It was a soft-eyed, well-fed, high-bred bossy, and somehow it winked at us almost humanly. Gandhi pulled up some grass and fed it.

"'Isn't she the best friend of man on earth?' asked Gandhi, patting her. 'Of course, I believe in reverence for the cow,' he went on. 'To me she symbolizes the basic teaching of our Hinduism—that all life is part of God.'"

"Gandhi and I talked of the ahimsa (non-violence) philosophy," Fred continued, "and how it happened that he could popularize that doctrine into an effective weapon for India. We decided it was because Buddhistic attitudes had so deeply permeated the Indian background although Buddhism, as a religion, had almost disappeared in India.

"Sunday was the great day of our week-end. In the morning after our solitary meditations we casually drifted over to the poet's doorway.

"When we talked about idolatry—Gandhi was completely vicarious. As he talked he became the pariah, the scavenger, whose ancestors could neither read nor write and whose children's children are doomed to that same hopeless future. Unless, as Gandhi told us, 'We four men, seated here, can arouse our worlds to white heat on the subject.'

"'The outcaste's little piece of red-painted stone, used for an altar under the tree,' argued Gandhi with emotion, 'is important.' 'That painted piece of stone is the only tangible symbol of God our half-starved brother has ever had. How can we deny him the only link between himself and God?'

"But Tagore could not let the Mahatma have the last word. 'You, Gandhiji, you and your Jain ancestors, long ago, left their chanting and singing and telling of beads. We all know full well that God is not only in the temple. He is there where the tiller tills the hard ground. He is with them in sun and in shower, and His garments are dusty. The Bishop knows that his Master, Himself, the Living Christ became man to symbolize this identity, and that he is bound with us all forever. But that does not mean He is the stone.'

"'No,' ended Gurudev, the poet, 'if idols and idolatry, if beads and painted stones are not needed by us in this room, not righteous for us, then they are not righteous for any of our people, however lowly. I'd like to sweep up every idol of every kind, brass, wood, stone and alabaster, from every city and village—every temple and mohulla, and make one great heap from the whole country, and sweep them into the sea and so cleanse our stables!'

"We were all silent. It was a dramatic moment. The poet cleansing the temple! Then Gandhi became the outcaste himself, thinking their thoughts.

"'You dare not take the crutch from a lame man's arm until you have taught the cripple how to walk,' Gandhi warned us quietly. 'That is the Bishop's task, it is Charlie's, it is yours, Gurudev, and it is my task!'"

I was greatly interested in my husband's contrast of the two Indians.

"Those two great men are vastly different, yet at one in purpose. Tagore is like—Mount Everest. He towers majestic. He is, in some ways, far off—He seeks abstract Truth. But Gandhi—is like the leaping cataract on the mountain-side trying to reach the stream to add his life to the parched stream below where the people thirst."

When I revisited India in 1939 alone, I was drawn immediately to Wardha and to the little mud-walled capital of the new India where the Gandhian spirit pervaded that small community and sent out sparks of true reform to the ends of the continent.

I saw him day after day in Delhi and attended his evening prayer. I shall not soon forget the Good Friday of 1939, when Gandhi after the formal prayers had been said and sung, asked the few Christians sitting there, C. F. Andrews, Agatha Harrison, and myself to sing his much-loved Christian Hymn, "Lead Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom, Lead Thou me on."

The world will be quoting Gandhi long after present-day passions have cooled.

"Civilization," Gandhi says, "is the conquest of one's mind and passions. We can conquer an enemy without hating him.....and moral force is greater than navies."

And now when so much of the world has fallen into the unthinking habit of blaming all India's troubles on the Hindu-Muslim skirmishes, Gandhi, the Man of God, has gone into the center of the disturbance, there to work out his gospel of love, friendship and co-operation with understanding. This to me is the most far-reaching religiously motivated experiment going on in the world today. He has become the practical leader on the road toward the Regnancy of God. When I was writing the life of my late husband, Gandhi wrote me a letter which I included in the book and which will be treasured as long as life lasts.

"Dear Sister," he wrote, ".....I had the privilege of coming in close contact with the late Bishop Fisher. He seemed to me to be one among the few Christians who walked in the fear of the Lord and therefore feared no man."

New York,
17-2-1947.

A SICK VISITATION

S. K. George

ONE of the most amazing things about Gandhiji is the care and concern he has for even the humblest among his followers. India's politician No. 1, bearing the brunt of the nation's battle for freedom and directing the many nation-wide constructive schemes he has initiated, he yet finds time to enquire about the well-being of his most obscure adherents. The sick and the infirm among them receive his special care, and he finds time during his almost whirlwind tours throughout the length and breadth of the land to visit them. The following incident illustrates this aspect of his life, and helps to explain the devotion that people of all castes and creeds in this country of baffling diversities feel towards one who is really Bapu to thousands.

My wife and I had come within Bapu's attentions since 1932. I was in Sabarmati Ashram during that eventful year, after I had to resign my place in Bishop's College, Calcutta, because of my loyalty to him. He was in jail at the time; but I had corresponded with him and he had sought to retain me in the ashram. But I came away and settled down with my wife in Trivandrum. We were running a kindergarten there and trying to be faithful to the light of freedom and service that had been kindled in us at the flaming torch of his spirit. But we were not finding full satisfaction in our work, and the suggestion was made by a good friend of ours and a trusted lieutenant of Gandhiji, Shri G. Ramachandran, who was then at Trivandrum, that we should find work under Gandhiji's direct guidance at Sevagram. A definite offer of work was made to my wife, and Gandhiji wrote inviting both of us to throw in our lot with him. But our responsibilities at Trivandrum and some illness prevented us from responding to that kind call at the time.

Shortly after that offer was made, in 1936, Gandhiji came to preside over a great celebration at Trivandrum of the epoch-making Travancore Temple Entry Proclamation. I called at his residence in the morning after his arrival but could not see him. I met Shri Mahadev Desai and

told him about my wife who was ill at the time. I spoke about it also to Shri G. Ramachandran, regretting our inability to meet Bapu. Ramachandran, knowing the mind of the master, said that then it would be a case of the Mountain going to Muhammad. I quoted scripture against that, and said that I was unworthy that he should enter under our roof.

But what the disciple had predicted happened. After the great meeting that evening Gandhiji returned to his residence, not joining in the procession that followed. During his evening meal he asked about my wife and enquired where we were staying. It so happened that the State Guest House where he was staying was close to our house, and one of the sisters in attendance on him was a teacher in our school. She offered to guide him to our place; and so immediately after food, staff in hand, the old man set out to visit this humble sister who, he had heard, was lying ill.

It was past nine, and we had retired early. Only a single kerosene oil lamp was burning in the house. We had not slept, and I could distinguish the voice of Mahadevbhai who was one of the company visiting us. I told my wife about this and heard Mahadevbhai remarking: "He thinks it is only Mahadev." Looking out I saw Gandhiji and party at our gate. I immediately rushed to open the gate which was locked. Gandhiji observed with a chuckle: "So you are afraid of thieves." I mentioned to Gandhiji what Ramachandran had said and referred to the Biblical parallel of the Roman centurion telling Jesus that he was not worthy that the Master should enter under his roof. "Aha!" retorted Gandhiji.

Coming into the house I sought to retain him in the drawing room. But he had not come to give a courtesy call and put me immediately in my place saying: "I have come to see not you but your wife." And in he walked straight to her room. Sitting beside her cot he enquired about her illness and the treatment she was having. I woke up our little son and brought him to Bapu for his blessing. It was a very patient and unhurried few minutes that he spent with us, but we were a little too flurried to

use it to the fullest advantage in seeking his paternal advice on our problems.

Accompanying him to the gate I said that I hoped to be present for morning prayers the next day. He restrained me from going with him further and walked briskly away with his companions. What follows is not creditable to me, but truth compels me to record it also. I could not fulfil my promise to be present for prayers the next morning. I was a few minutes late and so did not go in. But Gandhiji remembered my word and enquired before prayers began whether I was present. Another George was there, and Gandhiji specifically asked whether he was living farther away than I was. It might be that he felt that I had been weighed and found wanting. Anyway when I went in and announced myself after prayers he had nothing to tell me. It may also be a constitutional inability on my part to surrender myself wholly to any man that has kept me still from throwing in my lot with Gandhiji. But the wife has, in the intervening years, been drawn closer to the Master, and today she is his choice as the Agent of the K. G. M. F. for Kerala, and feels that she has found her life's fulfilment in his service.

Trichur,
15-6-1946.

GREAT IN LITTLE THINGS

Richard B. Gregg

1. At Sabarmati Ashram, after the common dining room was established, Bapu used to go to the kitchen early every morning after prayers to peel vegetables for the morning meal. In order to be with him I went also and helped with the peeling. I do not remember what we talked about morning after morning, but I remember how much I was impressed by his doing this, and contrasting it

with the actions of other national leaders generally considered great. Winston Churchill is versatile and paints landscapes and lays bricks as a hobby, making his own garden walls. But I have seen no reports of his using his hands for the benefit of his followers or guests or the common man. Stalin as a communist professes to work for the benefit of the masses, but I have not heard of his doing so with his own hands. Franklin Roosevelt talked persuasively about manual workers, but did no manual work himself. Bapuji identified himself with the workers in deed as well as in word. I could not help remembering the words of Jesus Christ—"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted;" and "Whosoever would be chief among you let him be your servant."

2. One afternoon at Sabarmati I went to Bapu's house to talk with him. As I went in I noticed that a tall Pathan was lying fast asleep on the verandah. Bapu remarked that the man had come a long distance to see him, and after a talk had lain down there quite naturally and gone to sleep. He was no leader. He looked like an ordinary Pathan moneylender. Somehow the incident seemed to me typical of Bapu's hospitality and accessibility to every kind of person.

3. Just after the rains in 1925 I came down from a visit with S. E. Stokes in Kotgarh, Simla Hills district, and went to Calcutta to be awhile with Bapu. He was then raising money for a hospital as a memorial to the recently deceased Bengali leader, C. R. Das. Mahadev Desai was with Bapu. The three of us slept in the same room together. Every morning at four we had prayers and worship of God, just as at the Ashram. That, too, seemed typical of Bapu always to put worship of God as the first duty of every day, no matter where he was or what the other business of the day might be.

4. Once at Sabarmati Bapu had been sick with a fever. It used up his strength a good bit. Shri Ambalal Sarabhai and his gentle wife came over to beg of Bapu to go to their house in Ahmedabad to get a rest and recover his strength. They came in the afternoon after 3 o'clock when Bapu was accustomed to receive visitors, and I happened to be in the room chatting with him just before they came.

Though they pleaded with him he gently declined to leave the Ashram. I sat silent. Presently Shri Ambalal cried to me: "Why don't you help us persuade him to take the rest he needs?" So I joined in the pleas, phrasing my urging in half-jesting form. Many men would have been irritated at such increase of pressure, but not so with Bapu. He maintained his position just as firmly and with complete gentleness and courtesy. This was a tiny incident, but to me it was another revelation of character.

5. In the spring of 1930 while on a brief visit to India with my wife, we stayed at Sabarmati Ashram for several days during the week before the start of the famous march to the sea to make salt illegally as the start to that campaign for liberty.

In a room in the guest house next to ours there was a young Englishman, a reporter from the *Civil and Military Gazette,* a strongly imperialist journal in Lahore. He had been sent to find out what was up, and thought he was being bold and courageous, walking into the camp of the enemy. Bapu of course let him wander all over the Ashram and talk with anybody and everybody, detailed a young man to attend to his wants, and granted him a long interview. At this display of courtesy, consideration and complete frankness the young man's astonishment was so great as to be ludicrous.

During that same week I watched and listened to Bapu talking to a group of Indian leaders who had come in for instructions and information. The speech was in Hindustani and too fast for me to understand. Bapu threw into his talk all his energy, and when it was over and I went up close to speak to him I noted that he was trembling all over and wet with perspiration. Such was the completeness of his devotion to the cause and every single detail of it.

Toward the end of our stay, one evening just after prayers, some messengers came running in in great excitement. Vallabhbhai Patel had been arrested, and the police had him in a car, taking him to Sabarmati gaol. Yet such was their friendliness to Bapu that they stopped the car on the road in front of the Ashram to give all the Ashram

members a chance to see Sardarji and cry out to him "Jai Jai". That seemed to me significant.

6. Here is a letter Bapu wrote to me from Sevagram on 20th January, 1945:

"My dear Gregg, Your letter makes me glad and sad. Glad because of your faith and enthusiasm, and sad because of Radha's illness which you say is beyond recall. I am hoping that in this at least you will prove wrong. Nevertheless you and I can say: 'His will, not ours, be done.' I believe also that what passes for misfortune is not always really so. Of these things, in spite of scientific advance, we know so little.

"When your revised book comes, of course, if I do not read it, Pyarelal or others will, and I shall know. Love to you both,—Bapu."

Putney (U.S.A.),
15-1-1946.

SOME IMPRESSIONS

Agatha Harrison

IN 1921, my work took me to China. Those were tense days in Indo-British relations; many Congress leaders had been arrested; from the questions put to me I realised how closely China watched Indian affairs —particularly in connection with Gandhiji.

It was not until 1929 that I saw him when I accompanied the Royal Commission on Labour to India. He was in Delhi at the same time we were; and hearing he was speaking, I went to the meeting. It was my first experience of an Indian crowd; thousands of people were sitting in the blazing sun; at the far end was a small platform to which, much to my embarrassment, I was led. With the exception of a woman missionary I was the only British person there. Suddenly I saw a small figure threading his way through

the surge of people. Having heard much about this "trouble-maker" I imagined he would breathe fire and brimstone on the British Government, and that I should have to hide my diminished British head. But no, it was a simple speech, no slogans—just a stern direction to those present that, if they wanted Swaraj, it must come by their disciplined, practical efforts. Then he set to work to auction the costly gifts presented for one of his funds. As swiftly as he came, he left. I went back to the Labour Commission with an indelible impression of a remarkable man with whom I wished I could have talked.

In October 1931 I *met* the Mahatma. By then I was working with C. F. Andrews in all he was doing to prepare the minds of people here for the coming of his friend to the Second Round Table Conference. The day after Gandhiji arrived, I went down to see him at Kingsley Hall, Bow, and found him in a small room on the roof surrounded by masses of papers, etc. It was his day of silence. I was nonplussed, never having talked to a silent person before. Yet I remember coming away feeling a part of his entourage.

Bow was a long way out. Happily a house was taken (88 Knightsbridge) nearer the centre of London where he came early each morning and in between the Conference sessions. I wish I had kept a diary of those indescribable days, but there was no time. Mahadev Desai, Pyarelal, Devadas Gandhi—to say nothing of C. F. Andrews—all needed help. On one of the rare occasions when Gandhiji was alone, I went in to make up the fire and found him reading an erratically typed letter. This, together with his reply, he handed to me. It was from a woman of over 70, who said she had followed his work for many years, and what a comfort he had been to her—for she was both blind and deaf—and that she hoped he would be able to read her badly typed letter. His answer was to the effect that she was neither blind nor deaf, for she had "the eyes of the soul that can see". How she must have valued his reply! It was typical of many incidents during those days—he had picked out her letter for priority in spite of the

mountain of material awaiting his attention. He always finds time for humble, suffering folk.

Before he left London, Gandhiji laid on a few of us here the need of "working for mutual understanding between our two countries". When I asked him for some guidance on this task, he replied: "God will direct your steps."

Early in 1934 I went to India to "see and listen". On arrival, I found a letter from Gandhiji saying he was making a tour of the earthquake-stricken areas of Bihar with Rajendrababu—and would I like to accompany them? He said he could offer me "no European comforts"! In spite of this (for he is a most thoughtful host) a large packet of tea was included in the stores we carried, which he called "poison". He gave me an amusing lecture on our British habit of tea-drinking, said we were a dyspeptic nation because we drank so much of it. All the same, I noted during the trip that several of his entourage seemed anxious to share my "poison" round about 4 o'clock each day!

Those were incredible weeks, in which I saw him and Rajendrababu move amongst homeless people steadying their morale. His message was always the same: "What has this calamity taught you? This is no time for differences between Government and Congress; between Hindu and Muslim; between Touchable and Untouchable. If you take money from the Relief Fund, see that you earn it."

Later, we toured parts of Orissa, in connection with work amongst Harijans, always followed by masses of villagers. The Mahatma has a puckish sense of humour. On two or three occasions he took it into his head to break into a run as we neared our resting place for the night. So, perforce, everyone else had to run too or run the risk of being trampled underfoot. Pierre Ceresole and I panted along behind—not, I recall, with conspicuous success!

The tour provided many opportunities for talking with Gandhiji about all that had taken place since he left London in 1931, and of the obstacles to work for "mutual understanding"—in which his fasts had played a part.

There was an incident that should be recorded. One hot midday we were resting—it was Gandhiji's day of silence, and he was busy with his enormous pile of letters, etc., and I going through a batch of home mail. Amongst this was a copy of the *Christian Century* of America of March 14th, 1934. Suddenly the following editorial comment caught my eye:

"WE NOMINATE GANDHI FOR THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE"

"Why not award the Nobel Peace Prize to Gandhi? It would be no personal favour to him, and he probably does not want it. The honour would not greatly impress him, and he would not know what to do with so much money except to give it away. These are all high qualifications for such a prize. The Nobel Committee could find no worthy recipient for the award in 1933. This is the seventh time in thirtytwo years that the peace prize has been reserved. Of the twentyfive awards that have been made to eminent promoters of peace, too many have gone, as the Stockholm Peace Society protests, to 'presidents, ministers, and other high officials' and too few to 'working friends of peace or to really radical proponents of peace and disarmament.' It is asserted that the founder's intention was to encourage bold dreamers and prophetic spirits whose ideas are too far ahead of their time to win attention without some such adventitious aid, rather than to reward practical politicians who merely negotiated another treaty or took another mile of trench in the long campaign against bloodshed. Both are worthy types of service; but if the prize is to have any real influence on the course of history, it may better be awarded in recognition of the heroic virtues of creative idealists than of the meritorious work of diplomats and statesmen. Even if Gandhi were all the kinds of impractical fanatic that his harshest critics think he is, it would still be true to say he is the world's foremost representative of the principle of non-violence. If he is not the most logical candidate for the Nobel Prize, then the popular idea of the function and purpose of that prize needs to be revised."

I looked across at the absorbed silent figure of the Mahatma—the "world's foremost representative of the principle of non-violence", the man "whose ideas are too

far ahead of their time". I took the paper over to him; his expression, while reading it, was a study. Then, selecting a minute piece of scrap paper he wrote:

"Do you know of a dreamer who won attention by 'adventitious aid'?"

With a broad smile he handed me the slip of paper, and went on with his work I had interrupted.

A message has reached me from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in Norway, saying they were nominating Mr. Gandhi for the Nobel Peace Prize this year. And in the press of March 16th, 1947, there is the following:

"Candidates for the Nobel Peace Prize this year include President Eduard Benes, Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. Herbert Lehman (former Director of UNRRA), and Sir John Boyd-Orr."

Another incident occurred during the tour which I record as being typical of Gandhiji's sense of justice and fair play. Attached to our party was a hefty young German about 18 years old. Gandhiji had given him permission to join him, as he does anyone who is eager to learn more about his way of life. The young man acted as a volunteer and made himself generally useful; in his spare time he typed long letters and articles and sent them back to Germany.

It was known to all of us that Gandhiji had taken a self-imposed vow to make no political speeches during the tour—and naturally that none of the party would. At one place in Orissa we stopped for several days, and while there (unknown to the rest) the young German addressed a large gathering of students. Had he spoken about what was going on in his own country, there might have been no trouble. Instead, he chose to deliver himself on the iniquities of British rule in India, and cited tales of repression he had heard. The next day came a letter from the British official in the district warning him that, if he took part in further meetings, he must leave the province. Delighted with this further proof of British imperialism, the young man showed his letter to Gandhiji. Rarely have I seen the Mahatma more angry. He turned on the lad

and said: "You have offended; you know of the vow I have taken; yet you, one of my party, have done this thing!" He told him he must write and apologise to the British official, and he wanted to see the letter before it was sent. Unrepentant, and rather bombastic, the culprit argued that he, not Gandhiji, had spoken at the meeting, and besides all that he had said was true. Quickly Gandhiji replied that this might be so, but how could the official view it otherwise than a breach of faith on his, Gandhiji's, part? And if he felt he could not write a contrite letter of apology, then he must leave his party at once. And he handed him a letter that he felt met the case. It was a typical Gandhi letter, and the stubborn young German rebelled at putting his name to it. Gandhiji then turned him and the draft letter over to me; and after *many* hours he agreed to the substance of Gandhiji's draft. This was taken by hand to the British official, and a sobered young German remained with us. Gandhiji's treatment of this incident made a deep impression on him. I often wonder what has happened to him.

In the latter part of 1936, I went to India again. Gandhiji was in his Sevagram setting. Going there from the pomp and circumstance of Delhi, here, it seemed to me, was the real centre of power—simple and accessible. I watched the many people that gravitated there as to a magnet, not only from India but from the world. Elections were taking place under the Government of India Act of 1935. Commenting on the Act, Gandhiji said: "Yes, you have given us the house, but you have kept the keys."

1938 was a strange and restless year, shadowed by Munich and rumours of war. In the autumn I went to India. The Provincial Governments had been in power for over a year; there was grave unrest in some of the States. I had a chance of studying both, and noted how the leaders from these Governments and from the States came to Sevagram for advice and help. Many people came from Europe too, and I remember a deputation from Palestine and the advice Gandhiji gave to them. His main point was that Jews and Arabs had *got* to learn to live together.

With war on the horizon, I spoke to him of the longing of some pacifists in the West that he should come over and meet with us quietly so that we could have the benefit of his deep experience in the practice of non-violence. He said he must first prove his method in India; how could he teach other countries until this was done? I appreciated his viewpoint, but was not convinced. Yet one had to admit that, with events moving so fast, it might have been impossible for him to do what some so ardently wished, i. e. that he himself would go to Herr Hitler.

The years 1939-45 were like a very bad dream. Work for "mutual understanding" between India and Britain presented insuperable difficulties. Mails were delayed or lost in transit, we had little to interpret the many statements made by Gandhiji and other leaders. The whole country was geared to the war effort; the majority regarded its waging as a kind of crusade; anyone, who in the written or spoken word questioned what was going on, was liable to be dubbed "Quisling", "anti-British", etc.

In the middle of 1940, soon after Dunkirk, Gandhiji's appeal, 'To Every Briton', was cabled over in extracted form. The press headlined that he had asked us to lay down our arms, and had suggested we should invite Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini to "take possession of your beautiful island". The full text of his statement came later; but the harm had been done by lifting out extracts that inflamed opinion. For the country had its back against a wall, struggling for its very existence, and few were in a mood to study the eternal truths that underlay the other parts of what Gandhiji said.

There followed the individual civil disobedience campaign; the failure of the Cripps Mission (that many laid to Gandhiji's door); finally the 'Quit India' resolution of 1942 brought feeling against him to a climax. "A stab in the back"; "Anti-British"; "Impeding the war effort"; etc. The cartoons appearing at that time reflected the deep hostility against him. The text of the Congress resolution, with its statesmanlike review, received scant attention by reason of its last sentence. A threat had been made to

launch a mass civil disobedience campaign in time of war. No Government, it was argued, could do other than take the action it did. By the time we knew that Gandhiji had expressly stated no campaign would be launched till he had talked with the Viceroy, he and all the other leaders were in prison.

Some months later came the news of Gandhiji's fast. In peace time, these had been understood only by few men and women. In war, this fast was set against the fact that millions of men and women the world over were also sacrificing their lives for a cause. "Why do you make so much fuss over this old man's sacrifice—aren't our men doing the same?" "He is doing this to embarrass the British Government at a time when they have so much on their hands." "This is moral violence; where does his non-violence come in?" Yet, during those anxious days, the daily bulletins about him were front-page news.

Through those truly dreadful years we struggled against an *ocean* of misunderstanding—mainly, though not entirely, directed against Gandhiji. Quiet interpretative work went on persistently; in that period a good deal of material was published.

At the end of 1945, I was at last able to get a passage to India. Gandhiji was in Calcutta. I went there as soon as the All India Women's Conference ended. What, I wondered, would I find these years had done to him? He greeted me warmly as though the years had been but a moment. I found him resting with an enormous mud-pack on his stomach! "Of course you are coming with me to Madras," said he. Next day we all set off in the "Gandhi Special"—strangely unlike one's idea of a special train—for his consists of an engine, a guard's van and a third-class carriage! This kind of travelling is not conducive to quiet talking, for milling crowds punctuated the whole journey. But in the midst of it all, I had the great privilege of discussion with him. We did not talk much about the intervening years; the present situation was so grave. On this journey I could see he was "steadying" his people, warning them against slogans, and stressing the need for discipline if they wanted independence.

So often over the war years we heard: "Mr. Gandhi is a spent force." I found no "spent force", and marvelled at the hold he has on people of all shades of opinion. To have such power—a power derived from spiritual forces—is unique in this day and age.

When the Cabinet Mission came to Delhi, Horace Alexander and I went there too. We knew the Cabinet Ministers personally; we had the privilege of knowing the Indian leaders; opportunities might arise for work of "mutual understanding". They were difficult, arduous days. Gandhiji's small mud hut in the Harijan Colony—a stone's throw from the Viceregal Lodge—was the nerve centre to which gravitated people from all over India and the world.

Through these weeks in Delhi and Simla there was further opportunity of talking with him about the present and the future. Just before my plane left Delhi I went to say good-bye to him. Fifteen years before he had said: "God will direct your steps." He said much the same now.

Across 6,000 miles we watch his latest experiment in the technique of non-violence—described in one paper "as an effort in spiritual awakening it has few parallels in history." In a letter to me from Shrirampur he says:

"Here I am in an inaccessible part of Bengal and dealing with the most difficult part of my mission in life.... If my mission succeeds here, I shall be fit enough for further work."

That he is needed in Bengal and Bihar has been proved. But a new situation has arisen since the British Government fixed June, 1948 for the transference of power from British to Indian hands. Gandhiji's dream has always been that this should be achieved by peaceful means. Will he perhaps see that "further work" awaits him in Delhi?

London,
20-3-1947.

M. K. GANDHI

Carl Heath

ALTHOUGH I had known and studied the teaching of M. K. Gandhi for a good many years it was not until 1931, when he came to the Round Table Conference in London to represent the Congress Party, that I came to know him personally. He had, of course, become by then a very important figure in public affairs; and, as a distinguished if somewhat dangerous visitor, he was taken close care of by two of London's expert detectives, men who had 'protected' all kinds of foreign princes and other important people who were State visitors in England. One of them remarked to me that he had never before had to handle such a problem as Mr. Gandhi. For this Indian was so utterly unlike the visiting prince or potentate they were used to. You never knew what he would do. No other such person elected to stay in an East-End Settlement, to live down in Kingsley Hall in poverty-London instead of in a rich hotel in the West. And he would go out at six o'clock in the morning for a walk whilst his Round Table fellow-Indian delegates, Princes and politicians, were still fast asleep in their West-End hotels. And there were all kinds of engagements to be watched—visits to very important people, to the King and others of Britain and outstanding Indians; and conferences and committees to attend. And the little great man had to be convoyed punctually and safely to his destinations across London, in one direction or another; for, truth to tell, he was not always conscious of western ideas of punctuality!

The East-End, poverty-London, deeply appreciated his acceptance of Muriel Lester's invitation to stay amongst the poor people rather than the rich. I think this marked his time in London more than anything else. But the thinking people were also deeply interested, and there was an eagerness to meet him and speak with him. Hence I invited him to come to my room in Friends House on October 31, 1931. (I was then Secretary of the Friends' Council for International Service) to meet some thirty to forty people of public concern:—politicians, publicists,

writers, journalists, social service workers and others. He came, and was supplied with a typed copy of a list of questions, which those coming desired to put to him. These he read aloud, one by one, answering each with an engaging frankness. Many differed from his judgments naturally, but all felt that the opportunity had been a unique one for getting at the mind of the man foremost in the thoughts of Indians. It was felt too that this gathering was suggestive of further possibilities of direct contacts and resultant understanding.

So we formed the India Conciliation Group, and from that day in 1931 to this, this Group has had the privilege of innumerable personal and private discussions with all manner of outstanding Indian men and women who have come to London; with many British men and women who have either given long years to the service of India, or have paid special visits thereto; and with many distinguished Continentals and Americans to whom India means much. This Group, through Mr. Gandhi and others, has been in close touch with many in India; and has also maintained a personal relationship with the Secretaries of State, successive Viceroys and Governors, Judges and others, with the India Office itself, and with the Office of the High Commissioner for India, and with many Members of Parliament. Miss Agatha Harrison has been its Hon. Secretary from the beginning, and very much is due to her capacity and sound judgment of men and affairs. The Group members have varied views, and have sought to understand sympathetically those of all parties, races and religions in this Indian context. Its one uniting aim is a progress by intelligent conciliation. It has been productive of much friendship and good understanding. Many have co-operated in this. But it will never be forgotten that its origin is due to that unique meeting with the magnetic personality of M. K. Gandhi.

Mr. Gandhi's visit to London coincided with the continued boycott of Lancashire goods in India. With no small courage he accepted an invitation to go to Lancashire and see for himself the effect of the boycott. In Darwen, a cotton town, he was faced by a public meeting at which the cotton-operatives put before him all that they were

suffering. He listened with attention and obvious sympathy. Then he is reported to have said quite simply: "I have listened with great sympathy to all that has been said. You are suffering badly. But then my people are ten times poorer than you. What am I to do?" And the cotton workers sat in silence looking at him! They saw the point in a flash.

One other picture before leaving this period. I quote from a little pamphlet I then wrote:—

> "There is a small meeting-house in the centre of Friends House in London. It has the simplicity of such places among Quakers, but this one though plain is beautiful. Today is a somewhat special day; and the seats being moved back, leaving a large square space, a broad Indian carpet is spread. Save for the somewhat dim lights of the hanging lamps that is all. The gathering is a meeting of silent prayer for India.
>
> In this setting each week, whilst the Indian Round Table Conference met, came Hindus, Muslims and Christians to pour out their ardent desire to God. No word was spoken, for how can men of differing language and religion so quickly find the unoffending and the creative word?.....
>
> To this little meeting of prayer for India came Mahatma Gandhi and the Hindu group. Thither too came Shaukat Ali and the Muslims. There came also the Indian Christians and the Lord Chancellor and many another English friend of India to pray."

A notable and suggestive scene, though the fulfilment of those prayers still delays.

In 1936-37 I was in India, going twice to Wardha in the last part of 1936, and staying, on the first occasion, with C. F. Andrews and Agatha Harrison in the most hospitable house of Jamnalal Bajaj. I can see M. K. Gandhi now, at this first visit, advancing to meet us with his smile of welcome. There was a long talk on many things recorded by our good friend Mahadev Desai, whose death later was a most grievous loss to his many friends in many nations. M. K. Gandhi sat on a cushion on the ground. Being an Englishman they offered me a chair, which of course I

declined, and sat down on the ground facing our host. I have no record of the talk at hand. It concerned the current problems of that time, now nearly ten years ago; and the general principles of life that Gandhi stands for. He showed all the time that vital mind that seizes a question at once and has a direct answer. Or, and this is one of his greatest qualities, frankly confessed that he had no answer, or that a previous belief of his had been a mistake. I have often quoted that really great saying of his: "I am not consistent with the *past*, I am consistent with the *truth*." That saying marks him as the dynamic man. There is nothing static in M. K. Gandhi. And he has that engaging grace of humour. When we rose to leave:—"Where is your wife?" said he, for he had met her also in London. "In Itarsi where we are staying," I replied. "Well," said he with a merry smile, "tell her I shall never forgive her if she leaves India without coming to see me."

So with this word, and before we left the Central Provinces for Calcutta, we came down some weeks later by road from Itarsi, a long and very, very dusty road.

I told him that one of my main reasons for coming to India just then, was due to the very large number of political prisoners; a matter that was greatly moving the Society of Friends, of which I am a member. The Society has a long record on penal questions, and I had been commissioned to visit the Viceroy on this matter. The Viceroy was willing that I should do so, but at that time was paying some visits to various capitals in India and could not see me till some weeks later. But I told Mr. Gandhi that I had planned to go to Calcutta first, and see Sir John Anderson, the Governor of Bengal at that time, who had expressed a willingness to discuss this prisoner question with me. Mr. Gandhi asked me to tell Sir John that he, Gandhiji, would be very glad if he might visit him concerning the Bengali prisoners. I believe Sir John would have been glad if this had been immediately workable, but up to that time the new Viceroy had not seen Mr. Gandhi, and official etiquette prevented the Governor receiving him first.

On the second visit I found Abdul Gaffar Khan staying

in Mr. Gandhi's Ashram. I had a long talk with this interesting man which proved valuable when, in the New Year, I met his brother Dr. Khansaheb in Peshawar.

Since those days much has happened. We have, from London, watched Gandhiji in peace and in war, we have seen him again in prison and have shared acutely some of his sorrows. Many are the letters and cables that have gone backwards and forwards, dealing with the changing political situation. I cannot quote these, save for one or two sentences expressive of his spirit. Thus in January 1935, at the end of a long letter expounding the radical objections he felt to the Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee which led to the Constitution of India Act of 1935, he closed with the words so characteristic of his greatness and his humility:

"Whilst, therefore, I hold the strong opinion that I have expressed in the foregoing summary, I would ask you to believe me implicitly when I give you my assurance that, God helping, I shall take no step in haste or in anger.

"I have retired from the Congress because, among other reasons, I want to impose silence upon myself, as far as it is humanly possible, about the political measures of the Government. I want, in my voluntary isolation, to explore the yet hidden possibilities of non-violence. Every action I am taking, no matter in what department of life, is being taken with that end in view. The only axe which I have to grind on this earth is to try to understand the ultimate truth of things which, at present, I seem to see only dimly. And after a laborious search I have come to the conclusion that, if I am to see it in any fullness, I can only do so by non-violence in thought, word and deed."

Five years later in February, 1940 I had written to him closing with the words that "as a Quaker and a long friend of Indian freedom my deep conviction is that this struggle must and can be ended in friendship and equality, accepting all the implications of both these words."

Back came the answer written by himself that he had read my letter "many times", and that "there should never be any difference of opinion between us, for there is complete heart contact and agreement as to the end and the means. If, therefore, there is any difference left, it can

be due only to an incomplete appreciation of facts."

Needless to say how I prize that letter.

And I think the following in 1941 may be quoted without offence: "The Congress is as much anti-Nazism as anti-Imperialism. If the Government had not thoughtlessly forbidden the anti-war activity of the Congress and had not proclaimed it as pro-Nazi, they could necessarily have claimed the whole of India as anti-Nazi—both that part which followed the Congress non-violence and the other which believed in the use of violence. Had it not done so, much bitterness would have been avoided, and the world would have profited by the lesson of tolerance, and its moral opinion would have been on the side of Britain. It is never too late to mend one's error. Whether, however, the error is admitted and mended or not, the course of the Congress is clear. The conviction being purely moral, it should be pursued irrespective of the immediate result. A moral means is almost an end in itself. Is not virtue its own reward?"

One other little letter about this time said: "I am in the midst of a raging storm and often hum to myself: Rock of Ages cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee."

(This is from an English hymn that C. F. Andrews may often have sung to him.)

I have not quoted anything on those political matters Mr. Gandhi has from time to time written to me about in personal letters. I have no authority to do so. These quotations above are taken simply to illustrate the inner nature of the man, as it has impressed another. In the Christian New Testament there was one described by Christ as being a man "in whom is no guile". That is my idea of M. K. Gandhi. Many will disagree. One eminent statseman expressed to me his opinion that M. K. Gandhi was far more of an astute politician than a saint. But I do not agree. This man, as he leads India to freedom, a freedom that is much more than a release from alien rule, does so by infusing the political and economic life of India with his own guileless spiritual nature. That is why he is so rare a personality, and *great*.

Guildford,
19-11-1945.

WHEN MAHATMA GANDHI CAME TO CHAMPARAN—A MEMORY

J. Z. Hodge

IT seems but yesterday that Mr. Gandhi stepped on to our verandah in Motihari, Champaran; but the year was 1917. There began that day a friendship that has continued to this present, although leagues of sea now divide us. He came among us practically a stranger; but his fame as the champion of Indian rights in South Africa had preceded him, and the populace received him with acclamation. The more conservative element in the community viewed his advent with a certain amount of apprehension and anticipated trouble; but then, as now, 'wait and see' was the watchword. Champaran had long been the scene of agrarian unrest, and relations between landlord and tenant, zamindar and peasant, were strained almost to breaking point. It was not surprising then that an invitation on behalf of the aggrieved peasants should be sent to Mr. Gandhi to come and inquire into their grievances. The Government were fully alive to the seriousness of the situation, but seemed unable, rather than unwilling, to put things right. I think on the whole they regarded Mr. Gandhi's coming on the scene as providential. They were doubtful at first, but when the purpose of his mission was fully understood they readily entered into an alliance with him and instructed their officers in the district to supply him with all relevant information. My first memory then of Mr. Gandhi was that of a friend of the people and a co-operator with the Government in the interests of the people.

There are two factors to be borne in mind as we accompany Mr. Gandhi to Champaran. (1) The abandonment of opium-growing in Bihar had reacted adversely on the economic position of the Champaran cultivator. This historic action of the Government was doubtless a fine moral gesture; but the cultivator in Champaran and adjoining districts had to pay for it. Opium-growing was a profitable means of livelihood, and its abandonment was a shrewd blow to the cultivator. It aggravated the growing

agrarian discontent. (2) The favoured position under which indigo planters, most of whom were British, held and farmed their extensive estates was another root of agrarian bitterness. It chanced that long ago the Bettiah Raj, which is the largest landowner in Champaran, fell into grave financial difficulty and was extricated by a timely loan from the planters. In return for this they were granted long term leases, and these leases conferred the right to exact from their tenants an undertaking to employ a certain portion of their holdings in the growing of indigo. This was known as the 'tin kathia' (3 cottahs in the bigha) system and was a measure of compulsion pure and simple. Naturally, it gave rise to widespread resentment. But the days of natural indigo were numbered: clever German scientists had discovered the secret of synthetic indigo, and the discovery meant the death of indigo-growing in India as a commercial investment. Apprehending the coming disaster the planters beat a financial retreat by entering into a treaty with their opium-growing tenants whereby, in return for a lump sum in token of compensation, the obligation to grow indigo would be annulled. Glad to escape from an irksome burden many of the tenants readily paid the compensation asked. Some, however, refused to do so, and it was primarily in their behalf that Mr. Gandhi came to Champaran. The circumstance that one of the men who sent the invitation was a young banker friend of mine probably accounted for Mr. Gandhi's coming to see us shortly after his arrival.

Investigation was the first duty and, assisted by a group of splendid helpers, Mr. Gandhi set himself to the task in real earnest. With characteristic expedition he submitted a preliminary report and, as a result, the Government appointed a Commission of Inquiry and, very wisely, made Mr. Gandhi a member of it. The Commission reported in due course, and the outcome was the Champaran Agrarian Act which finally liquidated the 'tin kathia' system, settled the vexed question of compensation, and removed other causes of discontent. In helping to right these agrarian wrongs Mahatma Gandhi won the gratitude and affection of the peasants of Champaran, and I doubt if there are homes in India where he is more loved and re-

vered than the village homes of Champaran. My second memory of Mr. Gandhi is that of a man with deep human sympathies wondering how best he could serve his fellow men and being drawn inevitably into the national struggle for Swaraj.

But to return to the Champaran Agrarian Commission. The vital question that confronted the members was the equity, or otherwise, of the action of the planters in exacting compensation to secure release from the obligation to grow indigo. Mr. Gandhi contested the right to such compensation both on legal and moral grounds. It was then that he showed what I have long regarded as one of his most attractive qualities—a readiness to compromise where no essential principle was at stake. To refund, or not to refund, was the question. On strictly legal grounds he might have stood out for a hundred per cent refund; but for the sake of an agreed settlement he was prepared to bargain. After some give and take he staked his claim at fifty per cent. There he seemed adamant. Thinking probably he would not give way the representative of the planters offered to refund to the extent of twentyfive per cent, and to his amazement Mr. Gandhi took him at his word, thus breaking the deadlock. Having established the justice of a refund the amount to be recovered was a matter for adjustment. In the bigger deadlock that confronts Indian and British statesmen today I am quite sure that Mr. Gandhi's genius for compromise or, to use a kindlier expression, 'sweet reasonableness', will exercise a reconciling and decisive influence. When my friends say to me: "What can you do with so unreasonable a man?" I am happy to recall this Champaran incident and say: "You don't know Mr. Gandhi." The third memory I cherish is that of a strong man who is strong enough to give way when the interests of others rather than his own demand it. After all, many of the tenants had voluntarily agreed to pay compensation and a refund of twentyfive per cent was no small material gain.

While I had no hesitation in subscribing to the national demand for Swaraj, my missionary calling kept me aloof from active participation in politics, and the creed of non-cooperation, violent or non-violent, did not appeal to me.

In fact, co-operation had become my guiding star. The inhibitions and disabilities under which the Bihar peasant lived and toiled had long oppressed me, and I had welcomed the coming of the Co-operative Credit Movement to Champaran as an Arctic whaler imprisoned in the ice might welcome the coming of spring. Mr. Gandhi himself, moving on the higher political plane, hardly shared my enthusiasm for Co-operation; but he very kindly deputed one of his colleagues, the late Dr. Dev of the Servants of India Society, to help me in organising village co-operative societies. Dr. Dev was a choice spirit, and I look back with pleasure on the days and nights we spent together introducing this way of escape from the rapacious moneylender to the unlettered villagers of Champaran. Mention of Dr. Dev reminds me of another engaging Gandhian quality, the genius for attracting men and women of ability and devotion to his standard and the service of their country. That surely was an authentic mark of leadership. It was in those early Champaran days that he captured Rajendra Prasad, another soul of good quality who is today one of his country's tried and trusted leaders. And what shall I say of Mahadev Desai, most capable of secretaries and most loyal of friends? It was an auspicious day for India when he responded to the national call and joined hands with Mr. Gandhi. The relation that held between them, as we saw it in those Champaran days, was very beautiful. It was a union of hearts that beat as one in the service of India. And not only the service of India, for to them the cause of India was the cause of humanity. Here let me record another Champaran memory: I found no trace of racialism in the Gandhi family circle. We knew Mrs. Gandhi well and had the privilege of entertaining her in our own home. Instead of finding in Mr. Gandhi an austere ascetic we found in him a social neighbour, a companion to go out with in all weathers. Our young people took to him at once, and only the other day the younger son home, from the war, which included the Burma campaign, showed us as one of his treasures a post card he had received from Mr. Gandhi when he was a school boy in England. Mr. Gandhi's sense of humour made our visits to him and his to us pleasant occasions; we shared the

bounties of each other's gardens, and I recall his affection for tomatoes; an occasional Indian dinner, attended by sparkling conversation, was another landmark in this pilgrimage of friendship. But even in our brightest hours we heard "the still sad music of humanity". In this home circle Mahadev Desai lived and moved as a member of the family; and when he died there was but one heart there, and that heart was sad.

Mahadev Desai had held office in the Co-operative Department of the Government of Bombay and given it up to devote himself to the national cause. What he did not know about Co-operation and its working was hardly worth knowing, and his practical experience was of immense service to us. His advice, always gladly given, saved us from many pitfalls. One of my happiest Indian memories derives from a visit Mahadev and I paid some years later to the co-operative settlement at Gosaba in Bengal, founded by the late Sir Daniel Hamilton. He found there much that interested and pleased him, particularly in the well-organised plan of rural development with its emphasis on character-building through gardening, farming, spinning and weaving, education for children and adults, a common medical service, a community rice mill and a management governed by high ideals. The educational ideal, I think, attracted him most of all. Here he found a system in keeping with village needs and village sentiment whose crowning reward was the Gosaba Diploma of "Master of the Art of Independent Livelihood". Where he had occasion to criticise he did it kindly, and his advice was kindly taken. Incidentally, Sir Daniel Hamilton and Mr. Gandhi had much in common. They differed on political methods, but they were both disciples of Ruskin and Tolstoy, believers in the essential dignity of human personality. The Gosaba co-operative commonwealth embodied many of the purposes of the India Village Welfare Association. One of the curiosities of Gosaba is the ancient spinning wheel of the Hamilton family, and Mahadev had the thrill of seeing it used to spin from Scottish wool the thread that was employed in the same school to weave a shawl for Mahatma Gandhi. This blending of

West and East through the spinning wheel was one of Sir Daniel's chiefest delights, and when he died it was but fitting that Mr. Gandhi should write: "We shall all miss good Sir Daniel." Mr. Gandhi was never able to visit Gosaba; but he and Sir Daniel Hamilton met in Nagpur and shared treasures such as only great minds can share. Had Mr. Gandhi not come to Champaran in 1916, this memorable interview of 1938 would not have taken place.

There is much more I might write about these far-off Champaran days; but I must pay heed to the clock. Compared with Mr. Gandhi's achievements in the ampler arena of national and international politics, the passing of the Champaran Agrarian Act, touching as it did a local situation, may seem of little account; but of this there can be little doubt that it was one of the compelling circumstances that led him to give himself unfettered to the national cause. No ashram and no organisation was big enough to hold him, and his Champaran experience entered into the very fibre of his public life. I know he dislikes eulogy; but I think readers will pardon me if I record two tributes paid to him in my hearing by two very different persons. The first came from my friend and neighbour Jokhan Singh, a Rajput peasant and a veritable 'village Hampden', who said: "God sends but one Mahatma Gandhi in a thousand years." I shall not soon forget the reverence with which he said it. The other tribute was spoken by the late Sir George Rainy, then a member of the Champaran Agrarian Commission, who said: "Mr. Gandhi reminds me of the Apostle Paul."

The Champaran Agrarian Act has not yet made Champaran a colony of heaven. It has, however, introduced a new order of self-respect; and if the peasant there today walks with a head more erect and a step more confident than his fathers did, it is because some 30 years ago Mahatma Gandhi passed that way.

Edinburgh,
19-6-1946.

THAT TWINKLING SMILE

J. F. Horrabin

MY first meeting with Mr. Gandhi was at Dover, on the Channel steamer which brought him to England for the Round Table Conference in the late summer of 1931. I had travelled down to the coast with other friends, English and Indian, to meet the boat and escort him back to London. We went aboard, and our little procession, in single file, made its way to his cabin. I was immediately behind the Dean of Canterbury; and I have a vivid recollection of the contrast between the tall, courtly figure of the English ecclesiastic, and the small figure, huddled in his white robes, who greeted us with a twinkling smile which at once took all the formality out of the occasion.

That twinkling smile dominated all our subsequent meetings, and is, indeed, my most outstanding memory of him. Anyone less like the conventional image of a Major Prophet than Mr. Gandhi I find it hard to imagine. He reminded me always of Edward Carpenter. Both men conveyed the same impression of an inner poise and dignity so deep-rooted that it found natural expression in a simple warmth of manner which put one instantly at one's ease. It would have been impossible to "pose" in the presence of either. No sort of artificiality could have survived in the atmosphere which each created.

I recall a mixed meeting of Members of the House of Commons, addressed by Mr. Gandhi, at which a stiff-necked Tory M. P. with a highly aggressive manner put a question obviously intended to convey extreme disrespect for the speaker. There was momentary perturbation among those of us responsible for convening the meeting. We need not have worried. That twinkling smile came into play—and within a few seconds the aggressive questioner was the only embarrassed person in the room.

On one other occasion I remember feeling a little nervous. I had promised David Low, the cartoonist, an introduction to Mr. Gandhi. (I was at that time a Member of the House of Commons, and Members have various opportunities of fixing such things.) Low had of course

drawn a good many cartoons in which Mr. Gandhi figured —cartoons not always uncritically sympathetic to the cause of Indian Nationalism, nor to its great champion. Would Mr. Gandhi show any resentment? I might have known better. The twinkling smile at once gave evidence, not merely that he bore no malice, but that he had enjoyed the cartoons. Low also has a friendly smile; and for some minutes the two great little men twinkled at one another in happy conversation.

Mr. Gandhi twinkled for a couple of hours on end one evening when, in my Gower Street flat, he sat surrounded by a small crowd of journalists—the dailies and evenings, the weeklies and the quarterlies were all there—who rained questions on him, some friendly, some hostile. Long before the two hours were up the crowded room looked much more like a happy social party than a political gathering. And it would assuredly have gone on for another two hours, had not the watchful Mr. Desai intervened to carry off his chief to another engagement.

My last glimpse of Mr. Gandhi was highly characteristic. I had gone to talk to him while the Conference was in session at St. James' Palace, to discuss with him the possibility of his addressing a public meeting during the forthcoming annual conference of the Labour Party. We chatted for some minutes in a small ante-room. Then, catching sight of a clock, he remembered another appointment, apologised, and hurried away. I watched him disappear down one of the long corridors of the Palace; his robes tucked up, his slippers twinkling as he ran. Dare I say it?—I am sure, at least, that no friend of his will misunderstand me if I do:—I was irresistibly reminded of one of those Chaplin films which end with the little figure hurrying away to the horizon, gradually lost to sight in the distance. The memory of a last glimpse of that kind lasts far longer in one's mind than would that of a more conventional leave-taking; because it is the memory of a human figure, and of one whose greatness was rooted in that very humanity.

London,
25-2-1947.

OCTOBER 1931

John S. Hoyland

THOSE of us who were at Woodbrooke Settlement, near Birmingham, in October 1931 remember every detail of the week-end during which Mahatma Gandhi was with us there. It was during the stormy days of the Second Round Table Conference; and he arrived from Nottingham on Saturday evening, in company with Horace Alexander, one of our College Staff. He was very tired; but he came to share our evening worship (we are a Quaker educational institution). With him were Mirabai, Mahadev Desai, and Pyarelal. They sang to us some Gujarati and Hindi *bhajans*; and afterwards Mahatmaji suggested a Christian hymn. We asked him to choose it; and he named two, '*Lead Kindly Light*', and '*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*'.

Next morning, very early, I took the Mahatma for his early morning walk, accompanied, somewhat embarrassingly, by two (or was it three?) huge burly detectives. I asked him for his advice regarding the problem of unemployment, which was bulking very large in our thoughts at that time. It was the onset of the depression period; and I had just returned from the first of the Work Camps organized for the help of the unemployed by Pierre Ceresole, the great Swiss internationalist, who has just died (October 1945). Mahatmaji replied: "In the first place, my friend, you must take this thing seriously, or it will destroy you!" They sounded somewhat extravagant words; but they were true. The number of unemployed in Britain rose eventually to over three million, but in Germany the number rose to nearly eight million; and on the crest of that wave of misery and frustration there came in—inevitably—Hitler, with the promise of finding work for the German unemployed. That promise he kept, by rearming, and so making war certain. It would have been well for us had we listened to the Mahatma's advice, and taken unemployment seriously, as Sweden for instance took it seriously, by establishing State-organized and State-paid public works on a sufficient scale to provide employment for all who needed it.

Mahatma Gandhi went on to say that the dole was an insult to humanity (I could appreciate his words, for I had been living in an unemployed family at Brynmawr in South Wales, where the Ceresole team was at work, at the time when the ten per cent cut in the dole, and the Means Test, were introduced, and I knew how the unemployed felt about it). "Tell your unemployed friends," he went on, "to refuse the dole as an insult, and to come out on the streets with their wives and children, and starve in public. If they had the courage to do that, your Government would give way in a week, and do the right thing by them." It was grim advice, and I fear I never plucked up courage to hand it on. But the Mahatma's own example had already testified, and was to testify again and again in the years ahead, to the triumphs that may be achieved by the courage which turns the evil will into good will, by taking self-chosen suffering patiently upon itself, instead of imposing it upon others by rifles or machine-guns, or bombing aeroplanes.

He went on to urge me to realize what property I could, turn it into land, and establish a land-working community, in which should be associated a dozen unemployed families and a dozen middle-class families. I feebly protested: "But what about my children?" "Take them in with you," he replied; "on no account leave them outside. Establish a school as one of the activities of your new community, and bring them up as part and parcel of the community. I have tried both ways myself, and I know which is right. Have some subsidiary industry—for instance, spinning and weaving—also practised in your community, for rainy days and spare moments."

Next I asked him about the reasons for his choice of the two hymns which he had named for our use the evening before. He told me how '*Lead Kindly Light*' had been quoted in the Presidential Address at one of the early meetings of the Indian National Congress. He had heard the quotation as a young steward, and had been deeply impressed. The other hymn he had heard used in South Africa, and the ideal of sacrifice which it enshrines had ever since seemed to him supremely authoritative. He told me also of how, one night many years before that

time, he had made the resolve that never again, so long as he lived, would he call anything his own; but that he would hold everything as belonging to the community. He told me of the vast resources at his command, and of the eagerness of his followers to do anything for him that he might desire. "Yet I own absolutely nothing," he declared. "And from that night's decision there came into my experience four things, life, power, freedom and joy. If you would know these things, my friend, you must tread the same path."

The dawn was just coming up before us as the Mahatma said these memorable words, presenting so stark a challenge to our everyday comfortable values. It was perhaps the most tremendous moment in a lifetime. I knew something of what the young man felt when he was told: "Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and come, take up thy cross, and follow me."

"If I own anything of which my brother stands in need, I am to that extent a thief." These words came powerfully into my mind. I remembered also that I had been told how the Mahatma had made five thousand pounds in half an hour, just before coming to Birmingham, by giving an audition to a gramophone company: and that not one penny of this large sum would go to himself; it would all be devoted to one of his funds for the suffering poor in India.

Later, there were wise words about the sovereign secret by means of which the Mahatma kept his mind from harassing anxiety in the midst of the multifarious activities and intrigues of the Round Table Conference. "Take no thought for the morrow." "Be anxious for nothing." Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." These sayings from the New Testament were quoted in a manner which showed how they had become a rule of life. They were adhered to so faithfully that carefree sleep would come in a moment to the Mahatma, however perplexing the problems might be with which he was besieged, and however fiercely quarrels and jealousies might rage around him.

On the Sunday afternoon he gave our community a long-remembered address, about the needs and aspirations

of India. During the discussion afterwards someone asked him what he, *as a Brahmin*, thought about this or that. The Mahatma's laughter at the suggestion that he was a Brahmin was something to remember!

On his departure he gave great pleasure to our kitchen staff, by making a special pilgrimage down corridors and passages to the kitchen, to say good-bye to them! He left our community simmering with the eager discussion which the challenge of his ideals, and of his way of life, had aroused amongst us. That week-end is fourteen years away now, but we still look back to it as a traveller looks back to a distant peak in the Himalayas from the dusty plains.

Birmingham,
27-10-1945.

WHEN GOD TESTED HIM

Jairamdas Doulatram

IT occurred nearly seven years ago—in December 1939. Somehow no incident in Bapu's life witnessed by me has been so indelibly imprinted on my memory. There must be a reason for this. But I have failed to discover it. In those days circumstances had led to my remaining in the Sevagram Ashram as a patient under Bapu's personal care. I was paying for my mistakes. And yet I benefited richly from my enforced stay close to Bapu. Among those benefits none was greater than being a witness to the incident I relate.

It was an hour before the evening prayer time. Bapu was going out for his usual stroll. About half a dozen of us were with him. He had hardly stepped out of the Ashram gate, when a visitor who was entering the Ashram stopped six paces in front of Bapu, placed on the ground a bundle of cloth, and reverentially made his pranam. Gandhiji returned the salutation and told the visitor that

he had received his letter but he thought the visiter would await a reply before starting for the Ashram. The visitor, taken back a little, explained that Bapu's pathetic statement on the morrow of his interview with the Viceroy when the war broke out, had deeply stirred him, and he felt an irresistible urge to come to Bapu and pass even two days with him. "I know I should have waited for your permission to come to the Ashram, but somehow I could not restrain myself, and so I left Hardwar to come to you." Bapu explained to him that he knew the disease he was suffering from, and he had been debating within himself whether it would be proper for him to let him come and reside in the Ashram where so many persons, women, children and the sick live in close proximity. The visitor was none other than Parchure Shastri, a fellow prisoner with Gandhiji in Yeravda Jail in 1922. He had unfortunately developed leprosy of a bad type, and had since his release been wandering from hospital to hospital for effective treatment and had ultimately found refuge at Hardwar, the famous sacred place of Northern India. Realising Bapu's difficulty, the visitor said: "I have had your *darshan*. This bundle contains the yarn I spun at Hardwar to give you personally one day. My purpose is served. I will pass the night under yonder tree and return to Hardwar in the morning." Bapu asked him whether he had had any food, and on learning that he had had nothing since the day meal, he asked Kanu Gandhi to arrange to feed him. Kanu looked to the needs of the visitor, and Gandhiji started on his evening walk. These evening strolls were largely used by Bapu for complete relaxation, and he joked and played with children for part of the walks or talked with his companions on matters of no serious concern and thus relieved the tension of strenuous thinking on weighty problems throughout the day. But I had seldom seen him at any time so absorbed in thought and busy battling with an internal problem as on that evening. We were all silent almost throughout the walk. The evening prayer soon followed his return to the Ashram; and before long, his head massage being over, he rested for the night.

The body rested. The brain also almost rested. But the soul of this great man was up in revolt within him. The

subconscious Gandhi was fighting his way through the calculative working of the conscious mind. The battle, silent and unseen, raged intensely for several hours. At last the Great Soul won the struggle. The outer sleep broke at about 2 a. m., and Bapu sat up to make the conscious mind respond to the call of the inner self. There was no peace for him till that response came. And with the response he saw light and knew his next step. The morning prayer over, he addressed the inmates of his Ashram gathered on the prayer ground at that early hour. He put before them all the aspects of the problem which had faced him on the previous evening. He told them how God in the form of Parchure Shastri had come to test his sincerity. For him to turn away Parchure because of his leprosy would be to deny himself and God, but he was at the same time responsible for the health of the Ashramites whom God had placed in his charge. How could he let Parchure live in their proximity unless they all were prepared to run the risk involved? The Ashramites rose to the occasion, and made it clear that they were ready to receive Parchure in their midst. The load was off Bapu's breast. One more experiment with truth, and one more manifestation of ahimsa in its positive form of love to all, even the lowliest, even to one whom the "untouchables" would not touch—this was the meaning of what had happened.

With the dawn Parchure became the inmate of the Ashram. A neat cottage was hurriedly put up close to Bapu's own. The roof consisted of a plain sheet of white khadi to permit the Sun to play its part in the treatment of the new patient. From that day no single individual in the Ashram occupied the mind of Bapu more than Parchure. It was a time when grave issues faced the country. We had broken with the British Government on the war question. Those who had graced ministerial chairs were getting ready to squat on prison floors. Civil disobedience, when and in what form, was being hotly debated within the Congress ranks. Having given up ministerial power, the nation was preparing to use the power of sacrifice to reshape the course of events. But in the midst of this all the leprous wounds of Parchure Shastri loomed large in

the mind of the great soul. He massaged him daily with his own hands till some Ashramites voluntarily relieved him of this duty. He determined the diet the patient was to receive, and so the food served out to Parchure was brought to Bapu for inspection three times each day. The end of the morning walk found Bapu every day at Parchure's hut. Affectionate enquiries about the patient's progress, a few suggestions about the daily routine, attentive sympathetic listening to the Sanskrit poems composed by this learned leper, a smile and a parting joke, all this made Bapu pass more time with Parchure Shastri than with any of his other patients whom he used to cheer by brief daily visits.

And so this next neighbour of Bapu prospered rapidly, as in poetic riches, so in health. The two days he had wanted to be near Bapu lengthened into two months and in due course to more than two years. Bapu would not let him leave his side till the disease was controlled and cured.

They say that mind affects the body. And so the state of the mind has something to do with the cure of disease. And how could not the ocean of affection in which Parchure swam but affect his mind and so the leprous limbs of his diseased body? The picture of an orange has got transfixed in my memory. That was an incident within an incident. Parchure had before long improved enough to go out for solitary walks on his own; and quite often Bapu, going or returning, met him at a resting place on the way where Parchure used to sit to relieve his fatigue. There Bapu would tarry awhile and lighten Parchure's heart with loving enquiry or cheering witticism. But what about the day of silence? Bapu could do no such service to the patient on that day. And yet serve he must. His all-pervading love must manifest itself in some form or other. If it did not, the patient would miss something on which he had come to depend, something which unconsciously helped him to happiness and to health. It was one of these silence days. Bapu listened to him with an affectionate smile as he poured out his thoughts in a rapid stream. But how could Bapu respond to him with his loving enquiries and jokes? What could not flow from him in words to

which Parchure had become accustomed, did yet flow to the convalescent patient. And how? Bapu with his remarkable forethought, born of ahimsa, had brought with him a fresh orange. Lovingly he gave it to Parchure in token of his affection since his lips could on that day utter no cheering words! You could see how the patient's eyes brightened and the face lit up with pleasure at this unexpected outflow of love. He understood the language of this silent act.

That is Bapu. The smaller the incident, the greater its significance and lesson. How much can we learn from him, and how little we actually do!

Akola,
25-10-1946.

MY VISIT TO MAHATMA GANDHI

Rufus M. Jones

MY visit to Mahatma Gandhi occurred in 1926. It was to me one of the most thrilling experiences of my life and our conversation together was a memorable experience, but there is very little that I can report in a definite manner. I recited to him two or three of the little stories from *The Little Flowers of St. Francis of Assisi.* He had never heard these stories before, and they fitted so strikingly into the aims and ideals of his life that he seemed very thankful to have them. It was then that I heard his view expressed that as all the rivers, even the little ones, carry water to the sea, even as the great Ganges itself, so all religions, even those that are less favoured, bear some burden of truth and life and love to men and so are worthy of regard. As I was leaving him I asked him if, after all the agonies and difficulties that had confronted him, he still believed that the way of love would work in this difficult world. He stood up and ran his fingers down his sides and said: "That truth has gone

all through my being, and there is nothing in the universe that will ever take it out of me."

Haverford (U.S.A.),
20-11-1945.

POTTER : THROUGH THE POT'S EYES

B. D. Kalelkar

"Oh, Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make."
—OMAR KHAYYAM

WHENEVER I unroll the canvas of memory in an attempt to have a fresh glimpse of the pictures painted thereon, like a child presented with a basket of fresh apples, I am unable to pick and choose. There are pictures still rich in colours; there are others which are hazy and indistinct; and yet, each one of them is so sweet—on occasions bitter-sweet—that it seems almost impossible to make a deliberate selection. This is particularly so with regard to my recollections of Bapuji, spread over a period of over twenty years. I am using the words 'twenty years' to be correct historically; if I were to go by my mental impressions, I should say I have been under Bapuji ever since I can remember, to this very day! However, it would be quite correct to say that I came under Bapuji's discipline right since the days when buttoning and unbuttoning my shirt was for me a complicated mechanical operation, too difficult for my manual skill!

Although hailed as the champion of South African Indians Bapuji was not quite an international figure in those days of my early childhood. Being a firm believer in teaching by example rather than by precept, and being less preoccupied with public activities in those days, he used to spend most of his time in organising and sharing the ashram activities which also included keeping imps like us out of mischief. To what extent he paid attention to

the details of our training can be easily understood if I tell the readers that, one afternoon at lunch, he systematically taught me how to crush a well-baked chapati into fine powder and prepare a kind of pudding out of it. No work was too insignificant for busy Bapuji. Sabarmati ashram was a wild place then; one couldn't say it was exactly in a jungle, but it certainly was not far away from it; the ashram ground was covered with shoulder-high grass—or so it seemed to my tiny eyes—infested with snakes and other animals. Tents, huts and other improvised dwelling-houses gave the little commune not very comfortable shelter. Verily Bapuji was giving the inmates practical training in bringing order out of chaos! From clearing the ground for open-air prayers, to digging ditches for movable latrines, there was nothing that he did not personally supervise and actively participate in. His special attention to personal and civic cleanliness, and his insistence on everyone learning and meticulously observing rules of hygiene left a deep and lasting impression on my mind.

Bapu of those early days was much more strict and exacting with his associates than Bapu of today. But his keen sense of humour and his angelic love for children were no less pronounced then. How can I forget how immensely pleased I used to be when at dinner-time he quietly passed a big chunk of raw sugar (gur) to me as a kind of socialistic recognition of 'to everyone according to his needs'; it was notorious that I had a sweet tooth!!

During my teens, I acquired a special position in his heart, and it used to be said by some of the veteran ashramites that he was pampering and completely spoiling Kanti (Gandhiji's grandson) and myself. My elder brother used to tease me by saying that we had learnt the art of 'fooling' Bapuji by observing his impossible discipline and then wringing concessions out of him! Kanti and myself were practically the first inmates in the ashram to learn all the 700 verses of the Gita by heart; we were able to create records in spinning—even in non-stop spinning for twentyfour hours; so on and so forth. Bapuji was much pleased with all this, and I might frankly confess that we were quite conscious of having been "Bapuji's pets". He

thought he was building model ashram-youths out of us! Little did he know that the young boys who, he hoped, would renounce all the material pleasures, would one day fly out, one taking to engineering and the other to medicine. And yet, just when he was preparing us for a life of renunciation, he was constantly impressing on our minds that we were like little birds, and that when we had grown enough feathers and strength the most natural thing for us to do would be to fly alone in God's free air! It is this quality of deliberately encouraging the independent spirit in the hearts of his followers that has made Gandhiji the idol of the modern youth that hate idolatry!!

Kanti and myself, it is hardly necessary to add, fully exploited Bapuji's attachment to us. I remember how one evening we carefully planned and prepared a 'sound' case to be presented to him for a special grant of money towards our expenditure on photography which we were just learning. We 'convinced' him, to our entire satisfaction, that Swaraj would not come unless we mastered photography! And to our great joy and much to the chagrin of some of the orthodox ashramites, each of us was sanctioned a monthly allowance of five rupees from that very month. Oh, what a triumph it was! On another occasion, I was responsible for winning a point and getting an order cancelled by him. He had decided to make a slashing cut in the supply of washing soap to the ashram inmates on the ground that we had no right to the luxuries which the poor villagers were denied. We youngsters, who used to vie with each other in washing our clothes snow-white and dressing immaculately, resented this new order very much. I took up the case and made a special appointment with him to argue it out. He said that the poor villagers had never even seen a piece of soap, and that if they could get along with *khār* (a yellowish-white alkaline deposit left on the banks of rivers) which was a good substitute for soap, why couldn't we? My immediate answer to this was that it was wrong to want us to adopt the dirty habits of villagers, and that clothes could never be washed so clean with *khār* anyway. He now changed his strategy. Why, he asked me, I alone of all the boys had resented the order which others had accepted without demurring? I retorted

that the others felt the same way about the order, but that they were dumb! He challenged me to get the signatures of 70 per cent of the boys to prove my contention. I very nearly accepted; but the next moment I saw no triumph in all this. I therefore pretended to be angry with his demand: I told him frankly that I was tired of arguing with him, that he was always obstinate in his preconceived notions, and that I would accept his challenge only on condition that he would grant my request if the necessary 70 per cent signatures were produced; I was not interested in merely proving my contention. I knew only too well that Bapu the democrat would never reject this condition. Within a couple of days I produced the signatures of 90 per cent of the boys, and the order was rescinded! What a victory! We—mere kids, we had 'convinced' the great Mahatma and brought him round to our view! And when do you think we taxed his time in this unthoughtful manner? It was when the Simon Commission had agitated the whole nation; when Bapuji's advice was sought by politicians of all shades of opinion; and when he was busy studying the Nehru Report on the future constitution of India! But that is how he treats all those who come in contact with him. He has learnt to be patient with the most ignorant, and this has given him the miraculous power of correctly feeling the pulse of the nation.

During the preparatory weeks before he led us as a batch of 80 volunteers to break the salt laws at Dandi, we were given permission to ask questions in public after the evening prayers every day. One evening I asked a moot—and, therefore, perhaps unnecessary—question of him: "Which would you rather have, the Indian mill cloth or the British handmade cloth?" Not willing to waste time over a moot point, he dropped the question and asked me not to raise such unhelpful points. I felt very much hurt at that time, but I received his answer in another form some four years later. It was at the time of his 21 days' fast in the 'Parnakuti' at Poona. I had the proud privilege of being his full-time nurse all through that fast. One day when he saw that the bottle of vaseline which he was using for enema was nearing exhaustion, he asked me to purchase a new one. Critical about every little detail,

he asked for an explanation when he did not see a new bottle of vaseline on the following day. I told him that I had tried hard to purchase one in the Cantonment area which was near by, but had found that bottles of English manufacture alone were available there. I had therefore postponed the purchase, and I was going to make a special trip to the city area that very evening to purchase a bottle of Indian make. He listened to my explanation with his usual calm, and pondered over the discrimination I had practised for his sake. I could read all this on his face; it is quite easy for those who have come in intimate contact with Bapu to read, from his forehead as it were, or from his pronounced veins, the thoughts that pass through his mind. He told me in gentle but firm tone that the principle of swadeshi which had actuated me was quite correct, and that he hoped I would practise it in my future life; but, he said it quite unequivocally, I was not to discriminate between British goods and other goods as far as his personal purchases were concerned. He added that perhaps it would be difficult for me at that stage to grasp the deeper significance of his apparent inconsistency, but that I was to follow his instructions all the same. But I knew I had received an answer to the question I had put to him four years previously.

Surprising as it may sound, this happened at the very time when he was busy persuading such of the A.I.C.C. members as were out of jail, and preparing them for giving a fresh fight to the British Raj by reviving the civil disobedience movement! Leaders like the late Shri Satyamurti with their clever dialectics and forensic skill would put their point of view with all the force at their command, and it was a pleasure to us, young followers of Bapu, to watch him demolish their case and win them round to his own view. The very man who would refuse to discriminate against British goods was preparing the leaders to give the British power a tough fight! But there lies his inner greatness and strength; he is, in spite of what the fashionable 'internationalists' say, essentially an internationalist; if there ever was a man with a deep sense of universal brotherhood, it is Gandhiji.

As a student of science and as a budding engineer I try

my best to wean the villagers from their belief in miracles and supernatural agencies, which, in my opinion, has wrought havoc with India, breaking the very backbone of her culture and civilization. Not for a moment would I subscribe to Gandhiji's view that the Bihar earthquake of 1934 was a divine punishment for the sin of untouchability. But, then, I should be untrue to myself if I did not narrate an incident to which I was an eye-witness and which would appear nothing short of a miracle to a layman.

It was at the time of the Rajkot agitation in 1938 when once again Gandhiji had to resort to a fast. This time also, during his convalescence, I had the privilege of acting as one of the nurses who attended on Gandhiji. Miss Chanduben Parekh, who had just returned from America and who later was to marry my elder brother, was also one of those who helped nursing Gandhiji. The atmosphere, with all the filth that an Indian native State can produce, was extremely tense; the agitation had already assumed all-India proportions; this was very much resented by some of the high-ranking State officials and landlords of the place. They thought they could intimate the public who were backing the agitation by creating panic among them at the time of open-air prayers which Bapuji used to hold in those days and which were attended by mammoth crowds. They engaged a gang of thug hirelings, and arming them with lathis and batons let them loose on the congregation after the prayers were over. The Congress volunteers, with their usual non-violent methods, tried in vain to hold back the goondas who were now pushing their way towards Gandhiji. Use of sticks made their way clear to Bapuji, who was on his way to the waiting car which used to whisk him off from the admiring crowd after prayers. But on that day, before he could reach the waiting car, the hireling thugs rushed the cordon of Congress volunteers and surrounded him from all sides. I saw the seriousness of the situation; pushing and jostling, shoving and elbowing was producing frayed tempers, and it was a matter of minutes before serious violence would break out. I cannot say how far I could have remained non-violent in the face of danger to Bapuji's person, but I at once plunged into the fray. I elbowed my way close to

Bapuji through the unmanageable crowd which was now divided into small parties exchanging blows. As I was watching with a mixed feeling of anxiety and curiosity the behaviour of the crowd, I suddenly noticed that Bapu's whole body began to shake violently. It was not out of fear; his face could tell how free from fear he was; the physical reaction was his revolt against the disgusting atmosphere of violence. I became extremely anxious for Bapu's safety; he was in none too good a health, and I thought he might collapse any moment. Suddenly he closed his eyes and started praying; I could hear him saying 'Ramnam' with an intensity of devotion that could never be surpassed. I joined him in his prayer and, to keep time to our chanting of God's name, I started patting my hand on his back. Half out of childlike faith and half out of silly egotism, I thought I was giving him a prop to retain his faith! Perhaps it was forgivable; when the house is on fire even a child may help its grandfather by bringing water in its tiny bucket. To my great astonishment and greater relief, the prayer worked. When Bapuji reopened his eyes there was a new strength that had appeared there like magic. In a firm tone he asked all the volunteers, including us, ashram boys, to quit the place at once and leave him absolutely alone at the mercy of the hired goondas. He would not, he said, return home in the car as he usually did; he would walk the distance! Then he called the leader of the gang who was busy breaking up the congregation, and told him that he was absolutely at his disposal if he cared to argue out his point; if not, would be tell what he proposed to do next? To everyone's amazement, the thug's violence melted like ice, before the warmth of love and non-violence. The leader of the gang stood before Bapuji with folded hands begging of him to rest one of his hands on his shoulder for support, and promised to escort Bapu as far as he cared to go! That evening Bapu walked all the way home with one hand on the shoulder of the leader of the gang that had come to break up the prayer meeting and terrorise the general public!

I shall never forget that memorable evening which has given me the faith of a lifetime in the efficacy of prayer.

But I would not like to call it a miracle. There have been cases where the ablest of mathematicians and engineers have solved the most difficult and complicated problems by sheer intuition; but these are hardly miracles. Intuition after all is an inner directive that flashes into one's mind when it attains a certain critical temperature; it is as though some past experience speaks from within. The incident narrated above only proves that one who leads a life of intensity for some noble cause may bank upon the power of prayer which would enable him to re-live the past struggles and get renewed confidence to march onward to Truth.

What we ashram boys owe to Bapu is beyond calculation. For the last thirty years Bapu's kind but stern hand has tried to mould the precious but plastic youth of us, ashram boys, into a life of duty and dedication. The master engineer has aimed at moulding according to the specifications of his inner voice. But each one of us acquired a shape according to our diverse plasticity of moulding sand. The defects in casting are entirely due to the presence of dry sand in the green mould; the master engineer is in no way responsible for these defects, just as he is not responsible for the loss of stature in the final casting which too is attributable to the plasticity of the material used.

The other day, when I returned from America after my higher studies in engineering and still higher experiences of life extending over five years, I was feeling a little diffident—how foolish it was!—about my reception from Bapu. But the same depth of love and affection was waiting for me when, after landing in Bombay on the Diwali Day of 1945, I went to the Nature Cure Clinic at Poona and once more received his blessings on the Hindu New Year's Day. It indeed was a New Year's Day for me.

Okara (Punjab),
16-3-1946.

MY CONTACT WITH MAHATMA GANDHI

N. C. Kelkar

BEFORE taking up my pen to make this contribution to Mr. Shukla's book of *Incidents of Gandhiji's Life*, I would like to make one thing absolutely clear. In writing these objective reminiscences about my contact with Gandhiji, I am not impelled by a desire to arrogate to myself the importance which incidentally is supposed to attach to one personally, when he writes or speaks about his own acquaintance or relations with great men. I am by no means a hero-worshipper; nor also one who does not know his own small place in this great world. My only excuse or justification for writing these lines is to comply with the insistent request of Mr. Shukla that I must be one among those who can possibly say something objectively about Mahatma Gandhi.

Without claiming or disclosing any close personal relations with this now world-renowned personality, I can admire the true elements of greatness in him from my own distance, though I cannot honestly say that I have not also seen Mahatma Gandhiji's blemishes in their true colour and perspective. The greatness of the Himalaya mountain must be admitted, though the mistakes committed by him may also be as great as himself. The magnitude of greatness is as impressive as the greatness of magnitude. Gandhiji is unquestionably the one man in this country who has contributed more than anyone else to organise and mobilise the strength and influence of the great mass of humanity in India and to impress it in the political service to this country as against the dominant imperialism of Great Britain, tightly maintained and injuriously exercised by it against this dependency. He was destined to be the man along with the hour for India to come within a measurable distance of her freedom and salvation.

The first time I saw Gandhiji face to face was, unless my memory betrays me, in November, 1896 in the ante-chamber or waiting room in the Malabar Hill (Bombay) residence of the late Mr. Justice M. G. Ranade, the father of the political education of India. Gandhiji was then

dressed in pants, a long coat, and a black silken cap with a flap behind it as was the fashion in Bengal half a century ago. Gandhiji's mission then was, I think, to ask for Ranade's advice about the political struggle into which Gandhiji had decided to enter in South Africa.

I next had correspondence with Gandhiji when in 1912-13 I, as the editor of the *Kesari* and the *Mahratta*, raised and sent him a sum of rupees five thousand as Maharashtra's contribution to the fund, started at the instance of the late Mr. G. K. Gokhale as a means of helping Gandhiji's struggle.

I met Gandhiji face to face once again in 1916 at Belgaum where he happened to be present, at the time when a conference of Tilak's Home Rule League was assembled. I saw him and his son (was it Devadas I wonder?) eating, at about 6 p.m., their evening meal of rice cooked with their own hands, in the rooms in which he was lodged by his Belgaum host. I could not but be impressed with his great simplicity, as I knew the ways of living of our political leaders from Pherozshah Mehta downwards.

But Gandhiji was yet to be counted among Indian political leaders. For, in that very year 1916, I saw what place Gandhiji occupied among Congress circles at the annual session of the Congress at Lucknow. Here I saw Gandhiji twice or thrice in the Tilak Camp, having come himself or at the invitation of Tilak to hold conversations with him on the great topic of the proposed Congress-League scheme of political reforms. Here at Lucknow Tilak was the acknowledged hero of the hour as he had recently returned from Mandalay, and successfully carried out his great strategical move of stooping to enter the Congress only to capture or conquer it.

Here at Lucknow one could see that Gandhiji was somewhat disliked by the group of Bombay Moderates on account of his advocacy of such an unconstitutional method of political agitation as passive resistance. I think I met him several times at the rooms of the Bombay Presidency Association where N. M. Samarth dominated the young group of Mehta's followers and pronounced his antipathy to passive resistance. At the Lucknow Congress when the

election of the members for the Subjects Committee was being held, it was, I know, Tilak's mandate to his followers that enabled Gandhiji to be elected to the Subjects Committee among the quota allotted to the Bombay Presidency. Not that Gandhiji himself was hankering for a seat on the Subjects Committee. He always is prepared and willing to spare himself, if he can be let alone. But, to tell the truth, the followers of Tilak had already been fed up with the arrogance of Mehta's entourage in the Congress, and were glad to join hands with any new force which might co-operate with them in snubbing and out-numbering Samarth and Co. In Gandhiji's own presence and under the Chairmanship of Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, Mr. Samarth and myself had the privilege of reading papers on the subject of passive resistance. In his paper Samarth was altogether opposed to passive resistance as being unconstitutional. I in my paper contended that extra-constitutional measures are legitimate in politics, but stressed that in order to be effective for its purpose, passive resistance should not be aimless or be even with a very broad aim. The objective of passive resistance should be small, specific, limited and pointed, so that acts done as passive resistance may have a chance of visible success. Too large or too distant objectives are not fit for passive resistance.

I think Gandhiji was obviously glad of getting this support from an unexpected quarter, though his personal relations with the Moderates of Bombay or Poona were thicker than those with the Tilak school of politicians.

I met Gandhiji at Amritsar in December, 1919. Here he was now surrounded by the Nehru family for whom his affection has continued till this day unabated. And it is well known that Gandhiji has pronounced that Jawaharlal Nehru is to be his political heir and successor. It was Gandhiji who turned the Nabob in Pandit Motilal Nehru into a Fakir.

I do not think I met Gandhiji again till the last illness of Lokamanya Tilak. I well remember the impression he made upon us when he visited Tilak on his death-bed at about midnight on the last day of July, 1920. He came with only two or three young friends or followers, sat with

humility and in a reverent attitude by Tilak, who had expired already, and after a ceremonious salutation left in such silence that even his foot-fall could not be heard.

After Tilak's death we all began to watch Gandhiji's movements, as we could see that, though at the Amritsar Congress he was content to play the part of a Moderate, he had secured a hold on the leaders of the Congress, and it was rumoured that his next whim was going to be to set up non-cooperation as a new weapon in the political warfare. Tilak had already warned his party against the Gandhian cult of non-cooperation and non-violence. But the politically-minded masses in India were hankering for some change in the method of political agitation. The storm was brewing for some time till it burst at last at the Special Congress Session in September, 1920 at Calcutta. The Gujarat and the Hindi Provinces worked for and secured a majority in favour of Gandhiji. And since then he remains at the head of the political movement, unvarying in his influence, though fitful in moods and even inconsistent in his conduct.

Sometime in 1920 I had the privilege of putting up Gandhiji as my guest for a day. He had then no followers in Poona. My friend Haribhaoo Phatak secured goat's milk for Gandhiji, and took him afterwards for a stay at Sinhagad.

In 1921 and 1922 I met Gandhiji from time to time very frequently as I was a member of the Congress Working Committee.

I have met Gandhiji a number of times during his famous feats of fasting. I did not give him the trouble of uttering any words to greet me, but I watched him from a distance just to let him know that I had cared for him. Fasting was one of the many acts of this extraordinary personality which earned for him a world-wide fame. For who in this world could have conceived of the use of fasting as a means of political agitation? Many a time did he sit down to a fast-unto-death, but on all these occasions he could be induced at last to give up his fast. Perhaps like the cat in the saying, Gandhiji had nine lives. But abnormal things of various kind have entered into his life. Apart from the fast, his manner of dress also is abnormal. And

though I had followed the changes in his dress from time to time, I was never so much struck by his change of dress as when I saw him at the Ahmedabad Congress, entering almost half-naked at the far end of the Congress pandal in front and walking on to the dais with the eyes of thousands of spectators fixed upon him. It was a very cold December morning typical of Gujarat, and yet Gandhiji had the hardihood to walk into the Congress pandal and sit therein for hours together without anything to cover his body.

I give here below a sketch of my impressions of the great Gandhi trial, to which I was an eye-witness, on the 18th March, 1922. For it helps me to recall a vision which shall remain one of the cherished reminiscences of my life. Never was romance and reality rolled into a more vital unity than in that sublime spectacle.

As a member of the Working Committee of the Congress, I had that day the privilege of occupying one of the reserved seats in the court-house. But the 'court-house' was only one term in a whole series of misnomers on that occasion. The reader can well imagine what ideas the name of a State-trial brings in its train. But here everything was completely reversed. This State-trial was not so much a trial by the State as a trial of the State itself. And all else was naturally consonant.

The court-house was not the architectural, ill-lighted, awe-inspiring hall that, I fancy, it proverbially is in great State-trials. This was a mean, white-washed, inelegant, insipid, room of the true barrack fashion. A hundred people could easily overcrowd it. From the interloper who for want of an admission ticket spied with one eye from the farthest window, up to the Judge who presided over the trial, was one continuous assembly of human forms, knit together, as it were, by a real physical nexus. No one, high or low, among the hundred there could keep his distance.

The judge, I thought, was the most pathetic figure among them all in that memorable trial. Never was he charged with a more unpleasant duty. Never did he feel as he did on that day that an accused under judgment could be really superior to the judge himself. The bloom on

Mr. Broomfield's face had faded. A hectic pallor had taken its place. Neither the natural correctness of conduct nor the consciousness of prestige could keep off the creeping nervousness from him. For once in his official life a Civilian English Sessions Judge nodded respectful salutation to a native in the dock before he himself took his seat on the Bench. For once were the judicial words of a penal sentence belied by the tributory words of human admiration. "Would I not rather sit at your feet and learn a little of your nobility than send you to jail for six years?"—words like these might easily have come from the inner lips of Mr. Broomfield when he stole a parting glimpse of Mahatma Gandhi.

The apologetic Advocate-General obviously felt quite out of his element in conducting that State-trial. There was no tangled skein of a secret plot which his skill should unravel in the opening address. He felt the mockery of leading evidence where everything was avowed and admitted. He winced at reading the articles charged, as every word in them was a bold indictment of the Government he represented, and left some unanswerable reproach sticking to the reader's soul, in spite of his assumed professional scornful manner. He regretfully missed the contentious opposition which he delights to meet in the law court every day, as it provides good sport for the keen file of his intellect or legal acumen. For once perhaps did Mr. Advocate-General also feel that the fat fees he would charge were simply wasted on him.

And what shall I say of the accused himself? Clad only in a khadi enlargement of the proverbial fig-leaf, there was Mahatma Gandhi, with submission to none and yet with goodwill to all, the grand accused, whom it was Mr. Broomfield's rare privilege to try and judge. When he was brought from the jail to the court-house his guard looked more like an escort of honour. With his nimble feet he stepped into the court-room, and with one universal smile he at once shed a halo of the holy spirit of the blessed passive resister upon the whole assembly, from which even his prosecutors could not extricate themselves. But I doubt whether they really did not like to share in that glory. The accused was not only

supremely serene but looked even festively joyful to a degree. Was it his trial or his own bridal ceremony? But he was even more jealous of his happiness than a bridegroom in that he had not even a single 'best man' by his side. No Counsel in robes or without robes appeared for him. He was himself his own Counsel. And paradoxical as it may seem, also his own accuser. He needed no file of witnesses, no tomes of law-books, and no encumbering paraphernalia of authorities. Two or three type-writ sheets contained the whole of his defence, the greater part of it, however, being devoted rather to a justification and an aggravation of the offence than a defence in any shape or form.

Did he plead guilty to the charge? Yes, by all means. He was only eager that the great categorical question be put that he might answer it away, like a shot. For once in his life, Mr. Advocate-General realised that his task of prosecution could be a thankful task, and the convicting judge, that he could be complimented upon leniency vis-a-vis a penal sentence of six years' imprisonment.

Mahatma Gandhi thus succeeded in completely subduing all the latent or patent dramatic elements in the great State-trial by simply reversing the familiar points of view in the affair. And like a skilful railway pointsman, he shunted the train of the trial from the track of vulgar terror to that of refined sublimity. The hidden surprise upon, and the consequent humiliation of, the prosecutor and the judge might have turned the noble drama into a farce, if there were not elements of grandeur in it too pronounced to be turned into ridicule.

Great as were the efforts made by Mahatma Gandhi to keep the trial free from feeling, the judge could not help giving it an emotional touch when he mentioned the name of Tilak in passing the sentence and trying to justify its severity by a precedent. And then Mahatmaji too could not help striking the sympathetic chord and declaring that he only felt honoured by the parallel cited. Swiftly did the memories of another great State-trial of fourteen years ago rush into the mind of everyone present; and the judge proved an unconscious wizard so to convert the dead past

into the living present by one key-word. There must be surely some magic charm in a sentence of six years' imprisonment that it should be regarded by Government as an effective amulet for the salvation of India, and two heroes like these—Tilak and Gandhi—should accept it as such in terms and spirit. Yes, by common consent imprisonment of six years for men like these could certainly do much to cure India of its present maladies!

I wonder if Mr. Broomfield did not leave the court with a secret feeling of self-reproach. Mr. Advocate-General was happier for not being elevated to the Bench, for he could actually shake hands with the accused, and thus earn the needed atonement for even such small animus as might remain to his debit, after the remarkably fair and even gentle treatment he had given to the Mahatma and his co-accused. And the police officers in attendance for once felt completely floored. Their usual fussy business of looking after a convict this day was gone. They need not hurry him out, and they would not have done it even if they could. With the disappearance of the judge and the Advocate-General from the court-room, the assembly was turned into a social gathering, the police being simply ignored.

And then commenced the re-enactment of a scene with which I had been familiar for about a couple of years before. There was Mahatmaji sitting in the centre with a *melee* of men, women and children engrossed in talking to Mahatmaji and being talked to by him in return, with all the welcome, because enjoyable, interventions of wit, wisdom and repartee. I heard Mahatmaji affectionately chaffing a young dandy of five years on wearing a suit of foreign cloth and a fashionable neck-tie. He mildly reproached an old title-hunter advising him to get rid of his habit at least at that ripe age. By silent inspiration of courage he arrested the tears before they could moisten, and in his opinion tarnish, the eyes of some affectionate follower here; and to another there, more stern and practical, he could give a useful hint for further strenuous work allotted to him. The ladies felt caressed by his blessings, and the men felt they got a gift of strength by shaking his supple but saintly hands.

In half an hour the grand levee was over. One by one the gathering in the court-house was dissolved. And even when the police escorted Mahatmaji back in the ominous motor-van of the jail, we all felt, the trial yet vividly remaining behind, of a spirit of rare devotion and self-sacrifice which could not be suppressed by the proceedings of the State-trial for the moment, or even by the threatened absence of the hero, figuring in them, for six long weary years.

Four years before this, when I first read the prospectus of the Satyagraha Ashram founded by Mahatma Gandhi, the one word in it which attracted my attention most was the pledge of fearlessness prescribed for its inmates by this disciple of Gopal Krishna Gokhale. That, I said, must be the really more salient feature in the political design of this Ashram than the drastic code of puritanism that served as an adorning embroidery. And as I left the premises of the improvised court-house I said to myself: "Verily has this pledge been fulfilled." Mahatmaji had by his personal example that day cast a true type of fearlessness which neither long time nor short memories can ever efface.

Poona,
15-6-1946.

AS I KNEW HIM

P. Kodanda Rao

CRITIC OF THE MAHATMA

I WRITE from memory, and it plays awful tricks. For instance, it does not tell me when and where and how I first met the Mahatma personally. Of course, everybody knew of him for years. I believe he came to know of me before I had the privilege of meeting him personally. I had joined the Servants of India Society in 1921, when the Mahatma had launched his non-violent non-cooperation movement. It was the policy of the Society to oppose it. There was hardly a day when the Mahatma did not make

speeches or issue statements in furtherance of it. And there was hardly a week when it was not vigorously criticised in the *Servant of India*, the principal weekly English organ of the Society. I was comparatively young, and loved occasionally to barb my shafts. The note on the "Violence of Non-violence" gave particular offence to many an admirer of the Mahatma. But he himself, so I am told, read the stuff in forgiving sorrow and not in resentful anger. He was supremely understanding.

"SHOW-VILLAGES"

But once I seem to have done the incredible: ruffled the temper of the Mahatma! My Chief, the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, wrote to me from Delhi that it was the first time that he saw the Mahatma in anything like temper. It occurred during the Gandhi-Irwin parleys. Mr. Sastri was using his good offices. It was said against the Government at the time that in order to escape its oppression, the inhabitants of several villages in Gujarat had deserted them and migrated to the more hospitable Indian States like Baroda. I had toured the area. It was reported to the Mahatma that I had discounted the stories of evacuation of villages and had called the villages to which I was conducted as "show villages". He asked Mr. Sastri to call for an explanation from me. I responded, and he was satisfied.

HARIJAN MOVEMENT FROM PRISON

Towards the end of 1932 the Mahatma decided to conduct his Harijan campaign from the Yeravda prison. He sent for me to see him in the prison. He dictated a message and asked me to give it the widest publicity through the news agencies and otherwise. I saw him almost every day for some weeks as his publicity agent. Gradually a regular office, with an adequate staff of stenographers, was established in the prison itself. Even when my services were no longer necessary as his publicity agent, the Mahatma extended to me the privilege of calling on him in prison or outside, whenever I wished. I was a fairly constant caller, but I rarely took part in any serious discussions. In prison he very severely restricted the discussions to the Harijan question, and if anybody, however

exalted, ventured to stray from it ever so little, he pulled him up at once, politely but firmly.

TWO YOUNG LADIES

There was a steady stream of visitors to Poona, Indian and foreign, to see the Mahatma and either to discuss the Harijan question or just bask in his presence. And a good many of them stayed in the Servants of India Society's Home, either at his instance or otherwise. As Secretary of the Society and resident member, it fell to me to receive them and help them meet the Mahatma in the prison. They were an assorted lot.

Among them may be mentioned two foreign ladies. They may be called N and S for our present purposes. N was young and beautiful, and S was young and determined. S was the first to meet the Mahatma. She decided she would be his *chela*, left for her country to pack up and return to the Mahatma. Suddenly dropping high romance, N took to Harijan work in the market place in Bangalore and corresponded with the Mahatma in Yeravda Prison. She was to come to Poona, stay in the Servants of India Society and be taken to meet the Mahatma. But before she did so, I happened to go to Bangalore myself. Reliable and chivalrous friends who had known the world outside of India, conveyed allegations not flattering to N. When I returned to Poona I thought I would do a good turn and confidentially whispered a hint to Mahadev Desai that the Mahatma had rather be cautious in his estimate of N. A few days after I was summoned. Mahadev showed me a copy of Mahatma's letter to N. It said that a good friend had cautioned the Mahatma against N. Would she make a beeline to Poona and see the Mahatma for examination? I felt betrayed; I felt guilty of unchivalrous conduct towards a lady and a foreigner at that. If the Mahatma should find her innocent, I could not be too ashamed of myself. However, the mischief was done; the letter had been posted. The only silver lining was that my name was not disclosed as the informant.

But that consolation was short-lived. For soon after came another message to inform me that N had arrived in Poona and to ask me to meet her. I did so in the

Mahatma's presence in the prison. To my utter discomfiture and consternation, the Mahatma told her that I was the informant! Then he asked me to examine her and let him have a report. I protested against the assignment; I had no right to probe into her affairs; I should be guilty of unpardonable impertinence. He was unmoved. He was in search of truth; it was at his instance and for his sake that I should undertake the unpleasant task, and no blame attached to me. N pitied my plight and came to my rescue; she volunteered her explanations; she denied the allegations. All that she had done was that she acted in India as she would have acted in her own country where her conduct would not have offended the proprieties; she had failed to make allowances for the different social environment in India. That was all. I told the Mahatma that without further and elaborate investigations I could form no opinion. He agreed that it was very difficult to judge persons. But from such examination as he made, he came to the conclusion that she was the innocent victim of malicious propaganda. My humiliation was complete. I hated myself as never I did. I apologised to N and said to myself: Never again. The ways of the Mahatma were mysterious and mystifying.

That was not the end. A few weeks later I was summoned again, and the Mahatma told me that he was, on further cross-examination, convinced of the truth of the allegations, and thanked me for my first warning! Soon after he went on another fast, and this time because all his instruments in the Harijan work were not "pure".

In the meanwhile, S had returned. Both she and N were now staying in the Servants of India Society's Home in Poona, at the instance of the Mahatma. When the news of the fast arrived, both N and S got, naturally enough, frightfully excited. N accused herself as the cause of the Mahatma's fast, and begged him not to risk his precious life for her sake; she would go through any ordeal he prescribed for her; she asked to stay with him during his fiery ordeal. But the Mahatma ordained that she should leave Poona at once, and she did.

S was furious with the Mahatma for undertaking the fast for a person not worth saving. If he did not desist

from it at once, she would fast against him! And she asked me to arrange for her fast in the Servants of India Society's Home. I said that the Home was open to the Mahatma's guests, but not for fasting either for or against him. She left the Home and a few days after broke her fast, much to the satisfaction of the Mahatma.

STRANGE SUGGESTION

The Mahatma was again in the Yeravda Prison in Poona. He asked the Government for permission, as on the previous occasion, to carry on Harijan work from the prison. The Government refused; he was but a prisoner, he was told, however otherwise exalted. The Mahatma then went on an indefinite fast and began to sink rapidly. The jail authorities did not want him to die on their hands. A Government official suggested to me that the Mahatma should be shifted to the Servants of India Society's Home, where he would be more at home than in jail. Would I agree? I eagerly welcomed it. Who would not? And besides, the Mahatma had often described himself as an "un-official" member of the Society, which he had wished once to join as a regular member. I, however, enquired as to the status of the Mahatma when we took him over: would he be a free man or still be a prisoner? I was told that the transfer would be so timed that the question of his status would not be significant! I declined to receive the Mahatma if he was still a prisoner; he was welcome as a free man. The matter was dropped, and finally he was transferred to the Sassoon Hospital, still a prisoner.

GANDHI AND THOREAU

It was in South Africa that the Mahatma invented and initiated his satyagraha movement. The belief is general, particularly in America, that he owed his idea of Civil Resistance to the essay on *Civil Disobedience* by Henry D. Thoreau, the American philosopher and writer. This was often mentioned to me during my stay in America, and at the Yale University. I thought it best to seek the truth from the Mahatma himself. In his letter to me dated Wardha, 10th September, 1935, he said:

"The statement in that I had derived my idea of Civil Disobedience from the writings of Thoreau is wrong. The

resistance to authority in South Africa was well advanced before I got the essay of Thoreau on Civil Disobedience. But the movement was then known as Passive Resistance. As it was incomplete I had coined the word Satyagraha for the Gujarati readers. When I saw the title of Thoreau's great essay, I began to use his phrase to explain our struggle to the English readers. But I found that even Civil Disobedience failed to convey the full meaning of the struggle. I, therefore, adopted the phrase Civil Resistance. Non-violence was always an integral part of our struggle."

THE CAPE TOWN AGREEMENT

Mr. Srinivasa Sastri was a member of the Indian Delegation to the Round Table Conference between the Governments of India and South Africa in 1926-27, which resulted in the Cape Town Agreement. The Agreement was a compromise. Before he left South Africa in 1914, Mahatma Gandhi had agreed to the principle of voluntary repatriation of Indians. In the Cape Town Agreement the Government of India became a party to it, but in a form less offensive to Indian sentiment. On the other hand, the South African Government agreed, wholly contrary to its avowed policy, to uplift Indians settled permanently in South Africa and see that they did not lag behind any other community. This might be interpreted to mean equality with the White community. Taking the two parts together, the Cape Town Agreement was a diplomatic triumph for India.

But would public opinion in India share that view? The non-cooperation movement was at its height, and no 'patriotic' Indian might openly approve of anything which the 'Satanic' Government of India did. The Cape Town Agreement was, in its very nature, an Agreement between the Governments of India and South Africa, and neither Government was *persona grata* with public opinion in India. The danger was real that, without reference to merits, the Agreement would be denounced out of hand. It stood a chance of being accepted by India if it had the approval of the Mahatma, not only because of his influence with Indian public opinion but also because he was an expert on the question of Indians in South Africa.

Mr. Sastri pressed that the Mahatma should be consulted, and, if possible, his blessing secured, *before* the Agreement was published. The proposal was opposed in certain quarters. It was unconstitutional and undignified for the Government of India to seek the prior consent of a private citizen and an arch-rebel at that. But Mr. Sastri pleaded that on the South African Indian question there was no difference between the Government and the Mahatma; it was common ground, and the Mahatma was no ordinary private citizen or rebel. The Viceroy, Lord Irwin, rose above official proprieties and dignities, and commissioned Mr. Sastri himself to sound the Mahatma. The Mahatma was then on whirlwind tour in the Central Provinces, and no engagement could be made in advance from Delhi. Mr. Sastri and I arrived in Nagpur. A message from the Mahatma gave us details of his itinerary. Ultimately, they met at a wayside railway station and were closeted together in a vacant first-class compartment in a local train which stopped at every station. While the train was in motion between stations Mr. Sastri related to the Mahatma the story of the Agreement. At every station there were huge crowds to have a *darshan* of the Mahatma, and Mr. Sastri's narration was interrupted. It was continued while the Mahatma had his evening meal at Wardha, while a monster meeting was restive for the Mahatma's appearance. Before they parted, Gandhiji assured Mr. Sastri that the Agreement was much better than what he could have hoped for, and that he would publicly support it and would write out his opinion and hand it over to the news agencies well in advance of the publication of the Agreement. When the time came, both the documents were published simultaneously, and the public eye caught the Mahatma's approval first. His lead was accepted, and the Agreement was saved. To be prepared for a contingency, the Government of India nominated Mr. Sastri to the Legislative Assembly to defend the Agreement. But it was unnecessary.

Nagpur,
18-3-1948.

PRATHAM DARSHAN

J. B. Kripalani

IT was in the February of 1915. Gandhiji had come to Shantiniketan. The inmates of the 'Phoenix', as his ashram in South Africa was called, had preceded him there. He himself had gone from South Africa to England. He was now in India, and with his near and dear ones at Shantiniketan. How the Phoenix party came to be in Shantiniketan has been related by Gandhiji himself in his autobiography. I had some kind of connection with the Poet's institution. I had put my nephew, Shri Girdhari Kripalani, for his education there. I was a professor in the Arts College at Muzzafarpur (Bihar). Bihar in those days, though a separate province, was in the matter of higher education under the jurisdiction of the Calcutta University.

At this time Kaka Kalelkar, then known as Brahmachari Dattatreya, was at Shantiniketan. He had attached himself to the institution as a teacher. He was an old friend. We were fellow-students in Fergusson College, Poona, in the year 1907. Here our lifelong connection began. He had informed me that Mr. Gandhi, the South African Indian leader, was shortly expected at Shantiniketan. Whenever I had a short holiday, I went to the Poet's ashram to see Girdhari and to know how he was progressing in his studies. The Poet's presence was, of course, a great attraction. I was also interested in the new experiment in education that he was making. In spite of my profession I was interested in politics. This interest went back to the Bengal partition days. I was an undergraduate then. After my graduation I had served in several educational institutions. I had to leave them either myself or through the action of the authorities. In either case it was for political reasons.

In 1914 political life in India was at a low ebb. The 1907 split at Surat had left the Congress impoverished by the withdrawal from it of its most active youthful and revolutionary elements. The Congress thereafter failed to inspire, enthuse or educate the people. It was a body without a soul. The Government had effectively suppress-

ed the violent revolutionary. Tilak had returned from Mandalay only a few months before, after serving his long term of imprisonment there. Bipin Chandra Pal was no more the inspiration that he used to be. Lala Lajpat Rai was safe in America. Shri Aurobindo Ghose had long before retired from politics and sought quiet refuge at Pondichery. The country was without effective leadership. At such a time any hope from any quarter was welcome. Therefore, as soon as I knew that Gandhiji would be at Shantiniketan, I decided to meet him. I wrote to Kaka Kalelkar that I was coming, that Gandhiji should be informed, and that some of his time should be secured for me.

I reached Shantiniketan late in the evening. Gandhiji, who finishes his last meals before nightfall, was taking his food. He was sitting on a small raised seat, his unshod feet dangling on the ground. For his dress, he wore a thick shirt and a plain dhoti. The shirt was unbuttoned at the neck. I was introduced. I saluted him in the old traditional Indian style with folded hands. He returned the courtesy with a broad welcoming smile. He invited me to sit by him and straightway entered into talk. The talk on both sides was personal. There was no mention of politics at this first meeting. But from his occasional gaze at me, I thought he was trying to know me and measure me. I too on my side was doing the same. Today it may appear presumptuous for a young man to talk in terms of taking the measure of Gandhiji. But it must be remembered that in those days Gandhiji was not the Mahatma that he is today. In Indian public life he was an unknown quantity. True, he had fought a good fight in South Africa to vindicate the self-respect of our countrymen there. He had also evolved a novel technique of political fight. But whether he and his new ways could be tried in India with some hope of success was yet to be seen. He was only Mr. Gandhi then, and rather an eccentric specimen of an England-returned-educated-Indian. Everything about him appeared queer and even quixotic. I marked the food that he was taking. It consisted entirely of fresh fruit and nuts. But the quantities that he was consuming

appeared to me rather generous. As a Sindhi I knew that fresh fruit could be taken in some quantities without much harm. But I had never seen a middle class educated Indian making a heavy meal of nuts, especially of such oily nuts as *badams* and *pistas*. However, it appeared that he was eating with appetite and apparent satisfaction, for he was masticating his food well and taking a considerable time over his meal. He insisted upon my being his guest instead of the Poet's as, he said, I had on that occasion come especially to see him. I readily consented. Having lived in several provinces I had completely shed all provincial prejudices about food. The plain, unspiced and unseasoned food of Gandhiji's establishment at Shantiniketan did not, therefore, frighten me. It must be remembered that the Phoenix party at Bolpur lived their own life apart from the life of Shantiniketan. They had been assigned separate quarters. They cooked their own meals and carried out their own daily routine, as they had done in South Africa.

This was my first interview with Gandhiji. After that I met him every day, for about a week, till he left for Calcutta. But what a week! If it had been merely a week of political talks, it might not have meant much in those days. But in this week I was privileged to see his reforming zeal at work. He seemed to have taken the land of the lotus-eaters, as Shantiniketan has often been called, by storm. In spite of the personality of the Poet, the enthusiasm of the teachers and the taught, and the atmosphere of joyous freedom, Gandhiji found many essential things neglected at Shantiniketan. He was already on intimate terms with most of the teachers. He had made himself quite at home with the young pupils; and in those days the pupils at Shantiniketan were very young indeed. The institution imparted education only up to the high school standards. The college classes were introduced long after, and so also was the Visvabharati section. Even as a high school, Shantiniketan was not affiliated to the Calcutta University as now. Its pupils appeared for their matriculation examination through some of the affiliated institutions.

Gandhiji's attention was soon drawn to the Ashram

mess, its management, the quality of food served, and the hygienic condition of the mess and the kitchen. The Brahman cooks would brook no interference in the management of the kitchen. They always threatened to leave. Here was an opportunity for Gandhiji as a reformer and a food faddist. He was not the one to let such an opportunity slip by. He made his proposals of self-help in the management of the kitchen and the mess to the teachers. Some of them wisely shook their heads in doubt. But the majority were prepared to try the experiment. When the proposals were placed before the boys they supported them with juvenile enthusiasm. The Poet was not consulted till the plans were ready. When approached he gave his blessings and even said that, that way lay Swaraj. However, I had my doubt if he was quite hopeful about the success of the experiment. In his daily rounds he passed by the mess, and saw teachers and pupils busy at work, cleansing and cooking. The sight always provoked a smile indicating scepticism about the lasting quality of this quick-born enthusiasm. The Poet knew his people perhaps better than Gandhiji.

The experiment was tried for a time and abandoned. It was found unpractical. The parents too objected. They had sent their children, as they from their own viewpoint rightly said, for literary education, in a free and artistic atmosphere, but not to learn co-operative physical work and cooking and scrubbing utensils and floors, at that. Orthodoxy too was up in arms against the experiment. Food served in a common mess could only be cooked by the members of the highest caste, the Brahmans. Otherwise it would not be acceptable to all the castes. Orthodox parents had already made a great concession to heterodoxy in allowing their children to dine in the ashram mess sitting side by side, all castes together. But it was too much to expect them to consent to their children taking food prepared by non-Brahmans. So ended the experiment of self-help in Shantiniketan. But the Poet's institution would not be itself if it did not give a poetic turn even to this failure. It has been symbolized. Every year Shantiniketan celebrates the Gandhi Day when the services of the cooks and servants are dispensed with and all physical

work done by the inmates of the ashram, teachers and pupils.

It would not be out of place here to give my first impressions of Gandhiji. They are even today vivid in my memory. What struck me most was the intensity of his character. He appeared to be a man who could, if need be, stand alone, provided he was convinced that the course of action he was following was the right one. He would not be deterred by the favours of friends or the frowns of opponents. Gandhiji was austere and puritanic. But he was not censorious. He denied himself many things. But he did not interfere with the legitimate enjoyment of others to convince himself of his moral superiority. His non-violence was not negative. This was clear from his love for the poor and the downtrodden. This love was neither merely intellectual nor sentimental or romantic. It was deep and abiding, and it manifested itself in appropriate conduct and action. One could see that Gandhiji was not merely patronising the poor but was trying to live like them and feel one with them.

As for his political views, they appeared to me to be all wrong. He was under the spell of the Moderates as the Indian Liberals were called by their opponents in those days. He had been greatly impressed by the personality of Gokhale who had become his dear friend. Gokhale had helped him in his work in South Africa. Gandhiji called him his political *guru*. This was natural. In spite of Gandhiji's new technique of political action against injustice, his attitude in those days towards the British Government in India was essentially the same as that of the Moderates. He did not go so far as to say that British rule in India was a Divine Dispensation, but he was convinced that the sum total of British activities in India was for the benefit of India. This view appeared to me to be justified neither by history nor by contemporary facts. But in spite of my youth I was not bothered about Gandhiji's misreading of facts, historical and contemporary. What I was concerned about was the man's character. I clearly perceived that he was a man who meant business, and when once convinced that a particular course of action was correct he would stick to it and follow it,

whatever the cost. He would also see to it that his own personal conduct was in keeping with what he kept before others. Therefore, in spite of his political views and estimates, I had no hesitation in telling him, before I finally took leave of him on this occasion, that if he undertook some piece of good work in India and if he thought my services could be of some use, he could count on me. I also told him that I was a free man, and had no commitments financial or otherwise.

Six months later he sent me the prospectus of his ashram with an accompanying letter asking for my opinion and suggestions. Evidently he had not forgotten me. Of course during the interval I had met him once again in Bombay, but the meeting was accidental and casual.

The ashram prospectus made me revise my estimate of Gandhiji. I thought that like the religious reformers of old he was more concerned with saving the souls of a few exceptional individuals than with the life of average men and women lived here below. His kingdom, like that of Christ, was not of this world but of the other. Certain vows as defined in the prospectus I was incapable of understanding then. If a married couple were to live as brother and sister, where was the need for them to enter into this troublesome bondage, or if once entered where was the point in keeping it? If a button that could be dispensed with but was not, constituted theft, then who could hope to be saved? I read the prospectus carefully but could see no light. I threw it in irritation on my table. I thought that, if a person was so hopelessly unrealistic and wrong, it was no use making any suggestions to him. He might as well establish his ashram in the Himalayas rather than in Ahmedabad. Thus I dismissed Gandhiji from my thoughts. But subsequent events proved that he was not the one to be so easily dismissed. A short while after even when I was in Bihar he sought me out, and has ever since made a bondslave of me. But of this on some other occasion.

Allahabad,
5-6-1946.

THE GREAT EXPERIMENTER

Bharatan Kumarappa

THE first time I had anything to do with Gandhiji was in 1929 when I was in London as a student, and my brother, J. C. Kumarappa, was at the Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad, working within reach of Gandhiji who lived then at Sabarmati, a mile or two away. My brother had been converted to khadi, but I could see no sense in hand-spinning. I believed that to make our country prosperous we should adopt efficient methods of production such as Britain, America, Germany, Japan and Russia had done, and certainly not the outmoded spinning wheel. I therefore wrote angry letters to my brother saying that Gandhiji was doing no end of harm to India by reviving hand-spinning, which would only keep the country poor. My brother showed my letters to Gandhiji. Gandhiji's message to me was characteristic. He said that he would be glad to see me on my return, that as soon as I came back I should start work along my own lines to make India prosperous, and that if I succeeded, he would be my first disciple. This, I am sure, he did not say in defiance, but in all sincerity as an experimenter with Truth; for through my long contact with him since, I know that Gandhiji's is the experimental mind which says: "This method of mine whether theoretically correct or not works, and I will stick to it till I can find one which works better." He is essentially a man of action, who is not misled by theorising. He wants to be shown results before he will accept any nice-sounding idea. Besides, it is a way of his with people who come to him with beautiful plans, to get them to put their schemes into operation themselves; for it is after all they who understand their scheme best, and may be expected to have sufficient enthusiasm for it to overcome initial obstacles. Moreover, only by working out a scheme can one get to know all its implications in full. It may be thought, however, that since almost every mail brings Gandhiji long letters from people who tell him what they think he should do or not do for this or that purpose, he has, probably out of sheer surfeit of such advice, adopted the easy course of saying: "I go my way. If you think

yours is so wonderful, you go yours. Why bother me?" But to think this of him is to do him injustice, for I know that he studies schemes submitted to him very carefully if he thinks there is something in them. Further, not satisfied with his own judgment, he sends the schemes to such among his workers or friends as he considers experts in the field, and obtains their opinion before he takes a decision on it. No short cuts for a man of his standing. If he avoided difficulties, he could not have become what he is today.

To my cost, I saw a great deal of the experimental mind of Gandhiji when I stayed with him at Maganvadi, Wardha. I was new to him then. So he made me sit by him during meals. He was experimenting with various articles as diet. One was fresh neem leaves made into a paste. It was as bitter as quinine. Daily he swallowed large quantities of it himself and served me with some. I had to put on a nice face over it, and eat without flinching all that was placed in my plate. Then there was soya beans. Everyone sang its praise at that time in India. Gandhiji got some grown in Manganvadi, and we were all served with it at every meal. It was cooked, mashed and eaten without further ado. My trouble was that besides eating my share of it, I had to eat what Gandhiji thought was too much for him and graciously passed on to me. Then we used to have 'salad', i.e. any non-poisonous fresh green leaves he found growing about the place. These you dipped in salt and ate. We grew plenty of oranges in Maganvadi. He got a brain wave that he would make wealth out of waste, and produce *murabba* (marmalade) out of their skins which are usually thrown away. So we were feasted with orange-skin marmalade! In the South, tamarind is much in vogue for seasoning food and making *rasam* (pepper water). Gandhiji heard of the high nutritive and medicinal value of tamarind, and as nobody around him knew how to use it, he made a sherbet (sweet drink) out of it with *gur*. This was a success, and we enjoyed it. But when it came next time without *gur* and with only salt, we made wry faces. It was called *rasam*, and we who were from the South justly felt insulted that so famed a preparation of ours as *rasam* was caricatured thus. It was

the colour of mud and tasted much like what it looked! The next time some groundnut was put into it to make it less forbidding. Another experiment was with oil-cake. We were extracting oil in Maganvadi with the bullock-driven oil-press. Oil cake was said to have valuable nutritive properties. So Gandhiji thought, why not see if 'tasty' dishes could be made out of it for human consumption? We were, therefore, served oil-cake 'chutney' made with *dahi* (curd). Garlic is reputed to have antiseptic qualities when eaten raw. Gandhiji tried large quantities himself, and gave it to whoever would eat it. The result was soon everybody round him stank of garlic. Lately it was reported in the papers that ordinary grass had plenty of vitamins and made a perfect food for human beings. Fortunately, however, the discovery was not made when Gandhiji was still with us in Maganvadi, for then he might have decided to wind up the kitchen and ask us to graze on the lawn! All of us used to be weighed regularly every two weeks, and our weights reported to him. I expect his interest was to see how we fared on his experimental diet.

He depended on diet as his chief remedy for disease. Disease gave him a vast field for experiment. He delighted treating patients. He would listen very carefully to all their complaints, enquire in detail about their diet, and prescribe to the last ounce what they should eat or drink, and when. Reports had to come to him regarding each patient before the next food was prescribed, and often he saw himself that every item of the food was in order and in the right proportion before he allowed the tray to be taken in. His interest in his patients was so great that he would visit them morning and evening, and would hate to be separated from them even by important political work with the Viceroy. He would rush back to their bedside as though they were infants to be nursed by no one but him.

An experimental mind is always open and ready to make a change when necessary. Whether Gandhiji agreed with you or not, he always listened intently and reflectively when you criticised him or made a suggestion to him to change his procedure. This did not mean of course that he did whatever people told him. When he was convinced of the rightness of his course, he was as

firm as a rock. But otherwise he gave in. I may record a trivial incident to show how open he is to suggestion. He generally leans on a girl as he walks, and with his other hand he holds his stick. There were two or three ashram girls who had got into the habit of escorting him by turns wherever he went. I noticed that the same girls did this service for him even on his tours. I thought this was unfair to local girls who were seeing him possibly for the first time in their lives and would regard it as a never-to-be-forgotten privilege to escort Gandhiji. I suggested this to him, and immediately he dismissed the ashram girl by his side for another. And ever since, I have noticed that he gives preference to girls of the locality for escort. He is never too proud to take a suggestion, from howsoever humble a quarter, provided he approves of it.

There are occasions when Gandhiji yields even when he is unconvinced. I remember the case of a student whom he sent to us in Maganvadi for a short period of training in paper-making. I demanded the usual fee laid down by the All India Village Industries Association. Gandhiji did not think the fee should be charged in this case. But I explained why the fee was being charged; and though he seemed to think that it was unnecessary and too high, he gave in finally and sent the student with the fee demanded. His principle in such cases was evidently not to go against the decision of a worker entrusted with the management of an institution. He was the unofficial President of our Association, its founder and adviser, and he could have insisted on my carrying out his wishes. But he was too constitutional for that. He believed that, if a man was in charge, he should have full responsibility and should not be interfered with in day-to-day administration unless it was absolutely necessary. By this method it would seem that Gandhiji allowed himself to be defeated. But no, he really triumphed. By submitting to my decision he made me even more conscious of my responsibility in looking after the interests of the Association without fear or favour. He lost a few rupees in the way of fees, but he won the esteem and loyalty of a worker, which was much more important. It vindicated to me the truth of his con-

tention that non-violence of the strong knows no defeat. It is always victorious.

Another supreme case of Gandhiji's non-violence in relation to me was when he wanted me for a particular type of work. I said that I would consider the proposition. Soon, however, I decided against it and told him so. He did not like my decision. But he did not try to persuade me to change it. He said that he would like me to help, but if I felt that I would be happier doing something else, he would certainly not stand in my way. I should feel perfectly free to follow my own inclinations and in just the manner I pleased. These were practically his words. He gave me free reins, but this only bound me closer to him. Again the triumph of non-violence which ruled by refusing to rule.

If there was anything to be done, there was for Gandhiji no waiting for an opportune time. It had to be done immediately. He advised village workers to take to scavenging in order to keep the village clean. They said that, if they did scavenging, they lost all status and influence with the people of the village, so that they could not do any other work there. But Gandhiji would not listen. He said, First things first. Where there was dirt, it had to be removed and at once. There was no such thing as waiting for a later time to remove dirt. Following his own advice, he carried a bucket and shovel when he went for a walk from Maganvadi every morning, or those accompanying him carried them for him, and with his own hand he would shovel into the bucket any dirt or human excreta lying on the roadside, and bring it home to be converted into manure.

Believing as he does, like our seers of old, in simplifying life, Gandhiji reduces his wants to a minimum. I walked in once into his room when he was getting ready for a shave. He did not have any soap or brush but only a crude country razor. No foreign razors for him. I asked him how he could shave without soap. He said that soap was quite unnecessary, water served the purpose when rubbed into the face. I thought this was carrying things a little too far, and that you could not really have a proper

shave without soap. But later when I was in jail and ran out of shaving soap, and there was difficulty in getting it from outside, I remembered this incident, and tried shaving without soap or brush. Friends told me that it could not be done, that it made the face burn, that it dulled the razor's edge, and so on. But I found that none of these things was true, and from that day to this I continue to shave without soap or brush. In fact I prefer water to soap, for it is not messy like lather, and shaving is therefore less disagreeable. Modern civilization is based on artificially increasing man's needs in order to make for trade and business. We ought, therefore, to check up occasionally to see if all we are told we need is really so. We shall probably find that much of it is useless encumbrance and unnecessary lumber.

Travelling with Gandhiji is a remarkable experience. I accompanied him on his tour in Bengal, Assam and Madras in the cold weather of 1945-'46. Everywhere the enthusiasm of the people for him was unbounded. In some cases it was beyond control, and people stopped the train and demanded his *darshan* (a view of him) even at all hours of the night before they would let the train pass. The night that we were travelling from Wardha to Calcutta, he was so tired with the noise and the shouting throughout the day that he sat in his seat exhausted with his fingers in his ears. It was a pathetic sight. He went to bed at 9-30 p.m. with cotton wool stuffed in his ears to prevent himself from hearing. Our worst experience was as we travelled through Bengal to Assam. The mobs stopped the train repeatedly by pulling the alarm chain. They flashed torches on Gandhiji's face to have a look at him, and banged the windows of his compartment to make him get up and give them *darshan*. We were entirely at their mercy. Because of being held up by crowds thus, the Mail took thirteen and a half hours to cover a distance usually made in six and a half hours. After this bad experience, the Government of Bengal would not allow him to travel by ordinary trains. Gandhiji protested in vain, saying that as a public worker he did not want any special facilities. He believed that public money should

not be used for providing comforts to people who were journeying at public cost. The Government, however, was adamant; if ultimately he yielded and permitted a Special to be provided for him, it was because he was told that the Railway could not afford to have ordinary trains detained for several hours on the way, and that such delay caused other passengers and the Railway great inconvenience. So thereafter we had to travel by special trains.

During the journey, whenever the train stopped at stations, he collected money for the Harijan Fund. People often underwent torture to get through the crowd to place money in his hand. They pushed their way through, and in the process got crushed, or tore their clothes, or lost their chappals. Still they persisted till they could reach his outstretched hand. It often happened that just as someone was at the point of placing money in his hand, and Gandhiji was bending his utmost to take the gift, holding on to the window sill to prevent himself from falling out, the crowd would push and the gift receded. He would laugh like a child heartily enjoying the fun, and taking up the challenge he would stretch his hand out all the more till he secured the money with evident glee. At one station in Andhra, I noticed a woman holding in her hand a pair of gold bangles and trying hard to get to him. She struggled for well over five minutes although she was within a few feet of where he stood. At times she was pushed towards him, at times away from him. She could make little progress and seemed in great distress. In the meantime Gandhiji went off to the other side of the compartment to give *darshan* to the throngs who demanded his presence there. The woman, however, continued to struggle to get to within reach of his window, thinking that he might still come back to it. On seeing this, I spoke to him about her and brought him back. But just as she was pushing through desperately, the train whistled and started off. She made one last frantic effort, but was mercilessly pushed back by the police. And there she stood on the platform, disconsolate and weeping, with the gold bangles still in her hand. For most of us, to give is no pleasure; to this woman as to thousands of poor people,

not to give to Gandhiji what was often their sole possession was untold deprivation.

Many, young and old, rich and poor, stood in his presence as before a god in reverence, and put their hands together as in worship. In Bengal we sailed in a boat through canals; people lined the banks all the way or ran along them, or sometimes stood knee-deep or even waist-deep in water, in spite of the cold, to catch a glimpse of Gandhiji and to give him reverential greeting. We were told that many of them came from distant villages, sometimes walking two or three days, carrying their babies, sleeping under trees on the way and undergoing great hardship, all for the *darshan* of Gandhiji which they regarded as somehow propitious and purifying. It is usual today to consider religion and religious reverence, which are said to be a special characteristic of our country, as something to be ashamed of and to be outgrown. When I saw people's faces lit up with religious devotion at the sight of one who stood for renunciation of material goods, service and devotion to spiritual ends, I thought that, if this was peculiar to us, it was a thing to be proud of; for culture does not lie in love of wealth, power and display which after all attract men only superficially and temporarily, but in appreciation of spiritual values which alone finally command the respect of all. The devotion of the crowds all along to this "naked fakir" seemed to be a sign of our hoary culture which had taught our people, even the humblest, to turn away from the cheap showy things of life and to regard with adoration things unseen but lasting and eternal.

Enthusiasm and devotion Gandhiji met with in plenty in all the places he visited. In Madura, it was thought that no less than 300,000 people assembled for the open air prayer he conducted. But what he felt was greatly needed by us as a people was discipline and organised action. Everywhere he spoke of it and introduced, as a first step towards it, keeping time during mass singing by clapping the hand in unison. It was a remarkable sight to see thousands acting thus as one organised whole. It was akin to military drill. The difference was that it was directed by Gandhiji to the non-violent purpose of chanting

the name of God. When one witnessed it, one felt that here was the next crucial step towards which Gandhiji unknown to himself was pointing, viz. to organise and weld the nation into a united whole. This is the task to which he is now devoting himself, especially in the way of bringing about understanding and unity between Hindus and Muslims. Gandhiji's prophetic soul is once more giving the lead. It is up to the nation to follow if it is to enjoy the freedom, now within its reach. Nay more. This oneness he is today striving for is not only for us in India but also for Asia and for the whole war-worn world. His aim is that by establishing unity and concord between the various communities within her borders, India should win the rest of the world to ways of love and peace. He is, therefore, not prompted by any narrow patriotism. Nationalism in his case has for its basis true internationalism or genuine desire to help establish peace on earth and goodwill among men.

Bombay,
8-4-1947.

LESSONS FROM HIS LIFE

J. C. Kumarappa

1. OUR MEETING

IN the year 1929 I returned from the United States where I had made a study of public finance, and wrote out the story of the British exploiting India through their taxation policy in the form of an essay. It was suggested that I should publish this. I was negotiating with some of the publishers in India in this regard when I was told that the subject was one in which Gandhiji would be intensely interested, and I was urged to submit the manuscript to him first. At that time Gandhi was merely a name to me. It was hardly associated with any definite ideas. The

person who was responsible for this suggestion was very persistent about my getting into touch with Gandhiji. Gandhiji was passing through Bombay towards the end of April that year after his South Indian tour. I was then practising as an Auditor in Bombay. I was directed to go and see Gandhiji at Mani Bhuvan, Laburnum Road, Gamdevi, which was his usual Bombay residence at that time. I went in European clothes up the staircase, and the door was answered by someone whom I took to be a servant clad in dhoti and shirts. I asked him if I could see Gandhiji, and I was told that Gandhiji was busy in a Working Committee meeting, and that he would not be able to see me just then. I had taken my manuscript with me, and marking that the person who was talking to me was able to speak good English, and thinking he might be worthy of taking a message, I left the manuscript with him and asked him to give it to Gandhiji. (This person later turned out to be Gandhiji's Secretary Pyarelal.) Pyarelal telephoned to my office address later to say that Gandhiji would want to see me in Ahmedabad after he had had a look at the essay, and suggested that I see him at Sabarmati on the 9th of May, 1929 at 2-30 p.m. I reached Sabarmati accordingly that morning, and went to the Ashram where I was horrified at the emptiness of the so-called guest room. It was devoid of all furniture excepting a charpai, though glorified by the designation of a guest room. Squatting toilet arrangements further made me anxious to get away from the place at the earliest moment. With these personal difficulties, my appointment being in the afternoon, I anxiously waited to get it over. The house where Gandhiji stayed was pointed out to me, and I was told that was the place where I should report myself at the appointed time. With a walking stick in one hand and the manuscript in the other I walked down the bank of the Sabarmati at about 2 p.m., and after enjoying the beauty of the bed of the river, walked up the bank again towards Gandhiji's house.

On the way up, I saw an old man seated under a tree on a neatly cleaned cow-dunged floor, spinning. Having never seen a spinning wheel before, I leaned on my walking

stick and standing akimbo was watching, as there were still ten minutes for the appointment. This old man after about five minutes opened his toothless lips, and with a smile on his face enquired if I was Kumarappa. It suddenly dawned on me that my questioner might be no other than Mahatma Gandhi. So I, in my turn, asked him if he was Gandhiji; and when he nodded I promptly sat down on the cow-dunged floor regardless of the well-kept crease of my silk trousers! Seeing me sitting without stretched legs, more or less in a reclining position, someone from the house came rushing down with a chair for me, and Gandhiji asked me to get up and sit in the chair more comfortably. I replied that since he was seated on the floor I did not propose to take the chair.

Gandhiji told me that he was interested in the essay I had written, and that he proposed to publish that in a series in his journal *Young India*. Then he enquired if I would undertake a rural survey for him in Gujarat, as he found that the approach that I had to economics was almost exactly the same as his, and that I was about the first student of economics he had come across with that same viewpoint. I raised the difficulty of language, but he quickly got over that by saying that he would place the professors of economics of the Gujarat Vidyapith with all their students at my disposal to help me with the survey, and suggested that I go and see the Vice-Chancellor of the Gujarat Vidyapith, Kaka Kalelkar, who, Gandhiji informed me, was the very person who came running down the steps with a chair for me!

In the afternoon I went to the Gujarat Vidyapith to see Kaka Kalelkar. Seeing that I was a young man dressed in the most fashionable Western style, Kakasaheb did not feel that I would fit into the sort of work that Gandhiji wanted me to do, and he made my ignorance of Gujarati to be a great handicap and discouraged me. I got into a huff and, even without taking leave of Gandhiji, returned to Bombay, and wrote to him that I should be glad to help him with any work that he wanted done, and reported that Kakasaheb did not feel that I could be of any use. By return post I got back a letter from Kakasaheb to say

that he would be most happy if I would go back and do the work that Gandhiji wanted. (Years later Gandhiji, in the course of a conversation on the study of characters, referred to this incident and said: "You remember Kaka-saheb was not able to size you up when he first met you. On the other hand, the moment I saw you I felt here is a young man I must grab." And he succeeded in doing so, as the later events proved.) While I was doing the survey later, Gandhiji started off on the Dandi march as the first stage of the salt satyagraha, and after his arrest the trustees of the Navajivan Trust invited me to conduct the paper *Young India* in the absence of Gandhiji and Mahadev Desai. My writings in *Young India* ultimately landed me in jail, after which it became impossible for me to go back to resume my practice as an auditor in Bombay, as a great many of my clients were European and Parsi firms who would not tolerate a man with Gandhian sympathies. It was after this that I threw in my lot with Gandhiji.

2. AN UNANSWERABLE APPEAL

When Gandhiji was on the Dandi March my articles on 'Public Finance and our Poverty' were published in a series. Gandhiji wished them to be collected together in the form of a pamphlet, and I desired that it should bear a foreword from Gandhiji. To discuss this matter he invited me to meet him at Karadi where he was camping then. In my own 'efficient' way I had prepared a foreword for him, and took it all typewritten and ready for him to sign! Gandhiji looked at it and smiled and put it aside saying: "My foreword will be my foreword and will not be written by Kumarappa."

He then said he had called me there not to discuss the question of the foreword but to ask if I would write regularly for his paper *Young India* when he was arrested. He informed me that the arrangement was that when he was arrested Mahadev Desai was to take over charge and he, therefore, wished me to help Mahadevbhai. I replied that I knew nothing about Gandhian philosophy nor what had gone before in *Young India*, neither did I know how to occupy a journalistic chair! I told him that I understood auditing dusty ledgers much better, and if there was

any work in that line I would gladly undertake, and asked him to spare me from doing any writing work. Then Gandhiji replied: "As regards your qualifications to write, I, as the Editor of the paper, have to sit in judgment and not you, and, therefore, I invite you to write to this paper. We have the tradition of publishing the name of the writer under each article. If you write any trash, the public will say Mahatma Gandhi's paper publishes trash. But if you write anything that is appreciated, they will give all credit to this Kumarappa who is writing in Gandhiji's paper." This presentation of the appeal was irresistible. It was then I promised Gandhiji that I would send some articles as soon as I heard that he had been arrested. (It may here be stated that as the events came about, Mahadevbhai was arrested before Gandhiji, and later when Gandhiji was arrested I was required not only to contribute articles to *Young India* but to take up its editorial charge.) This incident indicates the masterly way in which Gandhiji makes his appeal irresistible.

3. POT-WASHING

Gandhiji's sense of humour often saves the temper of people around him. When he finds danger coming ahead he immediately brings the ludicrous into play, and thus glances off at a tangent and avoids friction.

When the All India Village Industries Association was formed Gandhiji came to live with us at Maganvadi so as to be on the spot to guide the policy of the Association. One of our rules at that time was that everyone should take part in all our daily activities. This included washing of heavy kitchen utensils coated with soot and dirt. One day it fell to Gandhiji's lot to clean the kitchen pots. I was his partner. So we both sat down together, near the well, with cocoanut fibre in our hands, and ashes and mud by our side, and we were scrubbing the black stuff off.

Suddenly, Kasturba Gandhi appeared on the scene. She could not tolerate the sight of the great Mahatma with his hands up to the elbow in dirt. She watched him for a few minutes and burst out in Gujarati, telling Gandhiji that this was no work for a person like him, and that he ought to be engaged in better work. In a rage she asked

him to get up and go away, leaving the work to be done by others; and, swiftly suiting her action to her words, snatched off the *dekchi* from his hands, leaving Gandhiji bewildered at the quickness of her action. With the cocoanut fibre in one hand and the other hand all full of dirt, he looked at me with open mouth and laughed, saying: "Kumarappa, you are a happy man. You have no wife to rule you this way. However, I suppose I have to obey my wife to keep domestic peace. So you will excuse me if I go away leaving her to partner your washing of the kitchen pots!"

4. HUMILITY AND DISCIPLINE

The greatness of a man does not consist in the power he wields to control the life of others, though it may result in such powers being granted to him as a result of his greatness. The real greatness comes in the personal humility of the individual and self-discipline imposed on himself. Consequently, this alone brings us the so-called 'power' over our fellow-men. Power so obtained is a responsibility rather than a privilege. It should make us cautious in using that power. Gandhiji's life is full of incidents which show the great humility and the iron discipline he imposes on himself.

During the relief work in Bihar, after the earthquake of 1934, I was functioning as the financial adviser of the Bihar Central Relief Committee. Later Gandhiji arrived in Patna for a tour in Bihar. In order to check a tendency to be extravagant and spend much on the upkeep of volunteers and their expenses, I had made a rule that the daily allowance for food of volunteers should not exceed three annas. I myself was eating in the volunteers' camp on this basis. It became a little embarrassing when Gandhiji with his entourage arrived. Gandhiji's milk, fruit and the various requirements of his entourage, which called for provision of dates and nuts and other articles of food which would ordinarily be regarded as luxuries, would cost much more than the daily provision we had made for the volunteers, and, therefore, I told Mahadevbhai that I was not prepared to feed Gandhiji and his group. Again, I had a strict register kept recording the mileage of the cars, time when used, by whom used, and required

sanction for every trip that the cars made. Naturally all these restrictions caused a certain amount of dissatisfaction. When Gandhiji came I suggested to Mahadevbhai that they should obtain their own supply of petrol for themselves, and disallowed Gandhiji's bills in regard to food and motor car travel. When this was reported to Gandhiji he was a little puzzled. He sent for me and said: "I am coming all the way to Patna to help with the relief work. It is my one and only object in coming to Patna. That being so I fail to see why you should not debit my expenses to the Relief Committee." I explained to him my delicate position where I was faced on one side with checking the expenses of thousands of volunteers. Even an increase of an anna per day would involve the Relief Committee in lacs of rupees in the course of our work and, therefore, I suggested that Gandhiji should bear his own expenses so that they would not stand in contrast to the austere life I was suggesting to the volunteers and would also check the extravagant use of motor travel. Gandhiji appreciated my point, and told Mahadevbhai that not a pice was to be charged to the Bihar Relief on his account. He was willing to subject himself to the discipline that the administration called for, even though his rights arising out of duty done would have given him the right to claim for the expenses incurred in the execution of his work. This mode of submission to rules requires a great deal of humility and wise understanding of the situation, taking into consideration the difficulties of those who are engaged in the field work.

Similarly, early in 1947, when I was invited by the Congress President to become a member of his Working Committee, Gandhiji wrote to me, saying that he would be happy to watch my career in this new responsibility that had been placed on me, thus in a sense giving me his approval to take up the membership of the Working Committee. He had written this after seeing the reports in the newspapers. I immediately replied and said that one of the rules of the All India Village Industries Association, of which I was the Secretary, required us not to take part in politics, and if we wished to do so, we had to resign from the All India Village Industries Association. I pointed out that my life-work was connected with the

Village Industries Association, and if I had to join the Working Committee, I should give up my connection with the Association according to our rules. Gandhiji thanked me for drawing his attention to the rules of the Association, and said that his memory had failed him, though he was the President of the Association, in regard to this rule, and that the rule was a wholesome one and we must respect it at all costs; and, therefore, he undertook to advise the Congress President not to saddle me with this additional responsibility.

Here again we see his greatness. He definitely said that it was an alluring offer; but in spite of the needs in other fields we must resist the temptation and confine ourselves to the work before us, if we wish to forge ahead with the development of our country.

5. CO-OPERATION OF SATYAGRAHIS

When the National Planning Committee was formed in 1938 by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, the then President of the Indian National Congress, with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as Chairman, I was asked to contribute my share as a member of that Committee. Pandit Nehru invited me to attend its deliberations in Bombay. Looking at the personnel of the Committee I was doubtful of any good results, as I found in it all kinds of heterogenous elements. It included practical industrialists, academic economists, laboratory scientists, men of the world, and business magnates. In a group of this nature I felt that all efforts would result in nothing and, therefore, I declined to go and waste my time in endless discussions which would bear no fruit. On this Panditji wired to Gandhiji asking him to use his influence in sending me to Bombay. Gandhiji called me for an interview to discuss this subject. I pointed out the reasons why I felt my time would be ill-spent in merely trying to fence with the other interests. Gandhiji explained that it was inconsistent with the principles of satyagraha to prejudge our colleagues. He said: "Why do you think that you will not be able to persuade the whole committee to accept your policy? This shows a lack of faith in yourself and in your colleagues that they will be open-minded enough to listen to you!" I

replied: "The view may be strictly correct, but though we may be innocent as doves, we have also got to be wise as serpents, and we should not attempt the impossible. Knowing the personnel as I do, I feel that it would be merely dashing one's head against a wall." To this Gandhiji replied: "This is not the approach of a satyagrahi. You must give your opponent the fullest chance, and when the time comes that your position in the committee will not serve any purpose, you can always resign and come away. Having done your part in good faith you will have done your duty, and it will then become your duty to resign and not to waste your time. The time that you spend in trying to satisfy yourself and your fellow-members will not be wasted. It will develop you and widen your range of view; and, therefore, I suggest that you go and attend the committee meetings until such time when your work would prove to be futile. Then you can with a clean conscience resign and come away." With this advice I went and worked with the National Planning Committee, and remained on the Committee for about three months. Afterwards, finding that they were driven into all forms of discussions which would not benefit the country, I got Gandhiji's permission to resign and get away.

This shows that the duty of a satyagrahi is limitless in regard to extending co-operation to whosoever calls for it, and it is wrong for one who wishes to lead the life of a satyagrahi to prejudge anybody.

6. THE DOCTOR

The kaleidoscopic variety of activities that Gandhiji indulges in cover practically all professions, and his contributions are by no means mean. He calls himself a quack where the medical profession is concerned, but it has not yet been decided whether the professionals are quacks or Gandhiji. He brings to bear on the case before him profound wisdom and commonsense which often outwit the technical advantages that the professionals have.

Some years ago when it was discovered that I was suffering from blood pressure, the reason for the malady was to be ascertained. I was taken to Bombay to be examined by some of the best doctors. I was thoroughly

'overhauled', and I was at the mercy of the specialists for three or four days. After this examination all that they could declare was that they could find nothing wrong organically, and therefore by the process of elimination they decided that my blood pressure was due to nervous strain.

With this report I came back to Gandhiji. He immediately set about finding the cause of even that nervous strain. He said: "We have to trace the cause of the strain, and unless we do that we shall not be able to treat the disease or prevent its recurring." He thought the cause might be either physical fatigue or mental tiredness, and therefore he wanted to locate the actual difficulty with me.

At that time there was a professor from the Kinnaird College, Lahore, who had come to discuss certain difficulties with Gandhiji. He sent her to discuss some of these with me, and instructed Dr. Sushila Nayyar to take my blood pressure both before the discussion and after it. The discussion was limited to a period of fifteen minutes. The result showed that my blood pressure went up by 15 points.

The next day Gandhiji called the manager of the workshop and asked him to draw a line on a plank of wood and get me to saw it exactly on that line, and directed that my blood pressure should be taken before and after. The result again was a rise in blood pressure of 20 points this time.

The third day the physical instructor was asked to run a furlong with me and observe my pulse and also have my blood pressure taken before and after the exercise. The result this time was a fall of 15 points, and the pulse remained more or less normal.

With these three results before Gandhiji he said he was fairly positive that my blood pressure was due to concentrated work of the brain and not physical fatigue, and the results also showed the way of cure and prevention. He said to me: "Whenever you get symptoms of blood pressure you have simply to walk it off. As regards mental strain, to prevent its accumulation you should relax between your periods of work. You may work in the morning till 11 or 12 and take a complete relaxation for about a couple of hours before you begin to work again

in the afternoon. Combining this with a regulation of the diet so that digestion and brain work do not go together, you should be able to control your blood pressure more or less completely."

I took Gandhiji's treatment as being scientific both in regard to diagnosis and in regard to treatment, and have followed his instructions carefully for the last seven years, with the result that excepting when this regime is upset by unforeseen circumstances the plan has worked satisfactorily.

In the same way his approach to the various ailments is both simple and efficacious. He looks upon disease as caused by man's deviation from Nature's ways, and his attempt is to bring back our life into alignment with the requirements of Nature. This should be the aim of every physician.

7. THE COMPASSIONATE

A few years ago when he was staying at Maganvadi a young man about 17 or 18 years of age appeared before him suffering from St. Vitus' dance which is a nervous disorder (choria) making the sufferer unable to control the shaking of his hands and feet. The young man said to Gandhiji that he found life heavy on him as he was unable to be of any use to anybody. So he requested Gandhiji to let him stay with him. Gandhiji told him that it was impossible for him, as he was situated, to take charge of every disabled person, and therefore he must seek elsewhere for shelter. But the young man was adamant, and would not go away under any circumstances. He sat down on the steps and remained there from morning till evening. One of Gandhiji's party reported to him in the evening that the young man was still sitting at the door-step, and suggested that he should be sent away. Gandhiji turned round and said: "If I turn him away, whom will he go to? Let him stay, and I shall consider how best to utilise him."

The result was, the young man stayed, and he was put on by Gandhiji to do some work which the shaking of his hands and feet would not prevent him from doing reasonably satisfactorily. Of course he could not card or spin, but he was asked to wash vegetables and help in the kitchen

work as far as possible. By will power the boy was able to control his limbs to a certain extent. Even the washing of vegetables was a difficult process for him to begin with. Later on he started cutting the vegetables and handling the knife, and little by little in the course of a few months he was almost normal. He was then well enough to go to America for technical studies!

With the all-pervading love Gandhiji elicits the capacity in an individual to the best advantage. He was able to develop in the young man will power sufficient to overcome the lack of control of his nerves. This was done by sympathetic understanding of the individual's case and dealing with him gently.

Gandhiji's decision to let the young man stay, as he would have nowhere else to go, reminded me of the invitation given by Jesus: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. My yoke is easy and my burden is light."

8. JUST AS I AM

One of the features that makes Gandhiji great is his ability to accept everyone just as they come to him, without waiting to mould the person according to his own specifications. Of course his leaven works slowly and secretly as in a mass of dough. He believes in letting each person express his personality in the best way suitable to the individual. This accounts for the range of variety of men and women who cluster round the Mahatma. You have Rajen Babus and Sardars, Sarojinis and Miras, Birlas and Vinobas, Rajajis and Bhansalis. He exploits the good points in each to the fullest on the principle "he that is not against us is for us." When I was in editorial charge of *Young India*, some overzealous person who was anxious to attain non-violence, in a hurry, in his own fashion, in thought, word and deed, suggested that my language of criticism was very severe, and that Gandhiji should ask me to tone down. Gandhiji replied with a smile: "Kumarappa comes from Madras. You must allow for the chillies in his blood!"

9. THE INDEFATIGABLE EXPERIMENTER

No scientist has a greater thirst for knowledge than

Gandhiji. He is ever experimenting though not in an elaborately equipped laboratory. Changes in his food are often dictated by the desire to find out something new. At Maganvadi we have a number of neem trees. So he started taking about ten tolas of neem leaves ground down to a paste, to find the effect it has on health. One day at the midday meal I was seated to Gandhiji's right and Sardar Vallabhbhai to his left. As Gandhiji was going to gormandize on 'the neem chutney', he took out a spoonful and placed it for me on my 'thali'. The Sardar was watching this parental act. Then he winked at me cynically and said: "You see, Kumarappa, Bapu started with drinking goat's milk, and now he has come to goat's food!"

Calcutta,
24-12-1947.

GANDHIJI : 1926-39

Muriel Lester

SOON after World War I an English translation of a book by Romain Rolland fell into my hands which in his matchless phraseology described the principles, the practice and the life of M. K. Gandhi, an Indian up till then almost unknown to English folk. That book marked a new epoch for me. The teaching was quite familiar to any lover of the Gospels, but here was a man who took their great principles as his personal programme for day-by-day living and called upon his fellow-countrymen to base their national aspirations upon the same eternal truths: God's love for man: man's need for God: the necessity of prayer, of unlimited forgiveness, of patience, of menial service, of self-giving and of practising the presence of God.

A few years later, in 1926, on reaching India I found one of his characteristic post cards awaiting me. It said

I was to take the train that evening from Bombay to Ahmedabad and drive out to the Sabarmati Ashram the next morning. Everything in India seemed strange to me. But surely the number of men in the roads and lanes clothed in gleaming white *dhotis* must betoken some special occasion! The lanes were thronged with them, all going my way. On arrival I found that it was Gandhiji's fiftyseventh birthday, and two hundred spinning wheels were humming in harmony with his own. "Big Brother" was there, and hundreds of other visitors. The speeches and conversations lasted for hours. An Indian play was followed by a scene from the book *By an Unknown Disciple*. I got plenty of practice in the art of squatting, a new and at first painful accomplishment. We sat on the ground, on long strips of matting, while graceful women walked between the rows with baskets on their hips from which handfuls of dates, raisins, bananas and nuts were handed to us for our common meal.

When only the Ashram folk were left, we had prayers. Then Gandhiji, before starting his twentyfour hours' silence, began to weigh the pros and cons of the day's experiences. Afterwards someone translated his criticisms into English for me. "When people borrow bits of furniture from their friends and neighbours for a stage set, it is anti-social to forget to take them back immediately afterwards. . . . The entertainments were good, but the spinning contest was more constructive. . . . India's poverty must never be forgotten. . . .nor that a war, albeit a non-violent one, is in progress. . . . Amusements are, therefore, rather irrelevant."

A few days later, as I walked with him to the Vidya-pith where he was giving his weekly lecture on the Sermon on the Mount, he told me about the good English friends he lived with when he first left India: how they had taught him their Christianity: how they had explained that on conversion one always heard a voice, saw a vision or had some immediately recognised experience of God: how he had never known anything of the sort.

I did not get to know him until later when Jamnalal Bajaj arrived, and when Anasuya Sarabhai and Shankerlal Banker took me under their wing. Shankerlal said: "Have

you discovered yet what Gandhi means to us, young men, whose spirits were fired by a passion for India's freedom but who saw no hope of gaining it except through violence? Some had joined secret bands. If the lot fell on them, they would have to throw the bomb. They were doing violence to their own souls in trying to save their country. They were tormented by inner conflicts. They were always in danger, always on the alert, learning how to lie and deceive and hate. Imagine our lifelong gratitude when Gandhiji showed us that the way to freedom lay through truth and openness, through humble honest service, through identifying oneself with the poor, through creative work and mutual forgiveness."

An English magistrate, seeing I had only just arrived in India, said one night at dinner: "Do you want to know what Gandhi has done for India? Ten years ago, if a coolie had suddenly crossed my path and frightened the horse I was riding, I would probably have sworn at him and shouted: 'Get out of the way—you!' He would have cowered before me and disappeared. Now I should not shout at a coolie like that. But if I did, he wouldn't disappear. He'd stand facing me with complete assurance, look me full in the face, and politely enquire: 'Why should *I* move?'"

The Indian National Congress was at Gauhati that year (1926). Between sessions I could see what the non-politicals, the non-Hindus, the common folk felt about him. These peasants had walked, some of them thirty miles throughout the night; they stood for hours all round Gandhiji's lodgings, watching for the *darshan* of him as he passed in and out. There was no cheering, no talking, no gossiping. They just stood, in a reverent attitude, and waited.

Circumstances were very different five years later when I had the honour of entertaining him for ten weeks at Kingsley Hall, Bow, during the Round Table Conference in London. Of course he had crowds of other homes offered to him. The hospitality offered by King George to the delegates was the opposite of ours. It had a view over Hyde Park, servants by the dozen, comfortable furniture,

rich food. But Gandhiji had written from India: "I prefer to be at Bow, for in the East End of London I shall be among the same sort of people as those to whom I have given my life."

What a welcome he had! A thousand people were outside and inside Kingsley Hall on his arrival. As he climbed the stone stair-case to the flat roof where we all slept, half of which we had reserved for him, Mahadev, Mira, Pyarelal and Devadas, the people in the adjoining street shouted to each other to come and look. . . . They noticed with great interest every visible detail of his disciplined habit of life. Even if his work at St. James' Palace or with delegates elsewhere kept him out until 2.30 a.m., they noticed that the light still appeared in his room at 4 a.m. for prayer time. He went in and out of the neighbours' houses, talked to the children, visited a nearby hospital, came to our parties. Once he said to a friend who begged him to stay in the West End: "I will not sleep one night in London away from Bow. Here I am doing the real Round Table work, getting to know the people in England."

In 1934 I saw another side of him when I joined his great anti-untouchability tour. For months we went from place to place. He held seven open air meetings in one day. After the long speeches there would be a collection; then a long procession of people brought gifts, often taking off their jewellery to offer him; then he became an auctioneer; nothing was too insignificant to have his attention, and to fetch its price. It was a long job and wearying, as often we would have to spend the night travelling. At each railway station the platforms were a sea of brown faces and white *dhotis*, waiting for a *darshan*. Men would climb up and hang on the windows, sometimes for miles after the train started. Then came the tour of Bihar and Orissa after the earthquake. Most of us grew weary, became worn out, but Gandhiji never. His inner equilibrium, his contact with the inexhaustible energy of God, his ability to sleep at any moment, all stood him in good stead. I remembered what he had said to Pierre Ceresole in 1931 when he was Romain Rolland's guest in Switzerland.

"A leader must have complete mastery over himself. He

must seek nothing for himself, neither power, position nor pleasure. And he must remember God twentyfour hours a day. I have no power except what God gives me. Look at me. A boy of fifteen could fell me with a blow. I am nothing. But I have become detached from fear and desire, so that I know something of God's power. I tell you, if all the world were to deny God, I should be His sole witness. It is a continual miracle to me."

Next time I saw him, there was again a very different situation. It was in 1936, and he was lying between life and death. Even then he was master of the situation. I remember that it was he who had to comfort Mahadev at the moment when death was expected.

Then came the winter of '38 and '39 when I found him, renewed in strength after his time with Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan on the North-West Frontier, rejuvenated by the arrival of his old friend, Herman Kallenbach, from South Africa. The two of them did everything together. They reminded me of a couple of school boys.

During the war I feared that he might become tired of the constant struggle against ignorance and pride and greed, which seemed to fill his life ; but the other day the news reached us in London that Gandhiji was hoping to live to be a hundred. That seemed to many of us of good augury. It strengthened our faith in the future of our poor world.

I heard Bapuji say: "I am not struggling for the freedom of India because I happen to think it's a good idea but because I know it's the will of God that every nation should be free. Otherwise they cannot make their maximum contribution to the rest of the world."

The following conversation took place during his visit to Switzerland in 1931:

"What do you think of Europe, Mr. Gandhi?" asked Pierre Ceresole.

Gandhi answered: "I see no signs of great leadership in Europe."

"What do you mean by God, Mr. Gandhi?"

"Truth is God, and the way to Him is non-violence. The slopes of the Himalaya mountains are white with the bleached bones of the sages and hermits and rishis who

for centuries have lived there trying to wrest the secrets of God from Him; and the outcome of the search of all of them is this: Truth is God, and the way to Him is non-violence."

Another time: "Jesus in the East brought a breath from the spirit of God and gave it to the world. But the West took hold of it and turned it into a system which I think is not a good one. That is why I do not call myself a Christian."

Once Stanley High was visiting Gandhi's ashram and having a long talk with him while I was on the verandah outside the room waiting for him to emerge when Mrs. Gandhi was going to serve dinner to both of us. Stanley High had been asking his opinion evidently about the difficult situation in China in 1926 when it was causing extra troops to be mobilized for the defence of British subjects in Shanghai. I only overheard the clear voice of Gandhiji giving his final answer to half an hour of questions. In a kindly, gentle voice he said: "But if you Christians send soldiers out there, you are denying your own doctrine of the Cross."

London,
11-1-1946.

MR. GANDHI IN OXFORD

Lord Lindsay of Birker

MY friend S. K. Datta was a member of the All-Indian Conference in 1931. He told me that Mr. Gandhi was so busy in London and elsewhere seeing all sorts of people and societies that he feared he would not have the leisure he needed to consider the important questions of principle with which he was confronted, and he asked me if I would invite Mr. Gandhi to come to Oxford for two less busy week-ends. He would, it was hoped, get some quiet, and we were to keep the visit as unadvertised as possible.

In the second week-end, it was hoped, we might arrange an informal meeting between him and two or three English statesmen interested in India, but the main purpose was to give him quiet and leisure. So he came with C. F. Andrews and Miss Slade and his son and various other friends, about a dozen in all. Mr. Gandhi, his son, his secretary and Miss Slade stayed with us in our house. We also had to find room for two enormous policemen whom the Government sent to see that Mr. Gandhi should not be molested by anybody.

The two week-ends were spent differently. During the first Mr. Gandhi saw various societies and interested groups in Oxford. Had I seen Mr. Gandhi only for that week-end, I should have been impressed most by his power of dealing with inconvenient questions. Most people who read Plato's early dialogues for the first time are struck by Socrates' power of getting the better of people who argue with him, by what has been called Socratic irony. It has been said that it would be translated better by "paukiness" —a Scots word meaning something like sly humour. Something like that was the most striking characteristic of Mr. Gandhi when faced with clever young questioners.

The second week-end was very different. The duty interviews were over and Mr. Gandhi could rest. Further I think that by this time he trusted us and was prepared to give us his confidence, and we saw the other side of Mr. Gandhi. It will be simplest to tell what I can remember of his remarks. He came to us on a Saturday morning. The night before some of my philosophical colleagues and I had been asked by Sir Michael Sadler, then Master of University College, to meet Pandit Malaviya, who was staying with him. The Pandit, after talking with us for a little about philosophy, confided to us a plan he had formed in which he was deeply concerned, and in which he wished us to help him. Would we help him to summon a conference of the most distinguished philosophers and scientists in the world? "When we have got these great men together we shall get authoritative answers to two simple but profound questions which we shall ask them. The first will be: Does God exist? and the second: What is His Will? and when we have got authoritative answers

to these questions we shall give up our differences and jealousies and suspicions and settle down in common to do the will of God." The Pandit spoke very movingly, yet I had to express my scepticism about this plan at the time, and in the morning I told the story to Gandhi and asked him what his answer would be. His reply displayed the practical and the saintly qualities of Gandhi. He said in the first place that he didn't think that such a conference would agree about anything, and in the second that, if they did, he would regard it as of no importance, as he did not believe anything could be the will of God which could not be understood by simple unlettered people.

When I came to see him later, I found him answering questions which my son was asking. My son was at that time teaching a tutorial class in Wales, and the miners had commissioned him to ask Mr. Gandhi various questions for them. As I came into the room I found my son with some hesitation saying to Mr. Gandhi: "They did also very much want to ask you how far you are a Christian?"—to which Mr. Gandhi without a moment's hesitation said: "Well, there is your father, could he tell you how far he is a Christian? He will not be able to, and neither am I."

And now for some more general impressions. A great friend of his said at the time that we should not think of Mr. Gandhi as a saint trying to be a politician, but as a politician trying to be a saint. Nevertheless both my wife and I said that having him as our guest was like having a saint in the house. He showed that mark of a great and simple man that he treated everyone with the same courtesy and respect whether one were a distinguished statesman or an unknown student. Anyone who was in earnest in wanting an answer to a question got a real answer. S. K. Datta said to me of Mr. Gandhi as a politician that he always thought of India in terms of the village, a place he really knew, and I expect that is largely true, and perhaps some of his views, some of his mistakes perhaps, came from thinking in terms of a village community in which everyone knew everyone else and there could be simple human relations between everyone. But I think this attitude was part of his strength, because it meant that he always kept firmly hold of human relationships and

actual facts. When the politicians were concerned too much with manoeuvres and mass effects and statistics and general results and so on, Gandhi, as he started at that simple end, seemed to me to keep far closer to the fundamental facts. He would say, for example, perfectly frankly, that he did not rest his claim for Indian independence on the assumption that India would be better governed under Swaraj. On the contrary he said: "We have to learn, and you do not learn administration overnight. But if you, the English, go on preventing us from making mistakes and suffering for them, we shall never learn." And yet so long as there was no question about India being responsible and able to make its own choice he was perfectly ready, that being thoroughly understood, to consider expediency and advantage. He did not want to dispense with frameworks and precautions, but they were not to interfere with India's free choice. I thought he was much more realistic about India than most politicians, whether British or Indian.

We had a great deal of discussion about his pacifism, and I thought then, and thought it more afterwards, that that was his most fundamental belief, even more fundamental than his hopes for India. And here I could not agree with him. And he said to me that in that matter I was as bad as other Englishmen whose characteristic is to respect the people who fight them. But whatever arguments we had it was yet a wonderful experience having him with us, and we shall not forget our sense that he had brought a blessing to us by his presence.

Oxford,
April, 1948.

TWO TALKS ON BIRTH CONTROL

N. R. Malkani

THE following is a report of two talks which I had with Gandhiji at Sabarmati in 1926. It was prepared by me, and has had the benefit of a revision at Gandhiji's hands. It has been lying with me all these years, and is published here for the first time.

N. R. Malkani

Hyderabad (Sind),
10-10-1946.

I

Thursday, 2nd July, 1926.

G. So you have come exactly at 9 (a.m.).

M. Yes, and as you were not in your room I have been stealing something.

G. What is it?

M. A flower from your table—perhaps the only thing worth stealing from your room.

G. Well then, begin.

M. Last time, Bapu, you made two statements—one that 'those who advocate birth control methods think that sexual indulgence is a physical necessity;' and secondly that 'the consequences of sexual union without birth control methods are not so serious as those of sexual union with birth control methods.'

G. Exactly.

M. Now I shall try and put my case before you. The use of contraceptives is the use of a power, and the use of a power as such has nothing ethical about it. But the motive behind their use makes their use ethical or otherwise. It is true that sexual indulgence may be a motive for their use. But it is not the only motive. I can easily imagine a different motive or a mixed motive. For instance, there may be the economic, medical, educational, domestic or any other motive. There may even be a mixed motive. As a matter of fact contraceptives were accepted by the educated and upper classes of society with whom sexual gratification could not be the only or chief consideration.

G. If gratification was not the sole motive, why need there be any at all? But what do you mean by an economic motive?

M. That the man and woman find it difficult to support themselves and children in their standard of life, with their wage.

G. That is to say that they would rather indulge their passion than control themselves for their economic well-being. You may not use the word 'indulge' but substitute the word 'gratify' or 'moderately gratify', but the fact remains that they would rather moderately gratify their passion than control themselves from any economic, educational or any other motive.

M. Yes, they may legitimately do so as the lesser evil.

G. You must understand me. Don't you see that to be influenced by the economic motive they must be all engrossed by it, and then no other consideration but that should guide their conduct? Now if they were really influenced by the economic motive, it should be enough to induce self-restraint. That it does not, proves that they believe sexual indulgence to be a physical necessity.

M. Well, logically that is so. But take my own case. I have now very few children. But suppose I got more. I would find it difficult to join any national or other movement. Would it not be better for me to use contraceptives and do some public service than leave the growth of my family to mere chance? What you advise is practically impossible to do. According to your method of argument a man and woman may unite twice or thrice in a whole life, have two or three children, and then abstain completely. That may be logical, but is highly impracticable.

G. I certainly do not consider it as impracticable. Think of those whom we call 'savages'. Look at their self-control. Why, they are not even aware of it. Some of them come into contact with modern conditions and deteriorate. But the real savage unites only for progeny, and not for pleasure. It is probable that like animals a single act of union results in a conception. But after that he abstains. You see our modern conditions of life have changed, and we consider such an abstinence as a great

act of virtue. The savage is virtuous without knowing it. Did not Wallace say that, if there was real difference between the savage and the civilized man, it was in favour of the savage? Birth controllers turn vice into virtue. When sexual indulgence is regarded a virtue, it will be the undoing of man.

M. Yes, logically that is so, and total abstinence is the highest ideal. But it is after all an ideal. Taking human nature for what it is, how many can aspire to or attain that ideal? And after all I cannot understand how the consequences of the use of contraceptives will be more serious than the consequences of the present thoughtless sexual gratification. You are aware of the terrible evils of infanticide, abortion, the misery of mothers, the tyranny of husbands, and the neglect of children which is due to the present system of haphazard multiplication. I cannot believe the results of contraceptives will be more terrible than that.

G. You are wrong there. The use of contraceptives will bring more terrible results than you imagine. Errors of thought are often more mischievous than erroneous acts involuntarily done. People are not wanting who suggest that Krishna was able to enjoy his hundreds of Gopis because he was able to control his emissions, and that he had the greatest moral elevation after each physical union.

M. Yes, Bapu, in Europe they write of a social union called 'Karezza' where there is union without emission indulged in by those having the greatest control over themselves.

G. Well, well, such a Krishna would stink in my nostrils. He would be a horrible person, whom I would reject with abhorrence.

M. But weak as we are, don't we require some sort of buttress in life? I confess my weakness; I even agree that sexual gratification is not a necessity of life. But the weak must be helped to become strong. After all you seem to be thinking of that one man only who will aspire to and attain the ideal. But why ignore the millions of ordinary human beings who cannot think, much less realize, the ideal? Your charkha movement is meant for

the uplift of masses, not individuals or classes.

G. The charkha is itself an ideal. It is not a compromise. But even if millions of years pass before the ideal of self-control is realized, I would wait. I have great patience. I am in no hurry to transform the world. But the advertisement of vice as virtue is intolerable. Some people tell me that, if my ideal were attainable, the world would be depopulated. So much the better. Men would then be translated to a better world. I am not scared by the bogey of depopulation.

II

Sunday, 19th July, 1926.

G. Very well, now you must teach me what you can.

M. But, Bapu, it is you who are teaching. You have spoken about birth control first, and you have made certain statements which you must prove.

G. Then how shall we begin?

M. I think we need not discuss the necessity of birth control.

G. No.

M. Nor the importance of birth control from the political or social point of view.

G. No.

M. Well then, Bapu, you say that the use of contraceptives will lead to sexual indulgence. I cannot see how that will happen.

G. Then I may tell you that I have been receiving letters from hundreds of young men asking advice about their sexual life. Most of them have committed excesses and are now paying the penalty for their indulgence. These men are anxious to exercise some sort of self-control. Now you tell them that a man may indulge his sexual passion without the fear of consequences, and that such indulgence is natural and necessary. How can you then expect any moral regeneration of the persons whom sexual indulgence has ruined?

M. Bapu, there are few young men free from the sin of sexual excess. But within marriage this lasts for a short time, maybe during the first few years. Then the impulse becomes regulated, and later the period of sexual

call becomes longer. Those who succumb to the impulse too long, have to pay a terrible penalty, until they learn some self-control. But my fear from the use of contraceptives is different. It is that there may be sexual irregularities outside marriage. Formerly the consequences of such acts were dreaded and acted as deterrent. That may not be possible now. But I do not understand how the use of contraceptives will further encourage such moral wrecks in sexual indulgence. One may advise the adoption of self-control to the indulgent and yet suggest the adoption of contraceptives.

G. Well then, I shall put the matter in this way. You have read the story of Vyasa in the Mahabharata.

M. I do not know which story you mean.

G. The story of Vyasa approaching the two wives of Vichitravirya with that dreadful appearance for the purpose of procreating progeny.

M. Yes, Bapu, I know that story.

G. That is the ideal for us—that progeny alone is the justification for any sexual gratification. The story may be true or false, but the theory behind it is perfect. You may question the possibility of any individual approaching a woman without any sensation of pleasure. Personally I do not ever remember to have approached my wife without the desire for pleasure. But here is the ideal—that in every sexual gratification progeny and not pleasure should be the sole consideration. Every other gratification is immoral. Now those who suggest the use of artificial methods cannot help also suggesting that sexual indulgence in itself is natural, and that gratification without its consequences may be an end of the sexual act. This is bound to weaken the desire for self-control and justify more sexual desire and its gratification. Please understand that I have recalled the above illustration not to justify *niyoga* which I dislike. I have cited it merely to show that Vyasa's act is described as free from the slightest taint of sexual passion.

M. I do not yet see the necessary connection between the two. Those who suggest the use of contraceptives do so in the interests of wise parenthood. Such men can never believe that any sexual indulgence will lead to wise

parenthood. In fact those who commit sexual excess know that it is harmful, and have to pay a heavy penalty for it. The use of contraceptives has no direct connection with the encouragement of sexual indulgence.

G. But don't you see the influence of the mental outlook of a man on his actions? Here is a man who gratifies his sexual passion knowing that consequences may follow; and here is another man who gratifies it knowing that none need follow. The latter will act recklessly. Then again the one knows indulgence to be reprehensive; the other sees no harm in it and may even consider it a virtue. Take my own case. If I had acted with greater restraint, I would have suffered less. My body has suffered much, and that is because of my weaknesses and lapses. It is true that I recover soon, but that is because of subsequent self-control. Now you know that I apply remedies, be they water cure and the like, to avoid the consequences of my errors. I know that this is a weakness, but then I want to live. Had I exercised self-control from the commencement, my capacity for serving the masses would have been much greater.

M. But, Bapu, we are comparing an ordinary person who has sexual gratification with the fear of consequences with another ordinary person without such fear. You are thinking of what an ideal person should do. Your own case is a special case and not an ordinary one.

G. No, my case is that of an ordinary person. What I have done any other person can do by exercising self-control.

M. You may say so, but who will believe it? The average person is incapable of exercising similar control.

G. Very good, take the case of two ordinary persons. One has fear, and another is without fear, of consequences. Now fear is not always bad. For instance, the fear of God is good. He who fears God exerts himself and improves. Take the case of Chaurichaura. I saw the consequences of violence and feared them. I got one telegram and then another—a graphic one from my son. That very moment I made up my mind. Look at it. Just a day before I had sent that memorable challenge to the Government, and a day after came the stopping of civil disobedience. I knew

how the country would feel the weight of my decision.

M. Yes, Bapu; I assure you that for a while we felt staggered.

G. Yes, I know that, but I am proud of saying that I never performed a greater service to my country. That is why I ask the doctors also to stop vivisection. Nature, if it takes away an eye or a tooth, may do so, for nature also gives an eye or a tooth. Man does not give anything and so cannot take away anything. I know that some books are even in favour of vivisection of man, for the good of man. We would perpetrate these cruelties if we had no fear of consequences. Fear coming from within is a good thing.

M. But should we not try and mitigate the misery of man and avoid the terrible consequences of thoughtless sexual gratification? You say that the consequence of artificial birth control will be sexual indulgence. Is there not sexual indulgence even now? Do you think that the consequences of thoughtless sexual gratification are less serious than those of deliberate gratification with a view to wise parenthood?

G. You have just said the thing. I mean that exactly —that the consequences of sexual gratification in spite of oneself are less serious than those of deliberate gratification. Take this case. Scores of women come to me, praying for a child. I tell them that I have no powers to grant such boons. But some of them are miserable and would not leave me until I muttered some blessing. I know of one very special case. One woman could bear no children, for the doctors pronounced that her womb was misplaced. She was so miserable without a child that I advised her to go in for a surgical operation to set it right. It was done, and now she bears children and lives happily.

M. But what does this prove, but that the instinct for motherhood is too deep-seated to be uprooted by the propagation of any birth control methods? Such methods are suggested only to mothers who don't desire troops of children.

A GLIMPSE OF GANDHIJI

Gurdial Mallik

MY memory goes back to the year 1921 when Gandhiji visited Karachi in the course of his lightning tour round the country in connection with his newly-evolved experiment in welding people together into an humble instrument in the hands of the Power "other than ourselves", and "that makes for righteousness—an experiment incorrectly characterized as the non-cooperation movement. In spite of his unusually heavy programme, packed with public engagements of all sorts, he had condescended to come for a few minutes to the night school for labourers with which I was associated as one of the workers. At the scheduled time we began our evening routine with a couple of songs—one of an unknown mystic of Sindh, and the other of the well-known mystic of Rajputana, Mirabai. As the former has since become a great favourite of Gandhiji, and is also one which he has generally asked me to sing to him whenever I have met him afterwards, I would like to translate it here:

O Lord, Thy house (this world) is wonderful, and in it Thou dwellest everywhere.

The sky is studded with stars, but the moon among them art Thou.

The market-place is crowded with people, but the breath animating them all art Thou.

The temples are installed with innumerable images, but through them all art mirrored forth Thou.

The river is aswaying with waves, but their liege and lord art Thou.

That boatman sits at the helm, but at the helm of his life art Thou.

We were so absorbed in the congregational singing that we did not notice when on tiptoe Gandhiji and his party had walked into the specious compound of the school and stood in a corner, listening silently to the song. However, no sooner was the song over than, spotting him, we all rose to our feet to do him reverence. I then requested him to say a few words to the students. He replied: "What I would have said has been conveyed to you all

through the song." And then he went away to fulfil another important engagement.

Another memory of Gandhiji, rich in re-orientating radiance, haunts me till this day like the aroma of my own mother's love. It was after the prolonged dark night of fear and frustration in the Punjab had just begun to be touched with the light of dawn. Gandhiji had surveyed the whole scene, and was in the midst of writing a report of the horrible happenings of the recent past. One day I went to see him at the house of his hostess, Shrimati Sarla-devi Chaudharani, at Lahore. It was on an errand of Deenbandhu C. F. Andrews. I found the door of his apartment shut. So I waited outside in prayerful patience. At long last, after about three hours, the door was opened. I went in.

"Were you waiting long?" he asked me affectionately.

"Rather," I answered with the individualised indifference, streaked with cynicism, of an impetuous youth.

"I am sorry," he rejoined with the disarming courtesy of the truly great. "You see, I was trying to hit upon the right word in a sentence describing what a certain party had done, in the scorching heat of purblind passion in a particular place during the martial law regime."

And yet one more reminiscence of Gandhiji have I in my limited repertory which I should very much like to relate. It was in Bombay, during 1945. Gandhiji had drafted a certain statement, which was considered rather long by some of the members of his entourage. And so one of them, referring to it, said to him: "All that you have written could be boiled down to only four lines." Whereupon Gandhiji remarked: "Is that so? Then please bring the abridged version, and I shall sign it straight-away." The young critic was at once taken aback. Then Gandhiji reminded all those present of the observation made by some wise person in the past that, while criticising something what another has done, the critic should be ready simultaneously with something constructive that could take its place.

Bombay,
6-12-1945.

INTERVIEWS WITH GANDHIJI

Sir Rustom Masani

WHEN a purely professional visit took Mahatma Gandhi to South Africa in April, 1893, who could have thought that he would return to India after two decades as the victorious general of a satyagraha campaign launched in that far-off land? And when, after having taught his countrymen in that land the secret of soul force in winning a victory for Truth without recourse to violence, he returned to India, who could have dreamt that within a short time he would be the hero of many a stupendous satyagraha struggle in his own motherland? During that short interval he led a comparatively quiet life in India as a social worker not actively interested in controversial politics. Social service, emancipation of men and women from the thraldom of harmful customs and usages, the curse of untouchability, the grinding poverty of the people and swadeshism as its remedy, and, particularly, the exposition and propagation of his views on moral progress, then engrossed his attention. When, therefore, the Legislative Council of Bombay thought of appointing a Committee to formulate proposals for the prevention of professional beggary, Gandhiji was invited, as one of the most ardent social workers of the day, to be a member of the Committee. It was at this Committee's meeting that we met for the first time as fellow-workers in the field of social service.

AN ARDENT CO-OPERATOR

Clad in pure white long coat (*angarkha*) with a *parthadi* and Kathiawadi *fenta* (turban), he sat on the right of the Chairman, the late Sir Phiroze Sethna. It was an irony of fate, however, that whilst we were trying to hammer out a solution of the very difficult and complex problem, various tragic incidents turned that enthusiastic co-worker into a dejected non-cooperator. Holding that Britain's difficulty should not be turned into India's opportunity, this apostle of ahimsa had gone so far as to organi e a vigorous recruitment campaign to help Britain and her Allies. But his faith in the good intentions of the rulers

of the land was, unhappily, soon undermined by the high-handedness of the authorities during the days of the Kheda famine and the Rowlatt Act, and he felt impelled to launch a campaign of non-cooperation and civil disobedience. Our Committee thus lost an esteemed colleague. Its report appeared without his signature.

Little did the bureaucracy of the day realise that it had offended one of the best friends of the British Government who was then prepared to collaborate in well-considered schemes of political reform and was envisaging an era of lasting friendship and partnership between Britain and India. Much less did the intrepid Governor of the day, who had Gandhiji arrested in 1922, realise that despite defeats and temporary reverses the forces of satyagraha would in the end forge their way forward towards the desired goal. Priding himself on the courage shown by him to clap the idol of the people into jail in spite of the warning given to him by the members of his Executive Council that such a step would lead to widespread unrest and riots throughout the country, he related to me the story of that arrest one day in the middle of the year 1922, when, crimson with rage, he had an altercation with me, as the then Municipal Commissioner for Bombay, concerning three resolutions sent to the Government by the Municipal Corporation, deprecating the action taken by them in certain cases. As is generally the case with short-tempered people, he cooled down after a heated argument, and in a very friendly conversation gave me two interesting instances in which, whilst his advisers had taken up a defeatist attitude, he had shown the courage to take drastic action. The first related to the deportation of Mr. Horniman; the second to the arrest of Gandhiji. "Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola (one of the members of the Executive Council) came to me," he observed, "with tears in his eyes, and implored me not to touch Gandhi. His arrest, he feared, would inflame the public. But it had to be done, and nothing happened."

OFFICIALDOM FROWNS ON THE GANDHI-IRWIN PACT

It did, however, happen that during the civil disobedience campaign of 1930-31 Lord Irwin, the Viceroy of India, went to Gandhiji practically on his knees and asked

him to come out from jail and co-operate with Government. It was in pursuance of what was known as the Gandhi-Irwin pact that Gandhiji agreed to proceed to London to attend the second Round Table Conference, little imagining that on his return to India he would be sent back summarily to jail. As is generally known, officialdom then frowned on the Gandhi-Irwin peace-parley. The annoyance of the members of the Indian Civil Service was not hidden from those who moved in official circles or were otherwise in a position to watch the reaction of those who sat in the seats of the mighty to the Viceroy's earnest effort to end the political strife in India. Being in New Delhi then, in connection with my work as Secretary to the Central Banking Enquiry Committee, I had such an opportunity. Moreover, I was in Simla when Gandhiji went there in July, 1931, to see the Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, and from what I noticed I had a grave misgiving that in view of the sullen antagonism of the bureaucracy and the open opposition of the European community, particularly in Bengal, Gandhiji's mission to London might not be successful. For some time it seemed doubtful whether Gandhiji would go to London, and most of the officials of the day were hoping till the last moment that he would not.

To the chagrin of the die-hards, however, Gandhiji did go to the Round Table Conference. Hostile as was their attitude, the hot-heads in the Congress camp also adopted an attitude harmful to his mission. They appeared to have been seized with the fever of war mentality, even whilst their chief was participating in the deliberations of the Conference, and talked of repudiation of debts and commercial discrimination, to the consternation of the business interests in Britain and the European community in India. These in their turn subtly launched a vigorous campaign to torpedo all schemes for a friendly settlement with the Congress. Moreover, with the sudden change in the composition of the British Cabinet the Conservative Party gained in influence and the attitude of the British Government began to stiffen. I was then in London, and

methought I heard the rumblings of the storm that was to break over the head of the Congress leader immediately on his return to India.

A CONVERSATION ON BOARD S. S. PILSNA

I had arranged to return to Bombay in the middle of December by S.S. Pilsna. It was a happy coincidence that Gandhiji had also arranged to board the same steamer at Brindisi after seeing Mussolini. Just think of what Mussolini was in those days! A statesman lionized as one of the most sagacious and successful dictators in the world, the cynosure of neighbouring eyes as well as of rulers of distant lands including Indian Maharajas and their ministers. No wonder I found the late Sir Akbar Hydari, who was also a fellow-passenger, together with his son, the present Sir Akbar, and other members of the Hyderabad Delegation to the Round Table Conference, enjoying reading a book on the life-work of Mussolini. At Brindisi Gandhiji joined us. A special portion of the deck had been reserved for him and his party. As it was evening time, I did not wish to disturb him. Early next morning, I unburdened my mind to him regarding my anxiety concerning the impending crisis in India. "For God's sake," I said, "do not plunge the country into the throes of another civil disobedience conflict. Government now seem fully prepared and determined to crush the movement."

Gandhiji observed that the Bengal Ordinance of the day had made his position extremely difficult. "You know," he said, "what attitude I had to take up when the Rowlatt Act was passed. There can be no co-operation with those who pass enactments enslaving the people."

"But, Gandhiji," I pleaded, "when against your exhortations people resort to violence and when even magistrates discharging their duty are wantonly killed, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that such ordinances are provoked by our own people. If you ask for the withdrawal of the ordinance, Government would consider it too humiliating a price to pay for your co-operation. If, however, you say that it is impossible to continue the truce unless an assurance were given to you by Government that

the most obnoxious clauses of the ordinance would not be put into operation whilst you would be co-operating with them, perhaps a satisfactory solution of the difficulty may be arrived at."

"I am not going to impose any humiliating condition," said Gandhiji. "I am trying hard to find an honourable solution."

During the next few days I had several occasions to speak to him. Although I did not revert to the same subject, I gathered that he had been in communication with the Secretary of State for India. On arrival in Bombay we were told that it had been arranged that Gandhiji should leave the ship first. As he was passing along the gangway, I told my son who had come to receive me: "Minoo, I hope you hot-heads will not urge him to break off negotiations with Government."

"What are you talking?" he exclaimed. "The war is already declared. Have you not heard that Jawaharlal has been arrested? There can be no peace in the country now."

"We had no news about Jawahar's arrest," I said, "but it is nonsense to talk of war. Let Gandhiji have time to consider what can yet be done for a peaceful settlement."

It was the twentyeighth day of December. Arriving home, I saw on my writing table a Christmas card from Sir Frederick Sykes, Governor of Bombay. In all conversations I had with him I had found him most keen on receiving suggestions for putting an end to the political strife in the country. As I apprehended that he had perhaps instructions to take action which would lead to another deadly conflict, I considered it necessary, in reciprocating his good wishes, to add: "With Gandhiji on board the steamer our voyage was most interesting. I found him willing to continue his co-operation with Government so far as possible, but on arrival here I find that his position has been rendered very, very difficult."

ARRESTED ONCE MORE

Gandhiji asked for an interview with the Viceroy. His Excellency, however, read in the telegram sent to him a threat of civil disobedience and refused to see Gandhiji.

The zero hour had arrived. A few members of the Welfare of India League, of which Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas was President and I one of the Secretaries, thought they should try to avert the crisis by waiting on the Governor and impressing on him the necessity to arrange for a meeting between the Viceroy and Gandhiji. Over the 'phone an interview with the Governor was fixed.

Before hastening to Government House we called on Gandhiji with a view to ascertaining whether he was still prepared to see the Viceroy and to continue his co-operation with Government, if he could see his way to do so. Gandhiji authorized us to inform the Governor accordingly, adding that it was because he earnestly wished to find a peaceful solution that he had asked for an interview with the Viceroy. We then went straight to His Excellency. From the expression of gravity and gloom in his face I feared he had already received instructions from Delhi for Gandhiji's arrest. One by one the members of the Deputation pleaded that Gandhiji should be given an opportunity to see the Viceroy. When my turn came, I said I had conversations with Gandhiji during our voyage and found him earnestly considering what could be done to avoid a conflict. I added that it was a pity the Viceroy had refused to see him simply because the telegram sent by him asking for an interview was not happily worded.

Sir Frederick Sykes listened to all the speeches patiently, but all that we heard from him at the end was: "Gentlemen, I thank you for coming. I will convey your views to His Excellency the Viceroy."

The very next day Gandhiji was arrested. For nearly nine months the civil disobedience movement was in full swing. In its early stages it demonstrated the strength behind the Congress. But gradually it weakened, and towards the beginning of the year 1933 it seemed it was played out. The country began to be tired of it. Many a Congressman seemed to doubt the wisdom of courting imprisonment and allowing the alien authorities to rule with the co-operation of Indian opportunists. Not a few of them openly expressed themselves in favour of seizure

of power by council entry. Not that the Congress spirit was killed; nothing could kill it. But it seemed to them politic to abandon the struggle for the time being, to retrieve the lost ground and to prepare for another more vigorous campaign under favourable conditions.

THE HISTORIC FAST

Then came what we all regarded as the greatest crisis in the life of Gandhiji. It had been left to the British Government to solve the problem of representation of the Scheduled Classes in the new legislatures, a problem that should have been settled by the leaders of the Hindu community themselves. The decision given by the British Government appeared to Gandhiji, the greatest champion of the rights of those neglected and ill-treated classes, to offer not the shortest way out but the quickest way down. At the Round Table Conference he had already sounded the warning that he would resist with his life the grant of separate electorates to the Scheduled Classes as he held that it would be harmful not merely to them but to Hinduism as a whole. He, therefore, decided to fast unto death, if he could thereby awaken his countrymen to the enormity of the disaster that seemed to threaten Hinduism and nationalism alike.

On the day the alarming decision was announced I asked several friends, mostly members of the Welfare of India League, what could be done to avert the catastrophe and to turn it into an opportunity to promote good feeling and comradeship between the different sections and factions of the population and to ask with one voice for the release of Gandhiji and the simultaneous termination of ordinance rule and civil disobedience. Whilst we were bending our thought and energy in that direction, I noticed with regret that some people could regard the fast unto death in no other light than political blackmail. I, therefore, considered it necessary to point out to his critics that what was lacerating Gandhiji's heart was the want of fellow-feeling undermining the foundations of the unity of Hindu society. In an article I wrote on the subject I considered it necessary

to call attention to that aspect of the problem in the following prefatory remarks:

"None knows the weight of another's burden. None at any rate would hazard an estimate of the burden of the man who, Atlas-like, carries the weight of a vast sub-continent on his feeble shoulders. Yet some wiseacres have come forward to belittle the grievance under the oppressive burden of which the soul of Mahatma Gandhi is groaning. All that we need tell them is: Tread not on thorns, ye barefooted people!"

The article appeared in the *Free Press Journal* (September 22, 1932) with the caption "*What to do to save Mahatma's life*", and with a cartoon by Mali showing Gandhiji lifting a continent on his shoulders.

A PLEA FOR COUNCIL ENTRY

This, however, is not the place to relate the story of that epic fast. It was abandoned after the Poona Pact, but was soon followed by another fast, and Gandhiji had to be released unconditionally. Whilst he was convalescing in Lady Thackersey's house in Poona, I called on him one evening. I felt it was necessary that he should be informed of the general feeling among several Congressmen and the public generally regarding the futility of prolonging the civil disobedience campaign. Withdrawal from the position taken up in January, 1932, I submitted to him, would not mean defeat or surrender, much less abandonment of Congress contention or policy. It would merely mean prevention of needless personal injury. Finding himself in a difficult position, a general retreats. That does not mean he will not return to the charge. "Similarly," said I, "if you call off civil disobedience, you would be merely laying aside a weapon which you tried but which did not yield the desired result. You could resort to it again, whenever you wished."

Gandhiji listened patiently to all this and much more that I had to tell him about my conversations with his lieutenants both for and against council entry and office acceptance. Then he said gently: "I know that a change of feeling has come over some of our men. Nevertheless the line of action you suggest does not appeal to me. If some Congressmen wish to enter the legislatures, let them

go there. But if I prefer to remain in jail, and if Mathuradas (pointing to his nephew who was standing near us) is with me, and a few others, our poor peasants will at least feel that they have behind prison doors friends watching their interests. I am going to declare individual civil disobedience."

"But I am advocating council entry with full force," I replied. "If only a few go to the Councils as Motilal Nehru and Vithalbhai Patel and others did, and if they remain in a minority, what can they achieve? I should like you to go there in full strength and be the leader of the Opposition."

Gandhiji smiled and said that what I had stated went counter to his reasoning. He was of opinion, and I could not controvert it, that once a movement such as civil disobedience were withdrawn, the spirit of revolt of the people stimulated thereby would be killed, and that it would not be easy to revive it.

Soon afterwards Gandhiji did declare himself in favour of individual civil disobedience. That, however, did not ease the tension. He asked for an interview with the Viceroy, but the request was turned down again on the ground that civil disobedience had not been completely called off. Thereupon he courted arrest once more, and I lost touch with him until I met him again at Juhu about five years later and requested him to write a foreword to my biography of Dadabhai Naoroji. He cheerfully agreed. I said I would send him an advance copy of my manuscript which I intended to complete in England after certain inquiries. He smiled and said he doubted whether he would be able to spare time to glance through it. I told him I had based my chapter on South Africa almost entirely on the correspondence between him and Dadabhai, and invited his special attention to it.

GANDHIJI WRITES FOREWORD TO MY BOOK

The foreword was received by me in London in time. Gandhiji did not appear to have had time to go through the manuscript, but from the following letter I received

I saw that he had, however, managed to spare time to read my book on another subject dear to him:

Dear friend,

Here is the promised foreword. I hope it is quite in time.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Utmanzai,
19-10-38.

I am just now reading during spare moments your *The Religion of the Good Life*, a copy of which you kindly sent me.

I see you want my photo. You will be surprised to learn that I keep none myself.

M. K. G.

Later, I learnt from Mahadev Desai that Gandhiji had also read from cover to cover another book of mine, *The Conference of the Birds*, a Sufi allegory, expounding the spiritual principles in which is rooted the philosophy of life of the philosopher-politician who once described himself as "a religious man" in a letter to the Viceroy concerning his fast of 1932.

OFFICE ACCEPTANCE

When I wrote the preface to my biography of Dadabhai Naoroji in the middle of the year 1938, the political situation in India was very hopeful. Popular ministries were then functioning after more than a century and a half of government by an alien bureaucracy out of tune with the political pulsations of the people. Many knotty questions, however, remained to be solved and the bark of co-operation was in danger of being wrecked on the rock of the demand for complete independence. I, however, expressed my hope and my belief that, if given a chance, Gandhiji would cut the gordian knot. That hope did not materialize. The truce between Congress and Government abruptly came to an end in 1940 and the popular leaders found themselves in jail once more.

Once more, however, Gandhiji had to be released; once more a sagacious and truly sympathetic Viceroy endeavoured to end the strife by calling the famous Simla Conference. Although that Conference proved abortive, council entry was once more favoured by the Congress High Command, and I wished I could have an opportunity to tell Gandhiji that in my humble opinion elections should be contested not merely to demonstrate the strength of the Congress but also to take and stick to office. One day I got the opportunity quite unexpectedly. He was travelling in the same train in which I was going from Poona to Bombay. I got into his compartment at Lonavla, and put it to him that so long as Congressmen were regarded as political rebels they would get kicks, but that once they assumed office the Services would be anxious to carry out their behests, as they had done when the popular ministries were functioning. The British Government, too, I added, would come to terms with the Congress more readily than they would otherwise. I cannot say that Gandhiji agreed. It was his day of silence; he said nothing, but from the way he nodded it appeared to me that he did not disagree. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who was also in the train, however, asserted emphatically that on that occasion there was no idea of refusing or relinquishing office.

I do not know what will be the next occasion that will take me to Gandhiji. I hope and pray it may be to give my felicitations to him for his success in at last bringing about a settlement with the Muslim League and securing for India the freedom he has fought for as the Nestor of Indian Politics for the last three decades.

Bombay,
15-2-1946.

PS. When I wrote this I asked myself: "Shall I ever get such an opportunity?" Within a week, however, high hopes were raised by the announcement that the British Government had decided to send to India a Delegation of three front-rank Cabinet Ministers with a view to ending the constitutional deadlock. On the day following the announcement I was in Poona and as Gandhiji was also

there in the Nature Cure Clinic, I took the opportunity to greet him in that institution which, thanks to his active interest in its reorganization, has proved a blessing to hundreds of poor patients and with which his name will be ever lovingly associated. Gandhiji thoughtfully asked me to meet him at 7.30 a.m. on the 23rd February so that he might give me during his morning walk more time than he could have spared otherwise. While parting, I referred to the approaching visit of the Cabinet Ministers and said that I had no idea that my wish that I might soon greet him to felicitate him on the settlement of the Indian problem was likely to be fulfilled so soon. I said the Mission gave promise of hastening the day for freedom, and I had no doubt that Gandhiji would know how to provide a ladder for Mr. Jinnah to climb down gracefully and co-operate in the constructive work that lay ahead. Gandhiji's smile was an assurance that he was ready for it.

Bombay,
1-3-1946. R. P. M.

SOME PERSONAL TOUCHES WITH GANDHIJI

G. V. Mavalankar

IT was in about September or so of 1917. I was then practising as a young lawyer at the Ahmedabad Bar. There were then a few old lawyers who had not discarded the dhoti and the turban. The rule with the young lawyers, on the other hand, was that they must be clad in coat and pant, if they were to be considered smart and good. The turban, however, was not rejected. The conception of public service meant writing out reasoned representations to Government in good English.

How could I be an exception to the general rule? I was elected as Secretary of the Gujarat Sabha in about

December, 1916. The Gujarat Sabha was an Association (which worked as a Congress committee also) founded for the purposes of the economic, political and social advancement of Gujarat.

The disobedience of the magisterial order by Gandhiji at Motihari in Bihar preventing him from enquiring into the grievances of the Bihar labourers sent a thrill through the hearts of many prominent members of the Gujarat Sabha; and all of us were unanimous that Gandhiji should be approached to accept the Presidentship of the Sabha, if we were to function vigorously for the real advancement of Gujarat.

As Secretary of the Sabha, I approached Gandhiji with the request to accept the Presidentship of the Sabha. He was good enough to respond to our wishes. I felt the inspiration of new opportunities for work as Secretary under Gandhiji's direction. We had, however, really no idea as to the mind, outlook and views of Gandhiji on the politics or economics of the country. We were imbued with ideas of the old type, namely, service and advancement through representations to Government in good English.

To us, therefore, besides the courage exhibited by Gandhiji at Motihari, the greatest asset from the Sabha's then point-of-view was the fact that Gandhiji was a Bar-at-Law, and that his English was so chaste and nice that even an Englishman would find it difficult to compete with him.

The work of the Sabha became more vigorous and voluminous after Gandhiji became the President. I had to get letter-papers printed. On the left side at the top of the letter-papers, the names of the office-bearers are printed. The first, of course, was the name of the President. This was dscribed as under:

"Mohandas K. Gandhi, Esqr., Bar-at-Law".

The letter-papers were used for all correspondence, including that with Gandhiji.

When I first met him after the letter-papers were printed, Gandhiji asked me: "Mavalankar, why have you described me as 'Bar-at-Law'?" I asked him if he was not

one. On his stating that he was a Bar-at-Law, I began to wonder, where, if any, was the mistake committed by me. He then said: "I am a cultivator and a weaver (implying also an untouchable)." This gave me a bit of a shock, but also a new light. The two words were so expressive of the fundamentals of Gandhian ideology. But, I must admit, I did not then understand the implications of his description as I claim to do now.

(2) The land, where the present Harijan Ashram is located at Sabarmati, was newly acquired, and there were not enough buildings to accommodate the inmates. Some tents were put up. I had been one evening to Mahatmaji for some work of the Gujarat Sabha, and had to stay over at the ashram for the night. I was given a bedding and a shelter for the night in one of the tents. In the morning I rolled up the bed, and not knowing where to take it, I proceeded to the main building just to enquire as to where I should take the bed. While returning, I saw Gandhiji himself carrying the bed on his shoulder. I was simply dumbfounded and felt so much stunned at the sight that it did not even strike me to run up to Gandhiji and have the bed transferred from his shoulder to mine.

(3) My first wife died in March, 1920. My age then was 31, and I had one daughter by her aged about 10 months. The question of my remarriage naturally agitated all, the most intensive desire in that direction being that of my mother. She was perhaps shrewdly apprehensive that, if I was not married soon, I might be lost to the family, and be drawn wholesale into the Gandhian whirlpool. I cannot say that she was cent per cent wrong. I had made up my mind not to think of marriage at least for a period of one year. At the same time I did not want to wound the feelings of my mother in any way. I, therefore, struck a weak man's course. While I never declined to see any proposed match, I continued to disapprove every proposal.

The reasons for my action were my own personal considerations, and the result of my make-up. It was difficult for friends not to believe that I was out to marry just within a couple of months of the demise of my first

wife. As I learnt later, some friends expressed to Gandhiji their grief at my conduct. They naturally felt sad that a friend of theirs should be so callous and forgetful of his obligations under the marital vows. Nobody had, however, the courage to speak to me and get from me an explanation about my conduct. As usual, I was judged *ex parte*, and the matter was carried to Gandhiji. I was then in Bombay.

This led to an article by Gandhiji in *Navajivan* dwelling generally on marital obligations and remarriage by a man on the demise of his wife. The article did not refer to me at all either expressly or impliedly, but friends, who had carried the matter to Gandhiji, knew why and on what occasion it came to be written.

Gandhiji wrote to me a personal letter also stating that he considered himself duty bound, as a friend, to tender advice to me in a matter in which I was perhaps not acting to the proper standard. I wrote to him in reply a long letter fully explaining my situation. Gandhiji's reply was typical. He said: "I appreciate fully your point of view. You should do what your conscience directs or permits you to do. My duty ended with tendering you advice as a friend. I assure you, whatever course you take, there will be absolutely no change in my attitude or love for you."

The reader will easily appreciate the peace of mind and the source of strength that I found in his reply.

(4) Since December, 1932 to March, 1933, I did not keep quite well, and suffered from dysentery and low temperature. The Collector of Ahmedabad recorded my statement over the question of boycott, on a large scale, of British machinery by Ahmedabad mills, and soon after he arrested and put me in the Sabarmati prison on the 2nd March, 1933, under the Emergency Powers Act. I was thence transferred to the Ratnagiri Jail on the 19th March, 1933, and set free there next day with an order not to leave the Ratnagiri district. My health was bad. I was advised rest, and the question was whether I should obey the order. There was no humiliating clause in the order, such as reporting to the police, etc. I, therefore, decided

not to disobey the order just then and apply myself to the improvement of my health.

Some time after, mass civil disobedience was suspended, and individual civil disobedience was substituted. This raised a further question for me. If I were to go in as an individual civil resister, I must continue to do so for an indefinite period. I was not prepared to do so. The only course was, therefore, to obey the order for a reasonable period and disobey it later on, on the restricted ground that the powers under the Emergency Act were being misused by Government. There were many friends at Ahmedabad and elsewhere who thought that the Government would continue the internment order indefinitely, and I would be a loser by a longer stay. To them, the easier and the shorter course was to disobey the order and to get out of Ratnagiri in about six months' time, which, according to them, was the sentence likely to be awarded. The friends thought that I would be killing two birds with one stone, namely, (1) an exhibition of my strength and courage by courting jail, and (2) a quicker release from the order.

This view was pressed on me. I pointed out that the friends who were pressing this view forgot the fundamental fact that disobedience of the order was only permissible as satyagraha and not for any popularity or some ulterior gain. The suffering by disobedience would otherwise lose all its utility and purpose. I stated that I would prefer to continue as an internee for any length of time and that if, at any stage, I considered the situation unbearable, I would prefer to be honest about the admission of my weakness rather than try to get out by underhand manoeuvres. I thought that the admission of weakness would lead me to strength ultimately, while a show of strength and manoeuvring would demoralise me.

I, therefore, decided to continue as an internee for at least one year and then consider the question of disobedience of the order, on the narrow issue of abuse of powers by the Government.

It is well-known that Gandhiji was to offer satyagraha

on 1st August 1933. He had decided to give up the Harijan Ashram. He had to consider momentous issues about the future of the struggle and the country. Yet in the midst of his worries he found time to write, in his own hand, a post card to me. This was the substance of what he wrote:

"I was thinking of writing to you for several days, but could not snatch time. I sat today with a determination to write, and hence this letter. There is an amount of work to be done for the country, and the best course for you would be, therefore, to take advantage of the compulsory rest by improving your health and getting more robust for further responsibilities in the future."

This short letter not only clearly indicated that Bapu approved the line of my conduct, but further shows his solicitude for every one of us—even the humblest among his followers.

(5) It was the year 1921. I was Secretary of the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee and was also the General Secretary of the Reception Committee of the 36th Indian National Congress held at Ahmedabad. The Reception Committee had planned the Delegates' camp and other structures in pure khadi. I purchased khadi on a large scale and had to honour *hundis* to the tune of about ten to fifteen thousand rupees a day. I was expecting for several months from the Bombay Committee a substantial sum of Rs. 1½ lakhs which was promised to be remitted. My reminders did not seem to have any effect. My balance dwindled down to about Rs. 50,000. How could I honour the fifth day's *hundi*, if I had not with me immediately the Bombay sum? Bapu was to go to Bombay. I explained to him the situation, and requested him to send me a wire that the money would be remitted that very day. That would ease the pressure on my mind. He agreed to do so. A telegram in those days cost only six annas. I did not receive any telegram the next day. I was naturally very much worried and thought that Bapu must have forgotten about the small matter in the din and bustle of urgent work at Bombay.

The next day I got a letter, which contained a telegram form with a telegram written and signed by Gandhiji for delivery to the Telegraph Office at Bombay. At the back of the telegram form, Gandhiji wrote to the following effect:

"Dear Mavalankar, I know I am prolonging your anxiety by 24 hours. But today being a holiday the telegram charges would be rather higher. As the money will surely be remitted, I preferred to save the telegram charges even if it meant continuation of your anxiety for some hours."

What a keen sense of economy in matters of public funds! Many people probably do not know that a number of Bapu's drafts and articles are written on the blank side of the telegrams or letters received by him.

(6) The Reception Committee of the 36th Indian National Congress at Ahmedabad had resolved that no complimentary tickets for the Congress Session should be issued to anybody for any reason. One day a message came to me, in the name of Bapu, that I, as Secretary, should issue 18 such tickets. I was not even given the names of the persons, much less the reasons for the issue.

I went to Bapu and had something of a tussle with him, as follows:

Myself: Bapu, have you really asked for such a big number of complimentary tickets?

Bapu: Yes.

Myself: May I know the names of the persons and why the tickets are to be issued to them?

Bapu: Mr. So and so knows the names. The reason for the issue is that each of them has paid more than Rs. 25,000 to the Tilak Swaraj Fund.

Myself: Does this not mean a premium on money in respect of one's contribution to the national cause?

Bapu: No.

Myself: Would you advise the issue of such tickets to people who have no money to contribute but have contributed out of their own sweat and blood?

Bapu: Yes.

Myself: Shall I be justified in issuing such a ticket for Mr. so and so, who is working day and night with us and, but for whose help, we could not have made any progress in the matter of our arrangements?

Bapu: Yes.

Myself: Then, arguing in the same way, why can I not issue such a ticket to myself?

Bapu laughed heartily at the question and said: "Yes, you can. But let me tell you that, if any of the invitees care to attend the Congress, I would surely say to them: The Reception Committee has shown its courtesy. But won't you like to pay instead of attending free?"

This line of reasoning very much appealed to me, as the maximum fee for a visitor's ticket was rupees five thousand, and I was very much short of funds.

Another difficulty then faced me in the form of a resolution of the Reception Committee. I then said: "I shall issue the tickets, but there is a small difficulty about the resolution of the Reception Committee. All the same, I think I shall issue the tickets.

Bapu: How will you overcome the resolution of the Reception Committee?

Myself: I shall let it alone. I do not think I can get the resolution rescinded.

Bapu: No, you should not act against the resolution of the Reception Committee.

Myself: Then what shall I do? I do not think I shall be able to argue with the Reception Committee and carry conviction to them. I must, therefore, take the risk of displeasing them, if at all these tickets are to be issued.

Bapu: No, that would not be proper. You must hold a special meeting of the Reception Committee and get the resolution rescinded.

Myself: I will do so provided you agree to remain present at the meeting and argue with the members.

Needless to add that Gandhiji attended the meeting. The original resolution was recinded, and then the tickets were issued. While I was prepared to get my objective,

even by unconstitutional executive action, Gandhiji was not prepared to have the objective that way. No philosophy of "the end justifying the means". The means had also to be equally pure and high as the aims. The small incident shows Gandhiji as a real democrat.

Sasavane (Bombay),

1-6-1946.

MEETING GANDHIJI

Gaganvihari Mehta

THE first time I met Gandhiji was in December, 1915, in Bombay at the time of the Congress session. He had come back from South Africa and was settling down in India. I went along with my father. I remember I was with trousers on and found a little difficulty in squatting on the floor where Gandhiji was sitting. He spoke about the 'untouchables' and said that he preferred the term 'suppressed' classes to the expression 'depressed' classes which was then in vogue. It was the so-called higher castes, he said, which were really 'depressed'. He added that this term was not his original but was suggested to him by someone else—probably Mr. Andrews. I was too young then—only about fifteen—to appreciate his greatness. All that I felt was, I remember, a feeling of strangeness, a feeling that this man seemed to be very different from the normal men one knew—a 'crank', if you will!

Gandhiji's speech in the open session of the Congress was a great disappointment at least for the younger members of the audience like myself. He was received with tremendous ovation coming as he did after his historic fight in South Africa. But he spoke slowly and unemotionally—without any rhetorical flourishes and gestures. His simple, conversational style and low voice—there were no loud-speakers and microphones—were in sharp contrast to the eloquence and histrionic arts of Surendranath

Bannerjee who dominated the platform in those days. "No," we said, "this gentleman may have led a movement and fought the Whites in South Africa, but he is no speaker! He cannot move the masses or carry vast audiences with him!" How sadly mistaken were those immature judgments!

My next recollection of Gandhiji is of the Gujarat Political Conference at Godhra where he made his first debut in politics. It was October 1917. Educational authorities in Bombay had issued a circular prohibiting students from attending political meetings. This was as a result of Mrs. Besant's Home Rule Movement. Priding ourselves on some brave act of defiance, some of us went about attending these meetings and conferences. To Godhra, I went in the same train with Shri Mahadev Desai who was to place himself at Gandhiji's disposal there. I hesitated to go to see Gandhiji, but Mahadevbhai pressed me. I simply bowed to him. Someone—I think it was Shri Manilal Kothari—told him that, since I had come to attend the Political Conference in violation of the Government order, I could be called a satyagrahi and a follower of Bapu! Gandhiji only smiled: he did not probably agree with this certificate!

At the Conference, Gandhiji's speech was so unconventional—dealing as it did with subjects pertaining to the daily lives and activities of men including the cleaning of latrines—that it surprised many and shocked a few. To some, his emphasis on non-violence did not appeal; others were disappointed at the absence of passionate tirades against the Government and the British; others again did not relish his crusade against Hindu orthodoxy as summed up in his active fraternization with the 'untouchables'.

One small incident I still remember. He was very keen on beginning the proceedings punctually. Once the proceedings were delayed by about fortyfive minutes owing to the late arrival of a popular leader. In opening the proceedings Gandhiji simply said: "I think Swaraj will also be delayed by fortyfive minutes!"

For years after that I had no occasion to get anything but a glimpse of Gandhiji. In May 1924 after his release from prison subsequent to his operation, he was staying in Juhu at the sea-side bungalow of late Seth Narottam Morarjee. (Again after exactly twenty years, he stayed at very nearly the same place—at the hut provided by Seth Narottam's son, Shri Shantikumar—after his release due to his serious illness). I went with my father and nephew. My little nephew sang a national song in Bengali which pleased Gandhiji. He appreciated the Bengali accents as well as the melody. And when my nephew sang another Gujarati song which was a kind of satire with 'jais' for non-cooperators and 'shame' for co-operators with many names included in it, Gandhiji could not control his laughter. He told my young nephew half seriously, however, not to cry 'shame' to anyone even in fun!

Years rolled by. Mahadevbhai sometimes asked me to discuss some of my difficulties and objections with Bapu. But I always felt shy and diffident, reluctant to take up Gandhiji's precious time. Once during the Harijan tour, I believe in 1934, he passed the outskirts of Bengal from Orissa. My wife and myself went to pay our respects at Kharagpur (about 70 miles from Calcutta), especially as our children had not seen him. Sitting in the waiting room, he was spinning surrounded by a crowd whose questions he answered good-humouredly. In those days he spoke English. Shri Satish Dasgupta's son asked him: "Are you well, Bapu?" And Gandhiji in his rolling, slow, measured words flashed back: "Do you mean physically or mentally?" The whole crowd laughed. Someone said that the station master wanted to see him. "Call him, whoever he is, to me all are station masters!" he retorted.

One thing that struck us at that meeting and afterwards whenever we went to Sevagram was the personal attention given by Gandhiji and Kasturba to the smallest details about the comfort of their guests. Even in the midst of his multifarious duties, Gandhiji made personal enquiries to find out whether we had had our meals, and what

arrangements had been made at the Kharagpur station or in the town. I was truly amazed at this meticulous care by one who would not ordinarily be expected even to think of these matters!

When Gandhiji stayed at Shri Sarat Chandra Bose's house in Calcutta in 1937, we never disturbed him. We were given by him the easy, pleasant and enviable work of taking Mahadevbhai out in the evenings for a walk. At first he did not know with whom Mahadevbhai was going, but he immediately guessed it; then he entrusted that work to us. Once Mahadevbhai had heavy arrears of work and was very tired; he told us that he did not think he could go that day. But Gandhiji gently reprimanded him. He told him: "You might go without food for a day but never without exercise, Mahadev! Please go." Mahadevbhai obeyed. It was a touching sight to see him working near Gandhiji and to watch their mental reactions and talk. Often after that sad day in August 1942, when Mahadevbhai passed away, I thought of those afternoons and evenings when I saw them both together in Calcutta.

I had occasion to see Gandhiji twice for what may be called public work. It was during July-August 1941 in connection with the Indo-Burma Immigration Agreement, on which I wanted his views and guidance. The first time I saw him, he had just seen the Agreement and had not studied it. Should I see Shri Aney about this since he was about to join the Executive Council in charge of the Portfolio of Indians Abroad? Certainly, said Gandhiji. He thought that was probably the best appointment the Viceroy had made. On the second occasion, he had not only perused the Agreement but was decisively against its terms. He said that he would draft and issue a statement on the Immigration question, and enquired whether I could wait a day more. It was a privilege to do so. Next day he wrote it out in his own hand and asked me to go through it and get it typed. But there was hardly anything to see through in the sense of verbal corrections and

suggestions. Within two hours, it was placed before him when he touched it up a little and gave it back. It was then that I realized his insight which made him go straight into the core of the problem. When he discussed a question or gave his considered opinion, he was brief, businesslike and pointed. His judgment was penetrating and incisive, his approach clear and concrete.

It was then also that I learnt about his idea of living for 100 years. While I was with him, a gong struck near his room at about 5 p.m. He asked me what I thought it was. I replied that it might be time for an early meal. He said that it was a signal for him to stop work, and was devised by the Ashram people. He added that an astrologer had forecasted that he was to live 100 years, and if for nothing else, at least to prove the astrologer right, he had to try and live up to that prophecy. Everyone laughed.

During his fast in February-March 1943, I went to see him in the Aga Khan Palace at Poona. His voice was feeble but clear. When I told him about the All Parties Conference we had in Delhi, he smiled a little as though to indicate that he knew about it all and only whispered: "I knew all along that they won't listen. I had built no hopes."

I saw to my astonishment that he was holding, in his trembling hands, a book of English verse. One poem which he was very fond of reading at that time, I am told, was Thomson's 'Hound of Heaven'.

Above all, he was calm and looked even cheerful. When I told this to Shrimati Sarojini Naidu, she said: "That does not necessarily indicate physical well-being. He will be cheerful till the end and will face even Death with a smile!"

At Juhu after his release in May 1944, we had accidentally the good fortune to stay almost next door to Gandhiji. We received him there and also bade him farewell when he left for Poona. He read the tribute paid by me to Mahadevbhai in *The Hindusthan Standard* after

his demise and was touched by it. He wrote a beautiful letter which is one of my proud possessions, and asked me to read something with Mahadevbhai's son and take interest in his training. When we went to see him (which was only once during his month's stay), I told him that I wanted to make him laugh. He said it was all to the good, as people only saw him to tell him of their miseries and sorrows! When I read out to him the imaginary last words attributed to him in a *New Statesman* competition, he chuckled heartily over the remark: "I hope they won't think I am doing *this* also (i.e. dying) in order to embarrass the British."

He was deeply concerned when he came to know that my daughter Uma was ill. He made kind enquiries every day from Dr. Sushilabehn Nayyar and personally came to see her. He was observing silence during those days and carried on conversation with him through gestures and interpreters. He made everyone (including the patient) roar with laughter.

On my return from U.S.A., I went to see him at Sevagram and convey to him such impressions as I could and also convey such messages as I had. He was observing silence. The first question he put to me was: "Did you enjoy yourself thoroughly?" at which all round him laughed. He accepted a book of Louis Fischer's which I had brought for him, and then said: "In short, America and other countries are not prepared to help us unless we help ourselves."

Twice in Sodepur we had the privilege of having those brisk walks with him, one evening and one morning. He likes 'small talks' when he walks, and chuckled when we told him some stories. Referring to Pandit Jawaharlal, he said: "In many ways, he has surpassed me!"

Calcutta,
25-3-1946.

HIS DAILY LIFE

Mirabehn

OF all the incidents in Bapu's long career, to me, the richest and profoundest is the ever-recurring incident of his daily life. By this I do not mean the fact that he gets up at 4 or 3.30 in the morning, has prayers twice a day, eats unspiced food, and so on. Others also do this. It is *the way* he does everything. Whenever I am with Bapu I love to sit near him in silence for a while each day. Not when he is meeting people and carrying on discussions, but when he is alone. I know nothing more exquisitely gentle than the touch of Bapu's hand, and I am never tired of watching him handling his writing work. Nothing is ruffled or damaged by his hands, and nothing is wasted. I watch—Bapu is absorbed in his thoughts. He softly takes a piece of paper to write a letter. Though small, it is yet bigger than he requires for his concise communications, so he carefully folds it, and then divides it in two. It is now about 3 inches broad and 5 inches long, and on this he writes all he needs to say. Again he looks for something. There is a little khadi case with stationery in it. This he gently opens and extracts an envelope, addresses it, slips into it the written sheet, and puts it into a little basket, kept for outgoing letters. The next communication is evidently to be still shorter, and he takes up a post card. It is not a fountain pen which he is using; some misfortune happened to his last one, since when he writes with an ordinary nib and holder. The ink-pot is one of Bapu's little patents, and consists of a tiny balm bottle fixed in a wooden stand which also carries pen and pencils. The little old tin screw top of the balm bottle Bapu most delicately puts off and on every time he uses his "ink-stand". The post card is now finished and slipped into the basket. Again he turns to the khadi stationery case. It is evidently an article that he is going to write, because he extracts a number of odd sheets, with writing on one side, but unused on the other. These are his "pusti" sheets, carefully

collected from the blank pages on the backs of letters and other communications which come in endless numbers by each post. Bapu begins to write. The article seems to be of a serious nature, probably on some burning problem of the day, for a concentrated, even stern, look appears on his countenance. Before the article is finished he begins to feel sleepy. The pen is laid in the stand, and the tiny tin top is placed on the balm bottle. The "pusti" sheets are carefully put on one side, and Bapu turns and lies down on his *gaddi*. He removes his glasses, places them by the side of his pillow, and in one or two minutes he is fast asleep, and breathing as peacefully as a little child.

I take up a handkerchief and, sitting near his head, keep off the flies.

Such times are for me infinitely precious, infinitely sweet, and filled with a profound teaching which could never be conveyed in words.

On one such occasion, when I was sitting near Bapu, he could not find his pencil, a little stump which he had been cherishing. A whisper went round that Bapuji was hunting for his pencil. Members of the staff began to search about. It could not be found anywhere, so somebody brought him a new pencil. "No," said Bapu, "I want my little stump." So somebody brought him another stump. "Do you expect me to be satisfied with somebody else's stump?" he said. "Supposing you had lost your child, would you be satisfied if somebody brought you another child and said, 'take this one instead'?" After that a desperate hunt was made, and at last *the* little stump was found and triumphantly brought to Bapu, who received it with a beaming smile.

There is only one real Gandhi Ashram in the whole world, and that is the few square feet containing Bapu's *gaddi* and little writing desk.

Pashulok (U.P.),
24-1-1948.

GANDHIJI AS I KNEW HIM

Pyarelal Nayyar

The following jottings were penned during my last stay with Gandhiji only a few days before the end. They were to be placed before him for his final scrutiny and approval. Daily I used to recall, to his immense amusement, various little incidents and anecdotes that I had set down. "Bapu, all this stuff is coming to you. You will have to go through it before I return to Noakhali," I used to tell him, to which he used to reply, "Yes, I am ready for it." Alas, it was not to be, and I must leave it for the present as an unfinished fragment till God gives the strength and opportunity to present to the readers a comprehensive volume of reminiscences of him who came down to dwell in our midst to bless us and hallow the ground he trod upon.

GANDHIJI first came to me in the form of public caning. I was then a lad in my teens attending high school. Gokhaleji had just returned from South Africa and was to address a public gathering in Bradlaugh Hall, Lahore, to appeal for help to the South African Indian satyagraha struggle which Gandhiji was conducting; and the caning was for attending a 'political meeting' without obtaining permission in 'due form' from the hostel authorities. I was given the choice of tendering an apology which I declined, and was thus against my will turned into a rebel and initiated into satyagraha, without being aware of it. Little did I realize at that time that my experience was only a portent of the things to come, and that what I was doing then, one day the whole of India would do under Gandhiji's inspiration.

The meeting was a grand affair. Lala Lajpat Rai was in the chair and made an impassioned appeal, full of his usual fire which sent everybody's blood coursing through the veins. But what impressed me most was Gokhale's description of how not only had Gandhiji himself courted imprisonment but under his inspiration his wife and children had done likewise with thousands of

Indian men and women with the heroic courage and faith of the martyrs of old.

Six long years elapsed before I had my first physical glimpse of him in the city of Amritsar during the Christmas of 1919. I was then studying for my Master of Arts in the Government College, Lahore, and had gone to Amritsar to attend the Congress session as a student visitor. It was a raw winter evening, made worse by a heavy downpour of rain. From the station I trudged through the mud to the house of a friend. While I was climbing the stairs, a party consisting of Swami Shraddhanandji, Pandit Malaviyaji and Gandhiji came up from behind. I hid myself behind a door leaf on the staircase landing, and from my safe retreat heard a conversation which constituted a landmark in my life. It had been decided to acquire the site of the Jallianwala Bagh for the nation and to turn it into a memorial to the martyrs who had fallen in General Dyer's massacre on the fateful 13th of April 1919; and the deputation had come to expedite the collection for the memorial fund. During the discussion Malaviyaji appealed with his characteristic winsomeness in the name of *Dharma* (duty), *Artha* (worldly gain), *Kāma* (happiness), and *Moksha* (salvation). But somehow it did not cut ice with the hard-headed, hard-boiled businessmen of Amritsar. When Gandhiji's turn came to speak, he simply said that the target that had been fixed had to be reached. Failing that he would sell his ashram and make up the amount from the proceeds. He would not let the sanctity of the national resolve, to which he had been party, to be lightly treated. The businessmen were left wondering at the rocklike firmness of their strange client, and the first lesson that he had given them in the sanctity of national resolves.

A battle royal was waged in the Congress during that session over the Montford scheme of reforms. In the draft resolution under discussion the reforms were described as "inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing". Lokamanya Tilak advocated acceptance of the scheme in order to prove its inadequacy. "Whether we like to use it or not," he explained, "has been deliberately omitted in the resolution,

because it goes without saying that every statute of Parliament will be obeyed in this country. If we are loyal subjects of the British nation, every act that is passed by Parliament is binding on us. . . ." Gandhiji objected to the use of the ambiguous middle. He joined issue with the Lokamanya that a loyal subject must *ipso facto* obey every statute of Parliament irrespective of the right or wrong of it. "I am here to declare that I shall obey the orders and statutes of the King Emperor only so long as they appeal to my head and heart, but it is no part of my duty to obey any orders or laws against which my conscience rebels. I shall disobey them and take upon me the penalty." If a thing was disappointing, he went on, it had to be rejected outright. If, on the other hand, they accepted it, it should be to give it a fair trial. He was opposed to acceptance with 'mental reservations'. In the plenary session he delivered a speech in Hindustani which breathed the fire of conviction. "I shall challenge that position, and I shall go across from one end of India to the other and say we shall fail in our culture, we shall fall from our position . . . if we do not respond to the hand that is extended to us." And with that he passionately flung down his white cap on the rostrum to plead bare-headed with the Lokamanya. The end was a dramatic, eleventh hour compromise. The substance of his amendment was accepted. The paradoxical thing about it was that, although his was a plea for moderation and compromise, the spirit it breathed was of a rebel, more thorough-going and revolutionary than any that India had produced so far.

Even more impressive to me at that time was his utterance on the resolution of condemnation of mob excesses. It was Napoleonic in its brevity and force. I can recall it almost word for word. Characterizing it as the most important resolution before the house, he told them that the key to their success in the future lay in their hearty acceptance of that resolution, in their hearty acceptance of the truth underlying that resolution and acting up to it. "To the extent that we fail to recognize

the eternal truth underlying this resolution we are bound to fail.....I agree that there was grave provocation given by the Government. The Government went mad, but our people went mad too. I say, do not return madness with madness, but return madness with sanity, and the whole situation will be yours." His voice was full-chested, so ringing and distinct as to be clearly audible to the farthest end of the vast gathering in that pre-mike era.

Another little incident came a couple of months later. I had gone to Gandhiji's temporary residence at Lahore to make an appointment with him, through the good offices of a friend. Martial law trials were then in full swing, and Gandhiji's residence was at all times besieged with the friends and relations of those who were involved in the prosecutions. One such deputation was having conference with him when I reached there. It was considered to be a hopeless case as there was a murder charge against the accused. How could anyone dare to recommend for amnesty an accused guilty of political murder? They were in utter despair. But Gandhiji consoled them: "Let me have full facts of the case and a clear confession if your relation has done anything wrong. I would love even the worst of murderers to be saved from the gallows. I have several such men in my ashram as valued co-workers. They have been completely converted to non-violence."

Here was something new in the political field, a man of religion tackling political problems from an essentially human angle. There was something in that voice—a quality of compassion coupled with a quiet dignity and a sense of kingly power—that gripped me. I had found my master, and thereafter I was his man.

I saw him a couple of days later, and it was decided that I should go and join him in the Ashram at Sabarmati. "But I do not want you to discontinue your studies just yet," he added. "You must first finish what you have begun." How often I have since heard him quote the Sanskrit text which says that not to undertake is the first mark of wisdom, but having undertaken a thing, wisdom requires that one must see it through.

In the autumn of that year, I non-cooperated and went to the Ashram. The non-cooperation movement was then in full swing, and Gandhiji was on tour when I reached before," I replied "but I shall try." "All right, then," he asked me as soon as he saw me. "I have never done it before," I replied, "but I shall try." "All right, then," he proceeded, write me a thesis on the theory and practice of non-cooperation in English, and another in Hindustani on any subject you like, say, for instance, "Why I came to Gandhi". "And I want both to be in my hands before 3 p.m. today," he added. I sat down immediately to scribble out the first, napped over it for half an hour, tore it up, rewrote it, and delivered it to him along with the Hindustani piece at 1 p.m. On the next day he again left the Ashram on one of his unending whirlwind tours, and I buried myself in the Ashram routine, forgetting all about the thesis. One afternoon while I was still bending over my chores, I got a letter from him in Hindustani saying that he had gone through my thesis and had liked it. It ended with the sentence, "I want to make use of your pen." Two days later I got a wire from him asking me to join him immediately at No. 1 Daryaganj, the late Dr. Ansari's residence. Two days more, and I found myself seated in his presence facing a barrage of questions concerning minute, intimate details about all the members of the Ashram that constituted his family. I was then sent away to wash and make myself comfortable after the long railway journey. Later in the day I was again called. He had my thesis before him. He wanted to publish it in *Young India*. Had I read Thoreau? "I had not," I replied. I had derived my inspiration from the English writers, particularly the poets, and from Tolstoy. I was not much of a reader. I explained to him that I read only as an aid to my thinking. I found it tedious to read a book through. He said that was all right, and sent my writing for publication in *Young India*, "as an able contribution by a Punjabee student who has recently non-cooperated".

The next day the party visited Rohtak. I stayed behind. On his return at evening he rated me for drop-

ping behind; and when I explained that no one had invited me to accompany, he gave peremptory instructions to his entourage for the future in regard to me. Afterwards he explained to me that someone in the party had been remiss in his duty, but I should have made it my concern to save him from his mistake by my vigilance. Shyness or modesty when it stood in the way of performing one's duty should be regarded as a species of subtle pride and conquered."

Later he introduced me to Seth Jamnalal Bajaj as "the young man I spoke to you about." The affectionate, warm-hearted Jamnalalji at once took me under his wing, and as a token of his affection made me eat a piece of corn meal cake, and when I hesitated, clinched the matter by saying: "In these matters—eating and drinking—you should be guided by me, in everything else by all means follow Bapu."

That evening Shri Mahadev Desai left for Ahmedabad to look after *Young India*, and the long anticlimax of my schooling under Bapu began. Moisture on the outside of a glass must be wiped before handing it to anyone; after washing one's hands do not push open a door with them while serving meals; before offering a cup of milk it must be stirred with a spoon to bring to the surface any foreign matter lying at the bottom; the rationale and importance of dotting the 'i's and crossing the 't's in a manuscript to make it legible, how to make a bed, how to clean a commode, how to scan a newspaper thoroughly in the shortest time—these were some of the little things that I had to learn within the next few days. Not a small part of the training consisted in unlearning what I had previously learnt at school and college. "Call for facts, do not speculate in the void. It is waste of mental energy, a sign of laziness. Do not cite epigrams turned out by others, distrust them, think for yourself. Thought is more precious than language, and judgment most precious of all. If the judgment is faulty, everything else is nothing worth;" and so on. Later he began to twit me for reading literature, and when I chaffed under it he called me thin-skinned and

began to descant on the virtue of having a 'rhino hide'. Once he told me in polite language that I was just a street Arab, and that one needed to be a *bhogi* like himself to be able to serve well.

Once he gave us a passage from Milton's *Areopagitica*, and asked us to point out a flaw which he had found in the writer's argument. The writer in that passage had tried to argue that since intellect was the mind's eyes, to suppress a book was worse than inflicting death on the author. For death only put out the light of the eye, but to suppress a book was to put out the light of the mind which is God's most precious gift to man. "It is an overstatement of the case," Gandhiji explained to us afterwards, "and that is bad advocacy." "Why, the work suppressed may not be a writer's best or last. If he lives, he may produce more and better works. I expected a writer of Milton's calibre to be more careful in his thinking."

Mahadev's absence was a great personal deprivation. For, at the very first contact he had constituted himself into an elder brother—a role which he continued to fulfil till death took him away. In his absence Devadas, as 'the senior partner of the firm', became my friend, philosopher and guide, and took upon himself to educate me into my duties. I was raw and inexperienced—a green horn. His tips came very handy. One of them I still remember: "If you want to persuade Bapu to take a particular fruit, speak of it in the superlative degree. He is very fastidious in the matter of fruit." It took me quite a lot of patient study and observation to discover that his simplicity was a very complex art. "Simplicity is not so simple a thing as most people imagine," he once remarked on a subsequent occasion.

The stay in Delhi lasted only for a few days after my arrival. Towards the close he performed the opening ceremony of the Tibbia College. I noticed that before going to the meeting he wrote out his speech in full in English. I grasped its significance afterwards when, on his return from the meeting, he expressed great satisfaction that he had succeeded in giving full expression in Hindu-

stani to everything he had to say. He was at that time struggling with his Hindustani, and during the railway journeys the 'Munshi' used to be his unfailing companion, and whenever he could steal a minute—while taking his meals or even in the lavatory, he would turn over its pages.

About the same time a deputation waited on him to request him to preside over a Goraksha Parishad. Their ideology was of the orthodox, militant type. He declined their invitation saying that, although he attached great importance to the subject, his notions of 'Goraksha' were peculiar to himself and differed from theirs. "So long as there is the bone of a single slaughtered cow in India or a cow that is skin and bone, cow protection is a mere make-believe. My cow protection requires the uttermost purity and self-sacrifice, austerity, hard study and penance on our part. I see no place for these in your programme."

With another deputation he discussed the removal of untouchability. The Congress had not yet adopted it as an integral part of its programme, and some of the deputationists could not understand its importance in terms of the independence struggle. They thought that it would disrupt the common, united political front. But he was adamant. "You do not know whom you are pitted against. The moment they (the British) find that the game of setting up the Hindus against the Muslims is played out, they will use the 'suppressed' classes to push forth their policy of 'divide and rule'." This was ten years before the Harijan question became the question of questions and the main stumbling block in the realization of our national aspiration.

From Delhi we went to Lucknow where a session of the Khilafat Conference was to be held. It was at Lucknow too that I was first introduced to Pandit Motilalji as "the writer of that article on the Theory and Practice of Non-cooperation." I felt greatly flattered when the fastidious old Panditji greeted me with an appreciative smile, remarking that it (the article) was "extremely well done".

During the days that followed I noticed several things. One was Gandhiji's marvellous capacity to go on working day after day with only three or four hours' sleep—sometimes without any sleep at all. The second was his precision and thoroughness in the minutest details. The third was his meticulous regard for cleanliness and neatness, and impatience with slovenliness in any shape or form—in thinking, writing, dress, daily life. The fourth was the military discipline and clock-work regularity which he enforced in his own case and expected from those around him. The fifth was his habit of doing everything, so far as possible, for himself. If he wanted a paper to be looked up or a spittoon to be brought to him, he preferred to do it himself, even mended his own clothes. He preferred writing himself to dictating. One day I actually counted 56 letters which he had written in his own hand. Each one of these he re-read from the date line to the final detail of the address before handing them for despatch. At the end of it he was so exhausted that pressing his throbbing temples between his two hands he lay himself down on the hard floor just where he was sitting, without even caring to spread the bedding against which he was leaning. He simply pushed it aside.

He wrote with a steel nib from a country-made glass ink-stand costing half an anna, and used a red-coloured piece of khadi as satchel for keeping his files and papers. His diet consisting of goat's milk, raisins and fruit was weighed out and measured with a druggist's exactness and care. And when I once gradually increased the number of raisins from nineteen to twentythree he gave me a sermon on the danger of blind affection. Menu for the next meal was adjusted carefully each time according to how the system had responded to the previous meal, the amount of sleep he had or expected to have, and the physical and mental strain already undergone or in prospect. He insisted on the desk being kept always clear. The daily post was divided among the assistants as soon as it arrived, and woe to the person who referred a letter to him more than two days old. Sometimes he would pick out for us to deal

with letters containing knotty conundrums and himself check the replies. He deprecated fineness or dialectical tricks in replies, wanted answers to be straight, clear and to the point. "They must squarely meet the correspondent's difficulty." But in case of disputations correspondents who wrote only to lay traps he appreciated a clever, diplomatic reply or even a good retort, provided it was free from sting. Any reply of more than five or ten lines was rejected and consigned to the waste paper basket. The address was no less minutely scrutinized. Not to know or not to be able to find with the help of Bradshaw and posts and telegraphs guide the exact location of an out-of-the-way place in India was regarded as a culpable failure. Vagueness about train timings or the exact time it took for the post to reach its destination by a particular route was another cardinal sin. Deciphering bad handwriting provided another test in patience, perseverance, and resourcefulness. When the name of the place in an address baffled all efforts at decipherment he recommended plagiarising the illegible handwriting as closely as possible, and on another occasion suggested that the addressee's signature should be cut out from the original letter and pasted on to the address cover!

In the wake of these came other lessons. First was a delicate consideration for the convenience of the hosts. Being late at meals he regarded as inexcusable himsa. At the same time to succumb to the attentions of the fond and overgenerous hosts he regarded as a sign of weakness of character. "If you really want and insist on your hosts providing you with wholesome, simple diet, they will understand and have respect for you. If you succumb to their hospitality they will enjoy it but secretly they will have contempt for you, and that rightly." He always expected us to remember in the midst of overflowing kindness and hospitality that surrounded us everywhere that India was a poor country where millions did not enjoy even three square meals. But to be squeamish about freely using milk and even costly fruit when it was available, he no less regarded as a sign of perverse and unhealthy

kink in the mind.

I noticed that, though an ascetic in his personal habits, he was a most sensitive aesthete and managed his asceticism with perfect artistry without ever letting it become a source of embarrassment to others. For instance, he always deprecated the tea and coffee habit as being incompatible with simple living. But knowing that some members of his entourage had that habit, he would sometimes, during railway journeys, actually go out and fetch a tray of tea from the railway tea stall while his companions slept!

From Lucknow we went to Gujranwala and Rawalpindi. During the return journey, Dr. Kitchlew was travelling with us. Everybody in the compartment was fast asleep. Suddenly in the middle of the night Gandhiji woke me up and asked what the next halt was. "Gujarat," I replied. "Remember to wake up Dr. Kitchlew when the train halts. He is in the next compartment. He has to get down at—. He might be overcarried if nobody wakes him up in time." He again woke up soon after the train had passed—, and made sure that his orders in regard to Dr. Kitchlew had been duly carried out.

It was during this journey that the news about the tragedy at Nankana Saheb was received and necessitated a visit to the site of that grim happening. In the course of his speech there he laid down a dictum which has since become classic in the strategy of non-violence, viz. that it is not enough to eschew the use of force. Show of force too must be avoided. Anything that makes the opponent feel nervous is provocative of violence and is therefore itself a species of violence. At Lahore he was asked by an English daily to give a statement to the press on Nankana Saheb tragedy. There was no time. He was just starting for Ludhiana. "Can your representative accompany me as far as—?" he asked. "It is nearly 40 minutes' run. That will be enough for me." And as sure as anything, five minutes before the train reached there he had dashed out at white heat an open letter addressed to 'Khalsaji' and

handed it to the astounded press representative, at the next halt duly finished and revised—a classic of its kind. "One must be able to command one's thinking as an expert horseman does the horse he rides," he remarked afterwards. He co-related it with Brahmacharya. "Ordinarily our thoughts jostle chaotically in our mind. The discipline of Brahmacharya enables one to order them and to exclude at will every thought, impulse or feeling that is not relevant to the thinking in hand. If we could do that, we would not know what fatigue is. It is not the work that kills, it is the chaos, the friction of ideas in the mind that causes the wear and tear."

He had not yet resumed third class travelling—his state of health did not allow it after his recent illness. Nor did I ever see him at that time sit down to say his morning or evening prayers individually or with the rest while out of the Ashram. That came later after his release from Yeravda prison in 1924.

Another little incident that happened during this tour left an indelible impression on my mind. At Lahore he was putting up with the late Lala Lajpat Rai. The lion of the Punjab had not yet accepted in full the non-cooperation programme. Some Punjab leaders came to see Gandhiji and offered to take independent action under his lead. But he (Gandhiji) discountenanced the proposed move. The Punjab was Lalaji's province. He would not encourage or be party to any indiscipline in Lalaji's camp. It would be disloyalty to a colleague, and that was what he had never been guilty of in his life. In the Punjab he would act only with and through Lalaji. They must follow Lalaji's advice when it differed from his own. Lalaji was not present in the room when the conversation took place. But he overheard it from the adjoining room and was so deeply moved by it that it laid the foundation of an indissoluble and lifelong friendship between the two. Gandhiji maintained the same rigorous code of loyalty to all comrades throughout his life.

New Delhi,
13-4-1948.

LIGHT AND SHADE

Sushila Nayyar

MANY people seem to think that a sense of humour is incompatible with a serious or religious bent of mind. Therefore they are sceptical when they hear that Gandhiji never misses an opportunity to crack a joke and have a good laugh. "How can he possibly laugh and joke when he is carrying such a heavy burden on his shoulders?" ask others. Gandhiji's reply is that he is able to shoulder the burden because of his ability to laugh under all circumstances. "If I had no sense of humour," he said to a friend recently, "the attacks that I have had to face would have killed me long ago. But I have a living faith in God, and so long as He guides my footsteps, I do not care what people say about me. I take it lightly and can laugh even with those who laugh at me. This is what keeps me going."

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS JOKES

I have often been struck by the way Gandhiji is able to adapt his conversation and his jokes to his company. With children he jokes like a child, with the young people he is a young man, with old people he is old, with politicians he laughs and jokes about politics and with householders about their domestic affairs. But a careful observer can note that in all his jokes there is an undercurrent of seriousness. Even while joking he never says a thing that he does not mean, and not a word escapes his lips that may be termed frivolous.

One can always learn something by listening to Gandhiji's talk irrespective of whether it is light or grave. I well remember how once at the Sabarmati Ashram a girl came for the evening walk with half her sari stained with ink. She had broken her ink pot, spilled the ink on her clothes, and had been too lazy to go and change afterwards. Gandhiji greeted her with a smile: "Hullo, you have brought Ganga and Jamna together." Everyone laughed at the remark. The children were curious to know the meaning of what Gandhiji had said. He explained to them how the waters of Jamna look darker than the waters of

Ganga, how the two come together at the Sangam at Prayag, and still one can discern the two currents distinct from each other for some distance. The joke became so much the richer for the instruction it brought them.

At the time of the Rajkot Satyagraha, Shri Kasturba insisted on going to Rajkot to fill the breach caused by the arrest of Shrimatis Maniben Patel and Mridula Sarabhai. She had been mothering Ramdas Gandhi's little son for some time. The boy had become very attached to her and would not leave his grandmother's side even for a little while. After her departure for Rajkot he was disconsolate and cried for 'Motiba' (Grandmother) all the time. Nobody could manage him, and Gandhiji was too busy. But he had to take up the matter in the end. He sent for the child and told him that he would soon be with 'Motiba'. The little imp was at once all smiles. Gandhiji took out a *mālā* (rosary) and gave it to him. He told him the story of little Dhruva, and then advised him to sit down in meditation in imitation of the child saint. When he had done so, Gandhiji told him to tell the beads repeating 'Motiba' each time. "If you do that with absolute concentration and without a break, Motiba will be with you in person." And so little Kana sat down with eyes closed, counting the beads in all seriousness, with all the concentration that he was capable of. The family had a little relief and could attend to their work. From time to time little Kana would open his eyes and complain: "Motiba has not yet come." Gandhiji reprimanded him in mock seriousness: "That is because you interrupt your meditation time and again. In this way she won't come at all." And so the fun went on for two or three days. In the meantime Gandhiji had made arrangements for the boy to be sent to his mother at Dehradun!

IN SORROW AND SICKNESS TOO

His laughter has at times the quality of tears in it. Many of us can laugh when all is going well, but Gandhiji's sense of humour does not leave him even in the midst of adversity and sorrow. No one who saw him laughing and

joking with the visitors on the day of Shrimati Kasturba's cremation, could have imagined what her passing away had meant for him. It created a void that could not be filled. As Gandhiji himself said more than once, after sixtytwo years of companionship he just could not adjust himself to life without her. Yet he would not let his grief be seen. He had been sitting before the burning pyre from the early morning without food or water. Towards the evening someone suggested that he might retire and have some rest and nourishment. But he laughed and said: "If after sixtytwo years of companionship I leave her now while the cremation is unfinished, Ba will never forgive me." Who does not remember, how Ba could sometimes scold, and how like a sport he let her exercise her prerogative to be his own and everybody's good-humoured laughter? The secret of his ability to smile even under the weight of the most crushing sorrow, as he often explained, lay in his abiding faith in the goodness of God.

"It is easy enough to smile when life flows forth like a song.
But the man worthwhile is the man who can smile
When everything goes dead wrong."

In illness too he keeps a smiling face and can appreciate a good joke. That sometimes misleads those around him. During his illness at the Aga Khan Palace, the Government of Bombay sent their Surgeon-General to report on his condition. Out of his inborn courtesy Gandhiji greeted him with a friendly smile. He laughed and joked with him, and the temporary animation of the patient's face deceived the doctor. He went and issued a reassuring bulletin, which he had to contradict within 48 hours after seeing the pathologist's reports. These reports disclosed a dangerously low kidney efficiency, and resulted in the Government deciding to order his release unconditionally.

After his release his irrepressible high spirits sometimes created difficulties for his doctors and attendants. People, when they saw him cheerful and smiling, thought that the doctors were unnecessarily alarming the public. They took the law in their own hands and entered into long tiring conversations. The result was that when he went

to Juhu after three days' stay in Poona, he was at his lowest; and stricter rules had to be enforced in order to ensure a more satisfactory convalescence.

HOW GANDHIJI BRINGS DOWN HIS BLOOD PRESSURE

That reminds me of an interesting conversation that Gandhiji had with a homoeopathic physician who was trying to elicit his symptomatology. The physician first questioned him about his family history. When and what did his father die of, he asked. "He had had a fall, developed fistula, and died at the age of 65," replied Gandhiji. That did not help. The physician proceeded: "What did your mother die of?" Gandhiji: "She became a widow and died of a broken heart." It was no good. The physician was not getting what he considered helpful replies. Seeing a bottle of jaggery on Gandhiji's table, he asked: "Do you like sweet things or pungent?" and added, "I think you like sweets." "I have a sweet tooth," replied Gandhiji, "but I could gorge myself with *bhajias* and fritters." "Oh yes, no one likes only sweets," remarked the physician indulgently. Gandhiji interrupted him: "Don't say that. I have known Brahmins who will take huge *ladus* (Sweet balls) by the dozen without any *bhajias*."

The physician was getting a bit impatient. In homoeopathy, they say, the prescription depends upon the patient's symptom complex. He had been trying to interrogate Gandhiji as carefully as he could, but he was not meeting with luck. Still he was not going to give up easily. "What about your memory?" he asked. "As rotten as you can imagine," replied Gandhiji. "I have lost the memory for details. I have often envied my friends who could roll out whole poems after reading them once." "If you can give me that gift, I shall become your unpaid advertising agent," he added with a twinkle in his eye. "God alone can give these gifts, Mahatmaji," replied the physician. "I cannot do so, however much I may like your offer." "Then give it to me without my offer," said Gandhiji. "Do you remember the occasion when years ago you went to visit the Mission Hospital at Hardwar? I took you round," the physician proceeded especially emphasizing the last part of the

sentence. "Yes, I remember visiting the hospital at Hardwar," replied Gandhiji. The physician was very pleased and quickly put in. "Then your memory is quite good." "No," replied Gandhiji, "I have a very poor memory, and I do not remember you at all!"

The physician felt discomfited. He had been jotting down his observations. He now handed the sheet to Gandhiji for verification. It ran: "Temperament very intelligent, given to philosophic and religious studies....." Gandhiji put a big question mark before the data on temperament. The physician asked: "Is it all right?" "How should I know?" replied Gandhiji. The irrepressible Dr. B. C. Roy, who never missed the opportunity of exchanging good jokes with Gandhiji, was sitting nearby. He put in: "To these you should add one more, i. e. the habit to question any allegations of virtue." The physician smiled. "That is modesty," he remarked. "Modesty has never been my weakness," Gandhiji interposed, and there was a roar of laughter.

The physician next inquired whether the homoeopath knew some others whose names had been given to Gandhiji. He knew them and had great regard for one of them, who, he said, had been his patient. "How can you have regard for a physician if he is a patient himself?" put in Gandhiji. "Well, Mahatmaji, everyone does fall sick sometimes," replied the physician. "And sickness does not come because of what we do ourselves. It comes as an inheritance from our parents." "Surely, I have not inherited hookworms from my parents, nor the germs of dysentery," remarked Gandhiji. The physician felt nonplussed. In a more serious vein Gandhiji then proceeded: "It was regard for the memory of the late C. R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru which had led me to seek homoeopathic aid. They had always wanted me to give it a trial. I have no faith in it. My own preference is all for nature cure. I have sought your aid because I have no faith in allopathic medicines, and because I am not strong enough to have faith in God and what the five elements can provide." In the end the physician said: "Mahatmaji, I do not think you need any

medicines. Regulation of your diet is all you require to get strong." Before he rose to go, he mentioned to Gandhiji about a pupil of his who was very keen on meeting Gandhiji. "She is a sweet Gujarati girl, Mahatmaji, and I would like to bring her to you if you permit me," he said. "All Gujarati girls are sweet," replied Gandhiji. "No, Mahatmaji, say all girls are sweet," corrected the physician. But Gandhiji was in a playful mood. "No," he persisted, "it is claimed as a speciality of Gujarati girls. But mind you do not run away with her." "How can you say such a thing, Mahatmaji?" said the poor man in holy horror. "I am sixty, I cannot run away with anyone at this age." But Gandhiji was bent on teasing him. "I know of a man who ran away with a French girl after the age of sixty," he said. Everybody had a good laugh. "This is how I bring down my blood-pressure," remarked Gandhiji when the laughter had subsided. And besides some innocent entertainment, he had gained a friend.

LAUGHING AWAY THE BLUES

As an illustration of how Gandhiji can make people laugh away their blues the following may be cited. Years ago an esteemed lady friend and co-worker allowed herself petulantly to make an irresponsible statement about him. On the report being referred to her for verification she replied: "Ask your own heart to verify it." In reply he wrote the following post card which I reproduce from memory:

"Dear Mother Superior,

I must address you like this. You are so solemn. I must laugh or I shall burst. How is my poor heart to tell me what your tongue whispered into somebody's ear?"

HIS READY WIT

He has an unfailing, ready wit. I have never known him to be discomfited in repartee. During his incarceration in the Yeravda Central Prison in 1930, he once ordered a knife to be made in the jail workshop. It was done in a hurry and with unskilled labour. The next day the following little dialogue took place between him and the Superintendent of the jail:

Gandhiji: "So this is your proud handiwork."
Supdt.: "Well, you insisted on 'Swadesh'."
Gandhiji: "Yes, but not Yeravda."

On S. S. the *Rajputana* by which he voyaged to England to attend the Second Round Table Conference, a number of fellow passengers (mostly Europeans) had formed a club. It was named "The Billygoats". They also ran a typed news sheet, entitled *The Scandal Times*, the title being a fair index of the contents. The members one day took it into their head to "offer their greetings to the Mahatma". Their spokesman, somewhat the worse for drink, after presenting the latest issue of *The Scandal Times* with the good wishes of the members of the club, asked him to "read it carefully" and "give his opinion" as to its contents. "For, Mr. Gandhi," he continued tipsily, "I must have it before I go down to my cabin for my next glass of whisky." Gandhiji scanned the sheets, removed the paper fastener with which they were fastened, and quietly returned them with the remark: "I have extracted the most valuable part from it." The tippler beat a hasty retreat, well pleased with the joke.

The little children of the Sabarmati Ashram used to address him questions every week which he would answer. His extremely laconic replies sometimes exasperated them. One of the bolder spirits expressed the grievance on behalf of his comrades thus: "Bapuji, you always tell us about the Gita. In the Gita Arjuna asks just a one-line question and Bhagavan Krishna rolls out a whole chapter in reply. But you answer our full-page questions with just a word or a sentence. Is it fair?" Quick came the reply: "Well, Bhagavan Krishna had only one Arjuna to deal with, while I have a host of Arjunas on my hand, and each one of them a handful. Don't I deserve sympathy?" And the little Arjunas laughed. The grievance was drowned in the joke.

On his release from the Aga Khan's Palace in May last Pandit Malaviyaji sent a wire of greetings expressing: "Every hope He will let you live hundred years to serve motherland and mankind." Gandhiji's reply was charac-

teristic. In the course of his A.I.C.C. speech on the 8th of August, 1942, he had made a humorous allusion to the possibility of his living for a hundred and twenty-five years. He had often been reminded by friends about that remark as a "public commitment" to live for a hundred and twentyfive years. His reply to Malaviyaji ran: "Your wire. At a stroke you have cut off twentyfive years. Add twentyfive to yours!"

THAT INFECTIOUS SMILE

His good humour is so catching that it led the late Maulana Mohamed Ali once to make a grievance of it. "Mahatmaji, you are very unfair to us. We come to you full of grouse, to quarrel with you. But you make us smile and laugh in spite of ourselves. So our grouse remains unventilated, and you think that it is all right with us. And he quoted the well-known couplet of Ghalib to describe his dilemma:

उनक दीदार से चेहरे पे जो आ जाती है रौनक,
वे समझते हैं कि बीमार का हाल अच्छा है.

Most people think that when Gandhiji meets to discuss political questions with his colleagues, the atmosphere must be very tense and solemn. The fact is that these meetings are often a picnic of wit and humour. Here is an illustration. C. R. and Gandhiji were discussing a letter which Gandhiji had addressed to Mr. Churchill containing his celebrated retort courteous to the latter's description of him as "the naked Fakir"!

C. R. I am afraid your letter will be misunderstood. It was a naughty letter.

G. I don't think so. I meant it seriously.

C. R. You have touched him on the raw by rubbing in a past utterance of his, of which he is probably not very proud.

G. No. I have taken out the sting by appropriating his remark as an unintended compliment.

C. R. I hope you are right.

G. I am sorry, I can't return the compliment!

NO STING

Even his most devastating retorts have the quality of benevolence. They leave no sting behind. At the Second Round Table Conference Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, in announcing the signing of what is known as the "Minorities' Pact", argued that they represented 46 per cent of India's population. Therefore the Congress claim stood repudiated by about half the population of India. It was a plausible argument, and the House was on the tip toe of expectation when Gandhiji rose to reply:

"You had a striking demonstration of the inaccuracy of this figure," he remarked, referring to the speeches of the women delegates. "You have had on behalf of the women a complete repudiation of special representation, and as they happen to be one-half of the population of India, this 46 per cent is somewhat reduced!"

To a host of press correspondents who besieged him when his boat touched the shores of England on the same occasion, he retorted when a reference was made to his unconventional attire. "The fashion here is plus-fours, I prefer minus-fours!"

Only once have I known anyone to get away with the last smile at his expense. It was in 1931, on board S. S. the *Rajputana*. He was indulging in a little swagger about his paternity bump, of which he has a grand conceit. He claimed that he could hold the baby of Shuaib Qureshi (now in Bhopal State Service) better than anyone else, and proceeded to make good his claim with a faked grimace. The baby smiled its sweetest, blandest smile as quietly it came into his arms. . . . Quickly Gandhiji returned it to its nurse, the baby still smiling but the grimace gone!

N.B. I am indebted to my brother, Shri Pyarelal, for some of the anecdotes.

New Delhi,
June 1946.

GANDHIJI AND WOMEN

Rameshwari Nehru

MY acquaintance with Gandhiji goes back to the year 1927. I heard and read about him ever since he returned to India from South Africa, and was a regular student of *Young India*. His sayings and teachings affected me deeply, and I felt irresistibly drawn towards him. But I had never met him. He was much too high a personage out of the reach of an insignificant individual like myself. So I felt.

In the years 1927 and 1928 I served as a member of the Age of Consent Committee appointed by the Government of India, and went to Ahmedabad in the course of my travels. He was then living in the Sabarmati Ashram, near Ahmedabad. I felt an urge to see him and sought an interview with him, wanting to ask his opinion on the subjects of early marriage and the age of consent which were under the investigation of my Committee.

An appointment was made, and I was given a few minutes' interview. It was sometime in the forenoon, and he was busy with the inmates of the Ashram all about him. I do not know what happened to me, but I was overwhelmed with emotion. Uncontrolled tears began to flow. I felt ashamed and became tongue-tied, not being able to say anything. Another appointment was made, and I came again to the Sabarmati Ashram; this time to spend the night so as to be able to attend the morning prayers. I was put in charge of the late Mahadevbhai who looked after my needs and before retiring had a preliminary talk with me. Next morning at dawn prayers were held on the sandy bank of the Sabarmati river. Thereafter I had my first walk with Gandhiji. I explained to him what we were doing in the Committee. He heard everything kindly and graciously. But I could feel a touch of uncongeniality about the atmosphere. Without discouraging me, however, or without expressing his disapproval of what I did, he made it clear that, although early marriage

was bad and had to be stopped, his way of doing it was not through the agency of a foreign Government which he considered to be vicious and with which he thought it necessary to non-cooperate. He told me that, to achieve my object, the better way would be to go all over the country and preach against the evils of early marriage till people were weaned from this evil custom. The serious part of the interview over, accompanied by a couple of young girls, he wended his way into the kitchen, sat down on a stool with a small table in front of him, and started peeling vegetables. A light conversation with the girls interspersed with jokes and laughter ensued. This made me feel at home and at ease. By the time the peeling of vegetables came to an end my time was over, and I came back to the labours of my Committee work pondering on all that I had seen and experienced.

How does he find time for such a trivial occupation as the peeling of vegetables in the midst of his multifarious activities and with the heavy responsibilities of guiding big movements which shape the destiny of millions resting on his shoulders, and what common interest can he have with those simple, raw young girls whom I saw around him? They hardly looked educated. Greater understanding of him and closer association with him supplied me with answers to both these questions.

During my occasional and short visits both at Wardha and at Sevagram, as I watched him engrossed in his daily occupations, I realized the fact that with him there was no high or low either in work or in men. All work was service, and all service was dedication, and so work had no rank with him. I have seen him spending time in doling out food to the inmates of his Ashram with his own trembling hands both morning and evening. I have seen him devotedly attending on the sick. I have seen him giving as much time and attention to settling trivial disputes amongst his disciples, as one would give to settling matters concerning the most intricate affairs of politics or the State. He carefully reads the reports of the smallest of institutions (and there are many such all over the country)

run under his inspiration and guides them in great detail. He has time to enter into the domestic affairs of those who come near him and who seek his aid. He gives succour to the grief-stricken, and hope to the disheartened, by giving them daily attention. At this advanced age, with growing physical weakness and equally growing pressure of work, he writes his letters with his own hands. Others may consider all this a waste; and I have heard many highly placed men and women deploring the fact, asserting that, if Gandhiji spent his time a little more judiciously, saved it from these trivialities, and spent it on higher and greater objects which awaited his attention, things would be better managed. But I know how wrong such notions are, for the deep springs of Gandhiji's unfathomable love, like Christ's and Buddha's, must be equally shared by all without any discrimination. It is the spontaneous naturalness and the wisdom of these actions which is the real secret of the hold he has over millions. I can tell from personal experience what thrill of joy a few uneven and illegible lines of his own hand-writing have given me and how I have longed to get them. It is this devotion to small matters which lifts him above everybody else, and makes the lowly feel that they too have a place in his scheme of things. In his dealings with human beings he has often struck me as a super-sculptor busily engaged with the creation of fine specimens of men and women out of the human material available to him. He moulds them, chisels them, and gives them a finish in accordance with his own conception of things. The fineness of the specimens he produces is naturally limited by the nature of the material at his command. There is, therefore, great variety and difference of stature and colour and fineness amongst his numerous followers on whom the skill of his chisel has been applied. But there is no doubt about the fact that all those hundreds of thousands of men and women who come under his magic influence are moulded into a better shape. They fall far short of his ideal, for it is so high; but they all benefit by the contact and evolve into a better and higher life.

He is out to create a new world—a world which is free from the struggle and strife and turmoil of the world of today. He wants to bring the Kingdom of God on earth from which vicious human passions are eliminated and in which the governing force is love (ahimsa) and co-operation. For the creation of this world women supply the better material. He has often said that women can make better soldiers of his non-violent army than men. He therefore has confidence in them, and that is why they are so forcefully drawn towards him. I have often found him setting tasks to these little sisters of mercy too complicated and complex to be tackled even by men of great learning and power, with no other equipment except simplicity, humility, love of truth, and an iron will which he has instilled into them. These little women wear themselves out at his bidding in fulfilment of the duties entrusted to them. Thus many of them are posted in different far-off corners of India burning the candle of their lives to give light to the poor around them. They live unknown to the outside world, enriching the little world they live in with the fragrance of their selfless existence. The volume of their work may not be great, but its value lies in its purity which invisibly enlivens the world of their contact.

He values an ounce of practice more than a pound of precept. All rituals and conventions of society, therefore, have value for him only in so far as they conform to the actual facts of life and are based on moral principles. Mere assertions of principles, however learned, are like empty shells if they are not followed by practice. He pushes this love of living the truth to dimensions beyond the conception of ordinary individuals. The latest instance of this love for the living truth regardless of consequences was the Indumati-Tendulkar marriage celebrated last year at Sevagram under his instructions.

The procedure he adopted in this marriage gave a practical shape to the whole ritual of Hindu marriage, disregarding the fact that this ritual of his making was not recognized by the law of the land. He gave a new

shape to the rite of *Saptapadi* which in its orthodox symbolic form represents seven steps taken by the couple jointly in the path of life. In this new ritual the bride and the bridegroom were made to accomplish in company with each other seven pieces of activities like the reading of the Bhagavadgita, spinning, tending of the cow, cleaning the well-side and the land for cultivation etc., on the eve of the marriage. The priest who officiated at the marriage was a Harijan by caste and belonged to the Christian religion by profession. The whole proceedings were held in Hindustani. Amongst the list of pledges given and taken, some old unnecessary ones were omitted and new ones were introduced. In evolving this form of marriage the only one principle he regarded was strict adherence in life to the moral principles held by him and professed by the couple. At one stroke and in one action so many reforms which he advocates were woven into the fabric of life.

Another instance of a similar nature happened when my son's marriage was celebrated in accordance with his advice. In this case the complication was that the bride belonged to a nationality and a faith different from those of the bridegroom, and the question of the ritual of marriage allowing freedom of religion to either party was to be solved. I give below his written opinion on the matter, which prominently brings into relief his bold adherence to moral laws alone in defiance of all false notions of social prestige.

The following is a quotation from what he wrote on the occasion:

"The very word 'Hindu' is modern. The label was given to us. The name of our religion is 'Mānava Dharma', i. e., man's religion. Manusmriti is the code of man's religion. The fountain of all is the Vedas. But no one possesses all the Vedas. Man's religion has been undergoing evolution. Before the advent of British rule, society was undergoing change from time to time. British rule changed all this. What was fit for change became petrified. If there was a change, it came from either the Privy

Council or the British-made legislatures. Owing to this much harm has been done, and society has become inert like the superimposed laws. In this state of things, my advice is to perform marriage rites according to morals prescribed by man's religion. That should be binding. We need not heed those British rules which are inconsistent with highest morals. We must run risks, if there be any in so doing."

In the immensity of his work, he covers the whole of human life. No aspect is neglected. He has tried to solve all questions confronting individual and collective life. His solutions are made with a view to evolving a civilization in which there is peace on earth and goodwill among men.

New Delhi,
4-3-1946.

DANDI MARCH AND AFTER

M. M. Pakvasa

IN 1930 I joined the Dandi March at Surat. I was present at Dandi the evening prior to the lifting of salt. The prayer on seashore in the evening was so solemn and the whole atmosphere was so pure that I do not remember a single occasion of such solemnity and of such purity coupled with enthusiasm inspired by complete faith in the righteousness of the cause and blessed with divine favour. Gandhiji's address after the prayer was quiet, full of confidence, and showed complete reliance on God. After the prayer was over, he enquired of the local workers about the arrangements for picking up salt early morning next day. He was told about the arrangements and the exact spot where the salt was pure, available, and could be easily lifted. After hearing everything,

Gandhiji humorously remarked that the workers must be careful as immediately in front of him were sitting members of the C.I.D. dressed in khadi whom he could easily recognize and spot as spying on him. He said it was likely that, after intimation was duly given by these faithful servants of the British rule to the authorities, the latter might during the night remove the salt or make it impossible for anyone to take it. Therefore an alternative spot should also be kept in mind. Let it not be said that within the mighty British Empire there was not a pinch of salt for us to take. If such a thing happened, it would be to the discredit of the Empire. The secret service men looked down with shame.

The next morning nothing was altered, and the programme went through as arranged and on the spot fixed in advance. Gandhiji got up as usual at 4 o'clock, finished prayers, and after getting ready came to the sea, took bath and went to the appointed spot for picking up salt. It was an unusual sight, and it had a tremendous effect on public opinion not only in India but outside. This simple and harmless action had the most electrical effect throughout India. On my mind also it produced a deep and lasting impression. I decided to do some constructive work on the principles and lines laid down by Bapu. Shrimati Mithuben Petit was then working on prohibition in the Surat district. Under the advice of Gandhiji we decided to start an ashram at Maroli near Surat to work amongst the villagers and more especially amongst the Raniparaj (Adivasis). The ashram was started and was given the name of Kasturba Sevashram. We started with a school for training of the Raniparaj girls. We also started a small dispensary connected with it. This ashram is still working. Shrimati Mithuben Petit has devoted her whole life to service of the poor on the lines laid down by Gandhiji. She has buried herself in the ashram. A living interest in the ashram was taken by both Bapu and Kasturba. Bapu's ideals and principles are strictly observed in the ashram which owes its present position to the untiring efforts and selfless devotion of Mithuben, ably

helped by a veteran worker, Shri Kalyanji Mehta.

On the 4th of January 1932 Bapu was arrested in Bombay, and severe measures were adopted to suppress the Congress movement. In May 1933 Bapu was released when he began the 21 days' fast. The Government then made it clear that, if he again courted jail, the Harijan work which he was allowed to carry on from the prison till then would not be allowed even if he was to fast to death, and he would be only given 'A' class and not the facilities of a State prisoner under the Act of 1818. This led to another fast in August 1933, and he was released when he reached the danger-point. He had then to make the choice whether he should remain out and do Harijan work or court jail and fast again and again. If he did not go to jail, it would be open to some people to allege that while everybody else was going to jail he was avoiding it on the ground of Harijan work. In any event, considerable doubts and difficulties arose in his mind.

Before Bapu went to jail in August, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who was in the Yeravda Jail, had been transferred to the Nasik Jail. He was a State prisoner under the Act of 1818. He was removed so that, when Bapu went to jail and taken to Yeravda, the Sardar was not there and no question of their being kept together even in jail could arise. I was given as a companion to the Sardar in the Nasik Jail. He and I as his companion were the only two prisoners in a big courtyard under the strictest surveillance which in some respects went beyond the jail rules and regulations. When this situation was realized by the Sardar, he spent hours together in thinking what was proper for Bapu to do. He examined the question from all points of view very deeply, and ultimately came to the conclusion that Bapu should not court imprisonment again. My time was up, and in September 1933 I was released. I went straight from Nasik to Bapu who was then at Parnakuti in Poona. For 45 minutes I explained to him the pros and cons of the question and the line of reasoning of the Sardar, and how the latter had come to the conclusion that Bapu should not court imprisonment again. Bapu also

had come to the same conclusion after deep thinking for days. On that occasion I got my first insight as to how carefully all aspects of a question were deeply studied by him.

After that, under his advice, I wrote a letter to Sir Samuel Hoare, who was then the Secretary of State for India, pointing out the hard conditions under which the Sardar was made to live and how jail rules were broken or not followed. My letter was supported by Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas to whom I had related these experiences, and according to my information Sir Samuel Hoare sent suitable instructions to the Government of India.

I had to do a lot of work under Bapu's guidance and advice, especially in connecion with legal matters, and though I will omit the details of such work, I can say this with confidence that in matters of law he allowed full scope to moral principles, and allowed nothing to be done which would be circumventing the law or which by any stretch of imagination could be said to be not honest.

Nagpur,
3-4-1948.

AT GANDHI'S FEET

B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya

I SAW Shri M. K. Gandhi for the first time at the Madras Congress in 1903. He had put on a coat and trousers, and a small black turban familiar to those who have studied his photographs. He spoke gently and made no great impression. I was a student of medicine then.

The next time I saw him was in the streets of Bombay in 1915 with a dhoti, a Kathiawad kisan kudta, a big

Kathiawad turban, and an upper cloth. He was offered a lift in the car but declined it with thanks.

In 1917 in Calcutta I came into close contact with him at the meeting of the A.I.C.C. on the subject of a separate Andhra Provincial Congress Committee which was resisted by him on the ground that it could follow the Montford reforms; but it was Lokamanya Tilak who helped me secure it with the assent of the A.I.C.C.

Amritsar (December, 1919) was the real scene of Gandhiji's activities where he came out in all his non-violence. He refused to attend the Subjects Committee after it refused to condemn the violence of the masses on 10th April 1919 in the city which resulted in the burning of the National Bank and the death of three or four Englishmen. The Committee revised its decision, and he continued to participate. But he had a tussle with Lokamanya Tilak who had drafted a fierce-looking resolution embodying the first two paragraphs of the one passed, but his conclusion ill fitted with the preamble as the latter suggested responsive co-operation. I moved an amendment to Lokamanya Tilak's draft, omitting his last (operative) clause and suggesting instead the words: "accordingly the Congress rejects the Montford scheme." "That is it," jumped up Gandhiji, "if you are a man, Lokamanya, accept it." That was a challenge which was not accepted.

At the end of the Nagpur session, on 1st January 1921, Gandhiji asked me to rearrange the Congress provinces of India on linguistic lines, saying: "You know all about it; you do it." Then resulted the Karnatak, the Utkal, and the different Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committees, Sindh having been carved out earlier in 1919 in close succession to Andhra (December, 1917).

In April, 1921, Gandhiji visited Bezwada for the meeting of the A.I.C.C., where I met him with two other Andhra friends who have since passed away. I had already begun the publication of *Janmabhumi* as an English weekly, and a leading article on non-cooperation attracted his attention. "So you are a whole-hogger," he said to me; and I nodded assent. (He found me one still

when he supported office acceptance in 1937). In 1921, at the conclusion of the Ahmedabad session, he was asking for names of the members of the Working Committee and said re: Vithalbhai: "I can spare Vithalbhai, but he cannot spare himself. Give Vithalbhai any constitution, and he will tear it to pieces." He asked me whether Deshbhakta Konda Venkatappayya should be continued in the Working Committee. I said I would not mind his omission, but the Andhra Province would. He rejoined: "Don't I know?" and continued Deshbhakta's name.

In February, 1922, after the conclusion of the All Parties' Conference presided over partly by Sir Sankaran Nair and partly by Sir M. Visweswarayya, Gandhiji enquired about the no-tax campaign in Andhra. He gave me a letter to be delivered to Deshbhakta Venkatappayya, and added an oral message to it, saying: "Please tell him that I shall be happy and glad to be told that he has given up his campaign, and that the taxes in Andhra have been paid."

Many years after he remarked that the Andhras were each a Viceroy unto himself. While leaving my house in April, 1929, during his khadi tour, Gandhiji asked me: "You say you try to keep correct, but your son is living with his wife who is only 12 years old!" "It is a lie," I said. "But is that girl not in your house?" he asked. "Yes, she, her father, mother, grandmother and sisters, are all here. They belong to this town; their home is a furlong away. They have come to see you at close quarters and therefore are here. "Oh! is that so?" said he. I was sorry for the misinformation he got, but thanked him for verifying it. That is the great glory of Gandhiji. When he lends ear to all the rumours that reach him he readily puts them to the party concerned; and I have no doubt he accepts the explanations furnished as the full truth.

In 1924, a few months after his released from prison, there was a meeting of the A.I.C.C. at Ahmedabad; and when I was returning from the Sabarmati Ashram in his car he asked me whether it was true, as he was told, that at Cocanada Deshbandhu C. R. Das was included in the

Working Committee owing to my vindictiveness. I explained that I had merely asked why, if there was a compromise as was announced at the A.I.C.C. at Cocanada between the No-changers and Swarajists, a Swarajist—say, Das or Nehru—was not included in the Working Committee. This created an uproar, and caused a revision, and Deshbandhu Das was included. "I plead guilty," I said to Gandhiji, "to the charge that mine is a logical mind which argues without regard to party predilections."

In 1925 Gandhiji partitioned the Congress, or established a partnership between the Council Party and the Constructive Party at Patna, and in the A.I.C.C. said: "Now Dr. Pattabhi will drop his vitriolic pen." I took the hint. At the same meeting I had had occasion earlier to attack the Swaraj Party as having "betrayed their trust". This put out Satyamurthy and Motilalji. The latter snapped his fingers and said: "I don't care this much for the Congress. I shall go out of it." Gandhiji was the President of the year, and stopped me, saying: "I don't want you to go on with your declamation." I bowed to the chair and resumed my seat. Thereafter Gandhiji gave a twenty minute sermon to Motilalji, and stated that, however eminent he (Motilalji) might be intellectually, if he lacked humility, his haughtiness would land him in trouble." So saying he insisted upon Motilalji apologising to me as well as to the Congress. This the latter did, and the matter ended with a few words from me. Next morning I went to see Gandhiji. "Why were you so gushing in your acknowledgment of Motilalji's apology?" he asked me, and I had no answer to give. Then I told him I would give up my "acid drops and sugar plums", and pointed out that it was not merely my pen that was pungent or vitriolic, but also his own tongue; and for proof I quoted his (aforesaid) reference to Vithalbhai at the Ahmedabad session and one or two other instances.

In December 1925 Gandhiji was observing silence at the Kanpur session of the Congress, and wrote a chit to me (when I went to bid farewell to him), saying: "Come and spend a month in the Sabarmati Ashram." I explained

that I could not, as I should not like to pollute the Ashram from within but preferred to admire it from without. "How?" he asked. "I can neither attend the prayers at 4 o'clock nor stand the cold of Ahmedabad," I said. "You can sleep after the prayers," he indulgently wrote. But that did not appeal to me, and I said as much.

On another issue I had the same difference with him; for he was quoted as saying that a satyagrahi could alienate his properties so as to avoid attachment by the Government. I did not like this, and have stood all along against it. But he said: "It is a man's right to give as much as he can to the country—his person and liberty with or without his property." I beg still to differ.

In 1929, it may be remembered, there was a strong feeling in the country that Gandhiji should preside over the Lahore session of the Congress. Motilalji was anxious to have Jawaharlal in succession to himself. Gandhiji declined, and Jawaharlal presided. There was another incident relevant to the subject. In Bengal there were differences amongst Congressmen, and I was asked to enquire into them. I went to Calcutta, but Subhash Babu and Kiran Shanker Roy boycotted the enquiry after the first sitting of five hours. Subhash Babu said at the Lahore session before the Working Committee that he had objected to my enquiry from the outset, but Motilalji repudiated the statement. Subhash Babu, to prove his statement, quoted a paragraph from the Notes in the issue of *Janmabhumi*, the English weekly edited by me, which ran as follows:

"Talks tend to be freer and franker, the more compact the bodies to which they are confined. One should expect, therefore, that conversations in a body like the Working Committee would be exchange of feelings, while in an informal Conference of the A.I.C.C. they would be only exchange of thoughts, but when the A.I.C.C. formally met and moved resolutions they were merely exchange of words and even enumeration of hands. Gandhi, it must be owned, had a hard time of it all through. If he had readily consented to preside, they would have said that this old man had an impossible cult, and while he could not bring Swaraj he would not allow others to bring it. It is so near at hand, and what cussedness should it be,—be it on the

part of the greatest man of the world,—not to make way for the younger men that were willing to desire and dare, to dare and die! But if Gandhi declined, there were not merely his followers, but those strange bed-fellows whom politics always brings into their company, who were frantically pleading for Gandhi's nomination, election and acceptance. Bengal did not want Gandhi in December last. They called him—this old man, this loin cloth saint, this sage of Sabarmati. They did not want him in March in private and semi-private conversations. Suddenly they took a fancy for him in May and desperately wired to all or many of the Provincial Congress Committees in India. Some of the latter did not need their advice, others did not heed their guidance. Obviously their choice was a Hobson's choice, for their decision was determined not by likes, but by dislikes, not by sympathies but by apathies. Young Subhash stood no chance, and therefore let old Gandhi intervene. Then the men in between could be dished. What else may have been the psychology of such right-about-turn between March and May, between Calcutta and Lahore, between the Michael Collins of Bengal and the Redmond or O'connor of India?"

Gandhiji heard the paragraph and burst out laughing: "Oh! all that is said is not only true but is brilliantly put! I am sorry that I am not a subscriber to *Janmabhumi*. I should now subscribe for it." This was at the Lahore session of the Congress.

Some months earlier Gandhiji had toured the Andhra province and collected Rs. 2,63,000 for khadi. During that tour, at my house in Masulipatam, he asked me (April 1929) what I was doing. I gave details. He wanted me to take up the khadi work in Andhra, and I pointed out the impersonal difficulties in the way. He asked me whether *Janmabhumi* won't come in the way. I said I spent only five hours a week on it, but even so I was thinking of winding it up, as I had been sustaining a loss of some thousands. "Oh!" he said, "you are spending it on your advertisement." While I had made an incidental statement wholly germane to the subject of conversation, this remark from Gandhiji was felt by me to be "the unkindest cut of all", ungenerous, unjust and unfair. I suppressed my feelings of distress and retired. Even great men can err, I felt, as love of advertisement was the last of my infirmities.

During this same visit he told me he had received a long complaint against me. I wanted to be confronted with the complainant. The complaint related to my having resigned from the management of the Andhra Jatheeya Kalasala. The complainant was sent for, and both parties sat on either side of Gandhiji who was stretched on a cot on my terrace. While declaring that the complainant had no right to ask for my co-operation except on my terms, Gandhiji added: "Dr. Pattabhi has many virtues but lacks humility." This gentle but firm reprimand had a profound effect on me; and I may with humility claim that I gave no more room thereafter for complaint on the score of its absence.

In February, 1930, when the salt satyagraha was contemplated, Gandhiji asked me at Ahmedabad, after the meeting of the Working Committee was over, why I was silent all along. I said that I felt like a motor-driver driving the car in the fog who could see but ten or twenty yards ahead—not farther, until he advanced and could see another twenty yards. He was greatly pleased and said: "That is it."

I was taken into the Working Committee in June, 1929. In April, 1931, at the Karachi session, Gandhiji asked each member of the Working Committee about the personnel of the Committee for the next year—putting name by name out of a list, and to each of these names I said: "Yes, he must be taken." Then he asked me: "You have said 'yes' to each name; then what about yours?" I said I must clear out, and I did. When Jamnalalji pressed for the inclusion of C. R.'s name in the Committee, Gandhiji said: "C. R. and Pattabhi are our men. The Working Committee can invite them." That very night he issued instructions that both C. R. and myself should be invited to the Committee meetings. He then put me as the convenor of the Flag Committee and a member of the Fundamental Rights Committee.

At the same session of the Congress Gandhiji asked each member of the Working Committee as to how many should constitute the deputation to the Round Table Conference in London. Almost all said 'fifteen'; and I too

said the same, but added: "The number, however, depends upon the purpose for which you are going to England—whether it is to negotiate a treaty with Britain or hammer out the details of a constitution. If the former, you must go alone; if, however, the latter, you must take fourteen others." He said his purpose was the former, and I agreed to *one*.

In October, 1934, the resolution on village industries and the formation of the A.I.V.I.A. was to have been moved by Gandhiji in Bombay, but was actually moved by me. Thereafter I put myself in communication with him on the subject. His view has all along been that people should offer their services voluntarily and readily—a sentiment expressed in the following letter!

Dear Dr. Pattabhi,

This is village paper. The ink is village-made, and the pen is made of village reed. Do the villagers manufacture paper there? If so, at what price?

I have your full letter. Yes, we must meet. Since you have time, you have to be humble enough to ask for the responsibility you can shoulder—work of the highest order, with or without office, whichever is better for your work. In this service of the destitute, there is no room for ceremony.

And this business of rice, floor, gur, oil, ghee, etc., is a vast business. You have to revive your knowledge of medicine.

There are two ways of doing the thing—by compulsion through State organisation, or voluntary effort, i.e. organised honesty or non-violence....

Wardha,
29-12-34.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

In 1935 a satyagrahi, who had been in jail, came to see me and asked for a letter of introduction to Wardha where he wanted to see the ashram. I gave one readily. At the railway station he wanted to take a companion, and I included his name also in the letter. The letter was merely asking for permission to the two friends to *see* the ashram at Wardha. What was my surprise when I got a fiery letter from Gandhiji saying:

Dear Dr. Pattabhi,

You have placed me in a most awkward position by sending two young men without notice, without any pots, without bedding. We have hardly settled down here. There is not enough accommodation for our requirements. Is it fair to dump down people in an institution? Supposing others followed your example, where would I be?

We have not yet begun to entertain learners. There is little to teach. I have taken them and told them they will work as scavengers and labourers as we all do consistently with our other duties. Only please do not repeat the performance.

If you can get money from their homes or from friends, send me enough for their return fares and initial expenses.

How do you pass you time?

Wardha,
3-4-35.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

This took away my breath. It stunned me. I sent Rs. 20 on 7-4-35 by money order at once myself as a *prāyashchitta*, and apologized for having sent anyone to *see* an ashram—not to live there. I regretted that I should have been the cause of making him really angry for the first time in my experience of him, and explained the real character and purpose of my letter. To this day I deplore the incident. Later, I must admit, when I repeated my apologies, he strove to put me at ease; for, five days later, he wrote:

Dear Dr. Pattabhi,

The young men are not going back unless the life here disquiets them. Strange food, strange climate. If their friends can find money, I should like the return fares in case of need and some for their bedding. They are under Miraben's charge.

Wardha,
8-4-35.

Yours,
Bapu

By this time I had already sent the money.

In 1936 I opposed the Working Committee's resolution to postpone the decision on the question of acceptance of office, and I was cut out of the Committee after the Lucknow session (1936). I diverted my attention to a study of the States' people's lot, and visited nearly forty

States in Southern Mahratta Country, Western India (Gujarat and Kathiawad), Rajputana and South India.

In 1936, as I was about to preside over the All India States' People's Conference at Karachi, I had a call from Gandhiji and the Sardar who were in Bangalore to go there. I was unable to respond. Gandhiji sent a message through my wife and son, who were in Bangalore at the time (June 1936) and who visited Gandhiji, that he knew why I was afraid to go there. I did not understand the joke fully, but sent a long explanation in the course of which I wrote that I believed "in leaving my wife and children to themselves for a time once in a way in the year. It will give them relief from me—from the constant attention they show to the husband and the father which, howsoever pleasant to them, makes me pity their lot. That of course is not to admit that I am a taskmaster as husband or father, but that only means that I believe in the policy of a general rule applicable to the best of husbands and the best of fathers. My feeling has always been that women must not be yoked always to men, and when they take to independent thinking they must be encouraged in it. Otherwise they would adopt their plans and decisions in spite of the men, when the latter would have merely to submit. When, therefore, my wife and children came to an independent decision that they would spend the summer in Bangalore, I thought I should leave them to execute the idea themselves." This long rigmarole is quoted here in order to quote relevantly Gandhiji's answer to my letter:

Dear Dr. Pattabhi,

You have a brilliant boy, quite like his father. But he does not seem to have been able to carry the whole joke to you. When I saw Mrs. P. decked literally from top to toes, I said: "Now I know why Father was afraid to come to Bangalore. For the sin of this barbarity is more on Father's shoulders than Mother's." Now you may take the joke as seriously as you like. I quite agree with your philosophy. Wives and grown-up children must have vacation from their husbands and parents. Love.

Segaon, Wardha,
22-6-36.

M. K. Gandhi

The Gandhi Seva Sangh used to meet year after year at different places for its annual conferences, before it was virtually wound up. On 31-3-38 it met at Delang (Orissa) near Cuttack. I attended it, and paid a visit to Gandhiji one day and wore a chaddar which had a rent. The moment I saw him and took my seat, he wrote down a slip and passed it on to me. It stated: "I do not admire the big rent in your scarf. It is no sign of poverty. It is a sign of no wife, bad wife, or laziness."

I at once replied that the scarf was awaiting treatment by division into two towels, each towel making later two pillow covers, each of which would in due course become two kerchiefs which ultimately would become two drapers for babies and then meet their end.

In 1938, at Haripura, Gandhiji was good enough to invite me to a talk on the States' people's problem; and that led to the Haripura compromise finally. I was taken back into the Working Committee in February, 1938 at Haripura. In December, 1938, there was a meeting at Bardoli at which it was decided, as I learnt later, to request Maulana Azad to stand for the presidentship of the Tripuri session. He at last agreed. After he had left Bardoli I, who was detained by Gandhiji in Bardoli for reasons not known to me, expressed my desire to return, as I had urgent Congress work to attend to in Andhra. He summoned me at 8-30 p.m. finally, and asked me whether the Sardar had spoken to me. I said: "No." Then he said: "I wanted to place this crown of thorns on your head if the Maulana did not agree. But fortunately he gave his assent yesterday morning." "The crown of thorns is always on your head really, on whosesoever head you may place it," I replied, and left Bardoli. The subsequent story was interesting. The Maulana withdrew his candidature, and pressed me in Bombay to retract the earlier withdrawal by me of mine. I returned home with this unsought for crown hovering over my head; and as soon as I returned home, I had a telegram from Bardoli to go there again When I went there I was asked to draw up a statement relating to my 'stopgap' candidature. I did so. But Gandhiji

added a paragraph relating to my work in the States stating that, if I was elected, I would regard the result as an appreciation by the public of my work for the States' people. I need only add that I was deeply gratified by this addition, for I had reason to believe that my detour to the States was not very much countenanced when I jumped into it without consulting anybody. On the question of the 'crown of thorns', I have chanced to come upon a paragraph in *Janmabhumi* which I wrote on 12-10-29: "The crown of thorns was verily on his (Gandhi's) head during these conversations, and he was literally crucified."

Gandhiji has expressed the view more than once to common friends that I did not move closely with him and try to get under his skin. I replied jocularly that what I saw on the skin was quite enough, that I never had doubts about his philosophy, that I understood it and strove to preach it and, as far as possible, practise it.

During the five years of the World War II conditions in India became complicated by Shri C. Rajagopalachari cutting out from the Congress and adopting a view and attitude all his own—which was at variance with, and even wholly opposed to, the views of Gandhiji and the Congress. After Cripps's departure the situation became more and more acute and more and more trying to C. R.'s friends. As one of them I wrote to Gandhiji for clarification, and he explained how, without being in any way hostile to C. R. personally. I had to express my dissent emphatically, even as he was doing, i.e. if those who spoke or noted had the firm conviction that Rajaji was wrong. On this subject Gandhiji acted firmly in July when C. R.'s revolt became open and aggressive; for he wrote to the latter to resign his membership of the Assembly and even his four anna membership of the Congress. C. R. did so on July 15th, 1942, and thus endeared himself to Gandhiji, which accounts for the latter's partiality to the former in the critical days of 1945.

Finally I had an unpleasant experience in the year 1942. The Working Committee had finished a somewhat long and turbulent sitting on July 14th, 1942. The rubicon

was crossed. The decision taken was a momentous one. Members were bidding farewell to Gandhiji, and I too bade good-bye. But while all the members were still there, he said: "You want to go too! Do you know we have not even exchanged glances?" I replied saying that I would stay on if I was desired to. This put out Gandhiji who curtly replied: "You may stay if you like. I do not ask you to stay." On more occasions than one I heard or saw him grow angry. But this was the harshest occasion. I swallowed the bitter pill, cancelled my journey, and stayed on in Wardha to meet him the next day. What happened the next day has become a chapter of politics which is too recent to be incorporated into history or even into reminiscences.

Masulipatam,
18-10-1945.

SOME SOUTH AFRICAN REMINISCENCES

Henry S. L. Polak

NOT long before I first met Gandhiji, in Johannesburg, in 1904, I had joined the editorial staff of the *Transvaal Critic*. Until then I had no knowledge of the existence in South Africa of an important Indian community. I had come to learn of it from reading, among the exchange papers that came to me, *Indian Opinion* (then published in English, Gujarati, Hindi, and Tamil) which, I later came to know, Gandhiji had financed and which was largely under his control, though he never edited it. From it I gathered some valuable information concerning Indian culture, history, and political affairs. Moreover, I discovered mainly from this interesting source that there was a local Indian problem, and that the Indian community was complaining loudly of the many disabilities imposed upon it. Its leader and spokesman was Gandhiji, who had just come prominently before the Johannesburg public once more because of his outspoken criticism, in a newspaper controversy with the Medical Officer of Health, of the Johannesburg Municipality for its serious neglect of the Indian Location of the city, where the Indians were segregated, resulting in a bad outbreak of plague. This he had ascribed to the denial to his countrymen of the municipal vote, despite their payment of rates and taxes in common with the white population. I thought that he had the better of the argument, and, as a faithful journalist, I wanted to see him and to find out more of the Indian community and its needs.

My desire was increased when he was pointed out to me one day by a friend as we entered a vegetarian restaurant shortly after my conversion to a non-flesh diet by the great Russian, Tolstoy. He was a pleasant-looking man, sitting alone. Apart from his black, lawyer's turban and his rather dark complexion, there was nothing specially to mark him out. I could not guess that I was then gazing at the man who was to become the best-known Oriental of his time.

A few days later, I mentioned my desire to meet this interesting personality to the proprietress of another vegetarian restaurant which I frequented. It was my lucky day. She responded immediately. "That's easy," she said; "come to my 'at home' tomorrow night. He always comes, and I will introduce you to him." So we met, and the meeting changed the current of both our lives. I did not then know, as I came to know later when I had become closely associated with him, that, being himself an ardent vegetarian, Gandhiji had largely helped to finance these two restaurant-keepers, and when subsequently they failed in business, he lost heavily thereby.

Strangely enough, my real card of introduction to him was not that of a journalist, but because I was almost the only other person he had met who had read a book on the subject of nature-cure of disease by one Adolf Just, entitled *Return to Nature.* Upon learning this, he welcomed me with open arms, and we had a long talk on this and cognate subjects. He was interested in my vegetarianism and was delighted to learn that, like himself, I was an ardent admirer of Tolstoy. "I have a shelf full of his books at my office. Come and look at them," he said. I took the opportunity of his cordial invitation to ask for an early appointment, in order to learn from him more of the Indian question and of India, and to make a certain suggestion that I had been turning over in my mind for some time.

Gandhiji was then practising as an attorney (solicitor) of the Transvaal High Court. Though a barrister of the Inner Temple, he had chosen a branch of legal practice which brought him into direct contact with the lay client. I had already heard that he was held in high esteem by his fellow-lawyers and with respect by the Courts before whom he practised. Later I came to know that he would never sue a client for his unpaid fees or take a case involving appearing in Court without first warning the client that he reserved the right to return the "brief" if he should find that the client had been deceiving him. He held strongly that, as an officer of the Court, which had confidence in him, he could be no willing party to deception.

I have, on such an occasion, seen him throw down his "brief" and walk out of Court, with due apology to the presiding officer. And, if a matter in dispute could be properly compromised, he would always urge this upon his client, rather than that heavy legal expenses should be unnecessarily incurred by taking the matter to Court. That, indeed, was how he settled the dispute which first took him to South Africa. It will be recalled that, later, when he decided to withdraw from practice and become a "farmer", he did so, partly because he wanted to devote himself entirely to his public activities, of which the "simple life" was one; and partly because he wished to be logically faithful to his belief in non-violence, by refusing any longer to earn his living from a profession in which resort was ultimately had, through the use of the police, to force for giving effect to the decrees of the Courts.

At the time of our first meeting, as his family was still in India, he was living in a modest room behind his chambers in Rissik Street. A little later, and when he had settled down with the family as a small householder, he offered me its use, which helped to bring me into closer contact with him.

The day of our appointment arrived, and he received me in his office. As I sat down, I drew a mental picture of my host's surroundings, a picture which presently became so familiar to me that it remains unblurred to this day. Above his desk I noticed a large and beautiful picture of Jesus Christ. This at once indicated to me where some, at least, of his sympathies lay. Though I knew already that he was a Hindu, I at once realised that he was very tolerant in his religious approach. On the political side of his interests, another wall held large portraits of Dadabhai Naoroji, Ranade, and Gokhale—his political *guru*. If my memory does not deceive me, there was also a fine portrait of Tolstoy. In a small bookcase beside his chair were a number of volumes very familiar to me, but also some as yet unknown. There were the Bible, Arnold's *Song Celestial* (the *Bhagavadgita*), and an array of Tolstoy's works, many on non-violence. I also noticed a

copy of *India: What Can It Teach Us?*, by Professor Max Muller, which I quickly borrowed.

Gandhiji welcomed me pleasantly and with what I presently came to recognise as traditional Indian courtesy. His manner at first was quiet and restrained. As he told me something of the background of the South African Indian question, however, he warmed up. His voice took on a more serious tone when he described some of the hardships and disabilities under which his countrymen lived in this land of their exile. He told me how by their labour, originating in the evil indentured labour emigration system, and by their varied enterprise during nearly half a century, they had helped actively in the country's development and had saved Natal from economic ruin. I may here mention that he felt the tragedy of indentured labour so strongly that when, five years later, he asked the Transvaal Indian community to send me to India to make representations to the Indian Government and people on their behalf, he urged me to do everything possible to get the system brought to an end, at least as regards South Africa. I took his advice very deeply to heart, with the result that, because of Mr. Gokhale's activity on the subject upon the information that I had given to him, Lord Minto's Government did refuse to permit further indentured emigration to Natal in 1910. And I was one of the small band of workers under Gandhiji's leadership, of whom Dinabandhu Andrews was another, who helped Lord Hardinge's Government to end the system altogether ten years later.

Gandhiji, in those early days, had a curious hesitation in rapid speech, which took the form of a slightly sibilant in drawing of the breath, as he sought for the right expression. Later, when I had come to know him well enough to do so, I drew his attention to this, and I suggested that it would be useful to correct it in public speech so as not to distract attention from his argument. He promptly took the matter in hand, and the peculiarity soon disappeared.

Throughout our conversation, I never heard him utter one angry word or make an attack upon any individual, though several anti-Indian personalities were mentioned

between us. I soon learnt that he had no animus against individuals and that, though he could be indignant at injurious action or policy, he was always objective and impersonal in his exposition of its background. To him the Indian question was a human problem, like so many others, and I heard no hint in his tone or language, either then or later, of any bitterness at the many affronts that had been put upon himself because of his race and colour. His philosophic self-control aroused great admiration and respect among the few Europeans who knew him well as a man. It was never difficult to get close to him, for he was of a simple, friendly, and informal nature. But his mind worked with a political astuteness and a metaphysical subtlety which often baffled even his closest associates.

I had already told him that, even before going to South Africa, I had been attracted to Indian culture and philosophy by some books that I had bought at a second-hand book-shop in London. I mentioned some of them that I had brought with me overseas—Dutt's summaries of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* and Arnold's *Light of Asia* among them—and he had been delighted to hear this. He now showed me many more works along the same lines of thought.

I informed him that I had lately become deeply interested in Indian political problems, both in the Motherland and in South Africa, as I had seen them discussed in *Indian Opinion*. I told him that I had strongly differed from my own paper's policy on the Indian question, and that I had taken up the matter with my editor who, after listening to my objections, had generously informed me that I need not write in support of the paper's policy on racial and colour questions. Gandhiji beamed as I told him this, and congratulated me warmly upon my independent stand. I also told him that I had agreed with his side of the published correspondence with the Medical Officer of Health on the causes of the spread of the plague outbreak. He then told me many details which had not appeared in the press; but never a word did he utter of the great risks which he had personally taken in nursing plague-patients

—of which I learnt indirectly only later—though he had much to say of the self-sacrificing service of others of his countrymen.

Having by now reached the stage of mutual understanding, I felt the time had come to offer him my services as a writer for *Indian Opinion*, though at the time I had no intention of giving up my regular job on the *Critic*. He said that, if I were willing to do so without remuneration, which his paper could not afford, my contributions would be very welcome. As no thought of payment had entered my mind, I told him that I should be proud to do something to help to make the South African Indian question better understood among my own countrymen, both there and in England, with which I had professional contacts, as well as through the recognised organ of the Indian community. So began an editorial association with the paper which lasted till I left South Africa twelve years later.

I recall one interesting early experience of journalistic collaboration with Gandhiji, which has its amusing side. About this time, Paul Kruger, the ex-President of the South African Republic, had died in exile in Europe. He had been Hitler's prototype in describing black men as no better than intelligent apes, who should have no equality with the whites. Now his mortal remains had been brought back to South Africa, to be buried at Pretoria. To me was assigned the task of reporting the funeral proceedings for *Indian Opinion*. Having noted in the paper many printer's errors, I made an urgent request to Gandhiji that he would personally revise the "proof" of my article before publication, which he promised to do. In those days I was rather proud of my "style". My description of the ceremony opened thus: "He is dead and is buried." I thought that this looked impressive. Imagine, then, my horror when, on receipt of the issue containing the article, this is what I read: "He is dead and is *burned*." I wrote to him at once to complain that he had not carried out his promise. I pointed out further that, if any orthodox Boer were to read that his dead hero had been consigned to perdition, it would arouse strong indignation and resentment, which

would do the Indian community no good. I do not suppose that any Boer did read the article; but I received from Gandhiji a prompt and very humble apology. He explained that he had in fact faithfully carried out his promise, that he had read every line and word of the "proof", and that, when he came to the word "burned", it had seemed quite natural to him, a Hindu, whose dead were habitually cremated!

As in his professional work, which I shortly came to know intimately as his articled clerk, so in all that applied to public affairs Gandhiji always maintained a high standard of responsibility. He was always exact in his facts, and he would never magnify his case for the sake of argument. He had noted a too emphatic tone in some of my editorials. I had commented vigorously and somewhat acidly upon certain happenings specially relating to the Indian community or involving racial relations. He suggested to me, on one such occasion when he thought that I had been unnecessarily aggressive and flamboyant, that it would be much better for me, as a matter of professional self-discipline, and would have more desirable results for the cause that we were both seeking to serve, if I were to model my style rather upon the moderation and objectiveness of the London *Times* than upon the more picturesque if less accurate ways of the "cheaper" press. I tried thereafter to follow his excellent advice.

In those days, too, he had not gained that remarkable command of vivid, terse English which he showed in later years. Often he wrote hurriedly, in the midst of interruptions, and then his articles, for which I had asked him occasionally on some matter of special complexity or involving some particular legal technicality requiring careful analysis, came to me in somewhat unliterary language. I remember telling him once, with mock editorial gravity, that I could not send his "copy" to the printer unless he rewrote it, which he did with due humility—and with an amused twinkle in his eye. He had a great sense of humour!

I always found Gandhiji insistent that one should act

according to his conviction, whether spiritual or political. "Keep your standards right," he wrote me during my first visit to India, in 1909-10, on behalf of the Indian community. "Everything else will follow, sooner or later." An illustration of his ready regard for another's independence of judgment occurred shortly after I had joined his office, at his own early request. There had appeared in a well-known English magazine an article by a South African journalist in which, unintentionally as I afterwards learnt, he had made several serious misstatements regarding the Indian situation in the Transvaal. I felt that unless these were at once and authoritatively corrected, they would give rise to much misunderstanding in England, which was then still responsible, under the Crown Colony administration, for Transvaal affairs, and the Indian cause would thereby greatly suffer. I urged this vigorously upon Gandhiji, but he seemed unimpressed by my argument. Deeply disappointed, I spent the rest of the day in stony silence, which he noted quietly. Then he sent for me and asked me what was the matter. I told him somewhat curtly, and added that, of course, this was primarily his cause and he must be the judge of what should be done. He gently suggested that, if I felt so strongly about the matter, I should myself send an article in reply. I did so, and to my great satisfaction it was published in London immediately and was later reproduced in the Indian press. It proved to be my first direct introduction to the Indian public, and shortly afterwards I received an urgent invitation to contribute a further article on the subject to a well-known Indian magazine.

It was about this time that Gandhiji amazed me by informing me one day that he had come to the conclusion that *Indian Opinion* should no longer depend upon advertisements for its support. It seemed to me the death-knell of the paper, and I asked him whether that meant that he intended to close it down. "By no means," was his reply. "Let us try to get a substantial increase in the number of subscribers, to make up for what we shall lose by dropping the advertisements." "But," I said, "how are

we to do this?" "Well," he replied, "you can yourself travel around the country and get to know the Indian people better. You can bring the paper to the notice of many who are not already subscribers, and if you can convince them that they ought to be, they will certainly persuade others to subscribe. Explain that this is a non-profit venture for the community's service, and that all the workers responsible for it are performing a labour of love. In this way, too, you will yourself become better known and better able to understand the people's problems and living conditions." This was, indeed, the fact. I set out on a most interesting series of journeys, in which I made many friends; which brought me into direct contact with individual Indians whose hospitality I shared, thus enabling me the better to understand the Indian way of life (Hindu, Muslim, Parsi, and Christian); and which gained for the paper a considerable number of new and enthusiastic subscribers at what proved a critical period of the community's history.

Not long before this, a deep and fundamental change in Gandhiji's own mentality had occurred. It had been developing quietly for some time, but it had not yet crystallised. This seemed to occur by some mysterious chance and in a moment of time. But there was more than mere chance to it. Gandhiji refers to it in his own writings of the South African days. The financial position of the paper, under its then ownership, was causing him much concern. He had contributed generously to its establishment and maintenance. But it was not so much the fear of heavy pecuniary loss that troubled him as the prospect of the disappearance of the community's organ of expression, with the consequent loss of public service which this would entail. At last the crisis came, involving a hurried journey to Durban. As a result, and in order to save the concern, he decided to take over the complete financial responsibility and general control, thus, with wise foresight, preventing a serious setback for the Indian community.

On the night of his departure for Durban, I saw him off at the Johannesburg station. He was seated in the "reserved" compartment in which coloured persons were

required to travel. The "coolie lawyer" (by which foolish epithet he was commonly known) was a well-known passenger, as he went about the country on professional or public business, and he generally had the compartment (a first-class one, in those days) to himself. Full of my social and economic enthusiasms, in which he had been much interested but with which he had not always agreed, I handed him a book that I had just finished, and which I felt sure he would much enjoy. Little did I realise how far-reaching would be the consequences! The book was John Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. Gandhiji always regarded the perusal of this book as one of the great turning points of his life. He describes how he was so fascinated by the book that he could not put it down all night until he had finished it, and he declares that, upon his arrival at Durban, it had changed his outlook for ever. He determined immediately to adopt and to advocate the "simple life", with all its attendant consequences.

He bought a small estate of some 100 acres about twelve miles north of Durban, to which he transferred the printing-press. It was there that the historic Phoenix settlement (significant name!) was established, in the midst of sugar-cane and timber plantations. The colony consisted of Indians and Englishmen, able to rise above racial differences, and willing to live the simplest life, as advocated by Tolstoy and Ruskin, away from urban surroundings and industrial influences, and receiving only a trifling monthly stipend for their barest needs. They were to help to build their own and each other's tiny cottages and to cultivate with their own hands the two-acre plots allotted to each settler and from which they hoped to grow the crops suited for a vegetarian dietary. In addition, they were to undertake, without pecuniary reward, the production of the weekly newspaper.

It was here that Gandhiji later brought his family to live, after giving up his small middle-class home in Johannesburg. Here, too, began those inter-religious exercises which later became so famous. On Sunday the settlers would meet at the Gandhi house, when he was with them,

and would sing with him not only Hindu and Muslim chants, but also Christian hymns, of which the favourite was "One Step Enough for Me". It was here, too, that Gandhiji came to appreciate the meaning and the peculiarities of machine-industry at first hand. The printing-press, where the type-setting was done by hand, was run by a decrepit oil-engine which frequently broke down. When this occurred, the settlers had to resort to hand-power to turn out the paper in time for the usual despatch mails, often until the middle of the night. More than once, when this happened during one of his occasional visits—he could not permanently reside there, as his public and professional work in the Transvaal then occupied almost all his energies —I can recall Gandhiji literally putting his shoulder to the wheel as energetically as any of us.

In our "bachelor" days, before the return to South Africa of the Gandhi family, Gandhiji and I used to lunch regularly at one of the vegetarian restaurants. I had decided to undertake a three days' fast, partly as an exercise of will-power and partly as a health-cure. I used, however, to visit the restaurant as usual and sit with our small party, consisting of Gandhiji, a Jewish Theosophist, and a third, who prided himself upon being a rationalist and an agnostic and was a man of the highest integrity. They tried unsuccessfully to persuade me to give up my fast, lest it should do me harm. This was some years before Gandhiji himself took his own first long fast, for self-purification, in South Africa. Our meals on these occasions consisted mainly of fresh salads and other uncooked foods. The salads usually contained plenty of onions. Someone suggested that the four of us should form ourselves into the "Amalgamated Society of Onion-eaters", and Gandhiji fell in with the idea with much amusement. He was the President and I the Treasurer. There was never any "treasure"—unless, in the light of recent British war-experience, onions can be so described! I may add here that, when my Theosophical friend tried to persuade me to join the Johannesburg Lodge of the Society, and I showed signs of hesitancy, Gandhiji added his own earnest persua-

sions. Though an occasional lecturer to the Lodge on Indian religion and philosophy, Gandhiji was not himself a member of the Society, though, as a Bar student in London, he had become an associate member of the Blavatsky Lodge, during H. P. B.'s lifetime and shortly after Dr. Annie Besant had joined the Society. In his *Autobiography*, he recalls that it was two Theosophical brothers who first truly interested him in the *Bhagavadgita*. It was they who probably introduced him to Sir Edwin Arnold, who translated that immortal work in his verse-rendering, *The Song Celestial*. Arnold subsequently became an officer of a branch of the London Vegetarian Society, of which Gandhiji was secretary, at that time. "Rooming" at the same boarding-house in London then was Dr. Josiah Oldfield, the veteran "fruitarian", who told me recently that Gandhiji helped to design the badge of the Vegetarian Society, and it was his own badge that Gandhiji gave me, when I joined his household in Johannesburg.

Gandhiji's prompt and self-sacrificing action in saving *Indian Opinion* from extinction was soon to be amply justified. Within eighteen months of the plague outbreak, which had resulted in the scattering of a large part of the Johannesburg Indian population throughout the Transvaal and had raised the suspicion in the country areas that widespread illicit Indian immigration had occurred, the aggravated political situation came to a head. The paper played a very great part in keeping the community together during the Passive Resistance Struggle, which was about to commence. The leading figures on either side, for nearly eight years, were Gandhiji and General (now Field-Marshal) Jan Christiaan Smuts. And it was from the paper that the chief events of the long struggle, the sacrifice of its Indian participants, men and women alike, and the personality and philosophy of life of its indomitable leader became known to India and to the world at large. As Mr. Gokhale later declared, Gandhiji had shown that he had the supreme gift of making heroes out of common clay.

I well recall his impassioned appeal, at a public meeting of his countrymen, in 1906, in a Johannesburg theatre, which was burnt out the same night by an accidental fire (some may think that a good angel had decided that the building should not be put thereafter to a less honourable use!), in which he successfully urged them to take an oath to resist by all non-violent means the new anti-Asiatic law that had just been passed if all representations for its disallowance failed. I remember, too, the scene, some months later, when he was first charged with deliberate breach of the law, and he explained courteously to the Court, after pleading guilty to the charge, that he had felt it his duty to do so in the interests of his South African countrymen and for the honour of his Motherland.

I recall, again, how, after his conviction, and upon his return to Johannesburg some time later, upon being transferred to the local jail, several of us awaited his arrival at Park Station. Among the many watchers were a number of Madrasi hawkers. There descended briskly from the train, attended by a prison-warder in uniform, this small, slim, dark-complexioned man, with calm eyes and a serene countenance. He was clad in the garb of a Native convict —small military cap (the already forgotten original of the famous "Gandhi cap") which did not protect from the sun, loose coarse jacket, bearing a numbered ticket and marked with the broad-arrow, short trousers—one leg dark, the other light—similarly marked, thick grey woollen socks, and leather sandals. He was respectfully saluted by us all, as he turned quickly to the warder for instructions. He was carrying a white canvas bag, which held his clothing and other effects found upon him when he was received by the jail authorities, and also a small basket containing books. A brief consultation took place between the two. The warder appeared to realise the incongruity of the situation, for he bore himself towards the prisoner with every reasonable mark of respect. For this was evidently a person of some importance, to whom a certain degree of deference must be shown. The subject of conversation was whether the prisoner preferred to go by cab or to

walk to the jail. If the former, he would have to pay for it. He, however, declined the easier way, and being a practised and easy walker he chose to march the three-quarters of a mile, in broad daylight in his convict suit. Resolutely shouldering his bag, he stepped out smartly, we shamefacedly following at a respectful distance. Later he disappeared behind the grim portals of the Johannesburg Jail, above which was carved in Dutch the motto: "Union Makes Strength". It was exactly Gandhiji's charge to his people at the time. It was his motto to the end.

I recall how, almost exactly forty years before that tragic end, he nearly fell to a murderous assault upon his life by some of his countrymen who had entirely misunderstood the spirit of compromise with which he entered into an arrangement with General Smuts to suspend the Struggle and to undergo voluntary registration, upon the condition that the offending anti-Indian Act should be subsequently repealed. They awaited him as he left his office in order to be the first to offer voluntary registration, and when he refused to go back upon his undertaking, they struck him down. Being a few minutes late for my appointment with him, I just missed being personally involved in the attack, but I saw Gandhiji a little later at the home of the Rev. Joseph J. Doke (the writer of the first book dealing with his life and philosophy, entitled *M. K. Gandhi: An Indian Patriot in South Africa*, and arranged for the visit to him of the Registrar of Asiatics to take his application for registration, with finger-prints, before he would allow himself to be medically attended to. It may be added that he refused to give evidence against the culprits when, against his will, they were subsequently prosecuted by the Crown authorities. The evidence that convicted them was given by European eye-witnesses who had come to his rescue.

I may here add that among the books that Gandhiji had with him in jail had been some sent to him by General Smuts himself, who bore no personal animus in causing to be locked up, for the first time, his Indian opponent. On Gandhiji's retirement from South Africa six years later, he

reciprocated General Smuts's courtesy by sending him, in token of the Gandhi-Smuts Agreement, through Miss Sonia Schlesin (Gandhiji's enthusiastic secretary) and myself, a pair of hand-made sandals from Tolstoy Farm, which Mr. Hermann Kallenbach, a devoted believer in his philosophy of the "simple life", had placed at the disposal of the passive resisters. Not long before the end of the Struggle, both Kallenbach and I had been fellow-prisoners with Gandhiji. I have reason to believe that General Smuts, who himself lived the "simple life" in his own way on his own farm at Irene, near Pretoria, made an excellent use of the sandals, which 25 years later, he returned to Gandhiji in proof thereof.

I have already mentioned my living with Gandhiji as a member of the family, before he began his experiments in asceticism. Our relations were those of *Bhai* and *Chhotabhai.* At his persuasion, my wife later joined me there, and Gandhiji was the chief witness at our marriage. He had to assure the officiating magistrate that we were both Europeans (I had been so often taken for an Indian because of my close association with him and his community), our marriage in the Transvaal being otherwise unlawful.

I used to study Gujarati with him at this time, and I have recently come across my Gujarati notebook that I then used. After dinner each night we would read verses from the *Song Celestial*, which Gandhiji stated that he had always greatly admired and which not long since he admitted that he regarded as the first among the many English renderings of the *Bhagavadgita.* Remembering that, as an act of duty, he had donned the uniform of a British sergeant-major in the Boer War and, again, at the time of the Zulu Rebellion, I was somewhat surprised at his insistence that the *Gita* story must be taken metaphorically and not literally. I was the more astonished when I read Shrikrishna's constant admonition to Prince Arjuna that he should do his duty as a Kshattriya and that a man should perform his own duty only, even though with fault, rather than another's duty, though done perfectly, for the

latter brought with it spiritual danger. But in these matters, partly because of my own temperamental unwillingness to resort to physical force, and partly because of his superior authority where, as a Hindu, he was the *guru*, and I, an Englishman and a non-Hindu, was the *chela*, I could not question beyond a certain point.

And yet it is known that, during the first world-war, he took an active part in recruiting fighting soldiers for the Indian Army. Indeed, for the very reason that Shrikrishna had given, I was one of those of his friends who strongly dissuaded him from joining up as such, in order to set an example to others. It was about this time that I received from him a letter in which he wrote as follows:

"What do you say to my recruiting campaign? It is for me a religious activity undertaken for the sacred doctrine of ahimsa. I have made the discovery that India has lost the power to fight—not the inclination. She must regain the power and then, if she will, deliver to a groaning world the doctrine of ahimsa. She must give abundantly out of her strength, not out of her weakness. She may never do it. That to me would mean her effacement. She would lose her individuality and would be like the other nations—a worshipper of brute-force. This recruiting work is perhaps the hardest task yet undertaken by me. I may fail to gain recruits. I shall still have given the best political education to the people."

It is difficult to believe, looking back at the events of recent years, that even Gandhiji would have included indiscriminately all the non-Indian nations engaged in the late conflict as "worshippers of brute-force"!

About 1913 he received an inquiry from India whether he would allow himself to be nominated as President of the next session of the Congress. We discussed the matter, and I told him that I thought that it would be useless his doing so, as his views were, in my opinion, much ahead of Indian opinion at the time, and misunderstanding might result, especially as he could do no more than pay a very short visit to India, in view of the South African circumstances. After consideration, he decided to decline the

invitation. Another occasion when he accepted my view was with regard to the appointment by General Smuts of the Commission of Inquiry after Lord Hardinge's protest. At first he was inclined to tender evidence before the Commission, but I felt strongly that the Commission as appointed was one-sided, with two of the three members well-known anti-Indians, and there being no one to represent the Indian community. After discussion, we agreed that the Indian community should refuse to appear before the Commission unless at least one independent member, besides the chairman, was appointed. In the end and to break the stalemate, Lord Hardinge sent out Sir Benjamin Robertson who made the necessary representations to the Commission.

And, finally (for all good things come to an end at last), let me close these reminiscences of those days by recalling another historic event in both our lives. It had been agreed and clearly understood between us that, when at length the Passive Resistance Struggle should end, I should return to my own home-land, where our children could be brought up in an atmosphere free from racial and colour prejudice, in the South African sense of the term. After long negotiations, the Gandhi-Smuts Agreement of 1941 was at length signed. But it still had to be implemented. Imagine, then, my feelings when Gandhiji came to me one day with the urgent plea that I should stay in South Africa to serve the Indian community as its adviser in his place—as I had done so often during his periods of imprisonment or absences in England—since he felt the call to return to India, from which he had been absent for so long (he had not been there for twelve years), there to undertake such public work as would serve his countrymen in some of the many ways that we had discussed from time to time. One of us, he insisted, must stay to see the Agreement through, for we had already had two experiences of breach of faith in carrying out agreements with the Government. What could I do about it? We referred the matter to my wife, who told him that, in all the circumstances, though it was a terrible disappointment, she felt that I must free

him for his great mission. Who can say what might have been the course of political events in India, had the decision been otherwise and he had been obliged to remain in South Africa?

London,
10-3-1948.

IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN DAYS

Millie Graham Polak

MANY of us who knew Gandhiji in the days of long ago were aware that he had long had a deep interest in trying to heal a sick body—not only his own, though with that he was always experimenting, but also that of the many who were near or came to him for help. At one time he might have interested himself in orthodox medical science, though I cannot say that he had ever made any real study of it. But orthodoxy was not for him, for, like all other things in his life, he sought to get back to what was to him the fountain-head of life and health. So he sought to treat an ailment by what was known as nature-cure methods.

After reading Just's *Return to Nature*, in which the author had devised a special simple method of nature-cure, Gandhiji was convinced that here were to be found healing and absence of ills. It was about this time that an unhappy experience made a profound impression upon him, and deepened his suspicion of the orthodox medical schools of thought and practice.

An Indian trader had a dearly loved son, who had become seriously ill. Only an immediate operation, said the doctor in charge of the case, could cure the boy. The operation was not considered to be a serious one, but the father was filled with fear and anxiety. He consented at

last to the operation, but begged Gandhiji to be with him during the ordeal, and to help the family at the time of trial. Gandhiji consented to do so. The operation was performed at the boy's home one Sunday morning. When, later that day, Gandhiji returned to us—my husband and I were then living with the Gandhi family—it was evident that he was still labouring under a severe emotional strain. We learned, upon inquiry, that the boy had died under the operation. Gandhiji seemed to feel that the boy need never have undergone it—and, in any case, that it had been incompetently performed,—and that he might have recovered under other treatment. He worried about this considerably, and I think that he felt that his agreeing to be present on the occasion was tantamount to advising, and, therefore, being partially responsible for, the operation and the unhappiness of the bereaved family.

This experience certainly increased his bias towards 'unorthodox' methods of healing, and engendered a strong dislike of the surgeon's knife. Several of us who were closely associated with him at the time underwent experiments with earth-poultices, cabinet steam-baths to be followed by a plunge into a tub of cold water, colonic irrigation, acid fruit cures, fasts, many different types of diet, and several other trials. Always these experiments were first carried out on himself and the members of his own family. Many cases of illness or discomfort were quite successfully treated in this manner—a poisoned finger or a severely suppurating wound having made a remarkably quick recovery when treated with a clean, fresh earth-poultice. This same type of poultice, however, when applied to the stomach of my six-weeks old baby (who, like most infants, had a slight digestive trouble) proved not only a failure, but a real danger to the poor child. The shock of the cold compress produced a rigor, and after my ministration had restored him to normal, I refused to have the method tested on him again.

The cure that seemed almost miraculous to those of us who watched it was that for which he was responsible in respect of Mrs. Gandhi. She was at the Phoenix Settle-

ment, in Natal, and Gandhiji was at Johannesburg, in the Transvaal. After having been ailing for some time, she became very ill, and the doctor, who lived twelve miles away, had to be sent for late one night. Upon examination, he found her suffering from a bad attack of pernicious anaemia. He considered her condition so serious that he asked for her husband to be sent for at once. Upon Gandhiji's arrival, and after being closeted with Ba for some time, he told us that she had placed herself entirely in his hands for treatment, and that he was going to look after her himself. The doctor, who had been urging orthodox dietary treatment, which involved breach of the customary vegetarianism, was dispensed with, much to his indignation, and Gandhiji set to work and treat his wife. She was given frequent small quantities of acid fruit and practically no other food at first, and, contrary to the expectations of those of us who feared the consequences of such drastic treatment of a weak and desperately sick woman, the trouble was arrested. After a week or two, simple, non-stimulating food was taken, and Ba commenced to improve. In due course, a complete cure was effected.

In those days, Gandhiji accepted cow's milk as a valuable food, though already he was saying that it was not a proper food for adults. Presently, he insisted that it stimulated the lower passions of man's nature. This line of argument aroused strong opposition in me. "If that be so," I said, "then young children, who are principally fed on milk, would be nothing but horrible little brutes, and you do not certainly believe that to be the case." However, he smiled tolerantly. Neither of us believed that the other was right. Shortly afterwards he took a vow never to drink again the milk of the cow and the buffalo.

Since those days, doctors and surgeons played a bigger part in Gandhiji's life. Even his fasts had to be carefully watched by his medical advisers, and probably only such medical care enabled him to retain for so long a hold on his physical body. And, too, he later learnt to distinguish between the moral consequences of taking cow's milk and

goat's milk! I expect that he must often have thought back to the past and, in a way, felt that those days, full of hope and belief and strenuous endeavour, were rich in experiences and the knowledge that grew from them.

Our dietary experiments were many and various. For some time, upon his advice, Ba and I cooked without ordinary refined sugar. Cooked fruits, puddings or cakes were sweetened with raw cane syrup. When this phase passed, we had a saltless table. Salt, Gandhiji contended, other than that contained in natural foods, was bad not only for health but for the character. But years later, he conducted the great anti-salt tax campaign in India, and he and many others endured imprisonment therefor. Tea was not to be used, nor any other stimulant. Abstention from tea was, I think, a real deprivation for him, for, until my husband had denounced it to him as a stimulant or a narcotic, he had much enjoyed his afternoon cup in his office. When in London on one of his missions on behalf of his countrymen, his tea-parties were a delight to many. He would then be his most human self, teasing, laughing, and seemingly enjoying the friendly intercourse and the tea. An imitation coffee, made from roasted and ground cereals or peanuts, was the usual evening beverage. I personally struck against some of these austerities and refused to be bound or worried by them; whereat Gandhiji, with his usual affectionate smile, would cease to argue with me, though keeping strictly to his own regime, intent on working out his own dietary theories.

When Mr. G. K. Gokhale paid his historic visit to South Africa, in 1912, to investigate the Indian grievances there, my husband and I were no longer sharing a home with the Gandhi family, who were then living at Phoenix. A house had been placed at Mr. Gokhale's disposal by an Indian merchant. In all the arrangements for the distinguished visitor's comfort and convenience, Gandhiji entered minutely. When he discovered that Mr. Gokhale was suffering from diabetes, he and I used to char the bread and potatoes in hot ashes, so as to extract as much starch as possible. Mr. Gokhale never knew of these culinary

efforts to preserve his health. Nothing was ever too small for Gandhiji, and the more menial the task, the greater dignity he imparted to it by his own great earnestness and simplicity.

In our talks in the South African days, I came to realise that Gandhiji believed very intensely that man's essential nature was divine, and that if it were to be allowed to develop naturally from birth, the divine in him would expand as a flower and his natural wisdom would grow and manifest direct from God. This being his profound belief, it is understandable that education, in its ordinary sense, namely, the imparting of information along scholastic lines, was of secondary importance to him. Many were the arguments that I had with him. Yet we did have a little school at the Phoenix Settlement for a short time, which the children of the settlers attended. The teaching was very rudimentary and amateurish, for the teachers were without much training or skill. Nevertheless, it was something in the right direction, and Gandhiji was interested in the work.

A question that troubled him somewhat during this period was how to convey the right kind of sex-knowledge to the children under his influence as they were reaching puberty. He realised that children growing up in a free life close to nature might misunderstand the right use of the procreative faculties and that experimenting and abuses might easily take place. At length he procured what at that time were regarded as standard works on what a boy and a girl should know and how they should be informed. The then teacher at the school was an unmarried woman, so Gandhiji did not feel that he could ask her advice on the books without embarrassing her. Being the only other Englishwoman there, and a married woman, he asked me to help him. Soon after, owing to his rapid immersion in the political struggle, the little school was closed, and nothing further was done in the matter.

London,
12-3-1948.

WITH GANDHIJI ON DECK

Edmond Privat

OUR first meeting with Gandhiji was at Marseilles, in September 1931, when he arrived in Europe for the Round Table Conference. We went to the French harbour on an early morning with Romain Rolland's sister, and together with Charlie Andrews we spent part of the day on board the ship with the Mahatma.

It was a great experience. When we left, my wife wished him good success in London, and he replied, smiling: "Behaviour is success,"—a remark well summing up all his moral philosophy. We often quote it.

After the Round Table Conference we went to Paris to bring him to Switzerland, where he spent a week at Romain Rolland's house near Villeneuve.

We organized his lectures at Lausanne and Geneva, and shall never forget his reply to an old man who asked him if he was not discouraged repeating the same non-violent advice given by Christ two thousand years ago "without much success if we judge by history".

"How long did you say?" asked Gandhiji with his usual good humour.

"I said these things have been preached for twenty centuries in vain," insisted the old workman, who was a communist.

"Well," answered the Mahatma, "do you think two thousand years such a long time to learn something as difficult as to return good for evil?"

Gandhiji's part in human history will have shown that at least one nation agreed to fight for its freedom in a peaceful way thanks to his teaching and to the best spiritual tradition of the country. After such an event the world will never be the same as before. Even Norway followed Gandhiji's inspiration in its resistance to the Nazi authorities.

After his Swiss visit Gandhiji and his party went south to Brindisi to sail back home on the S. S. Pilsna, and

we accompanied them to the Italian frontier at two hours' notice. It was during that journey in the train that he asked us why we did not visit India. We replied that the journey was too expensive.

"You probably think in terms of first or second class," he explained laughing, "but we only pay ten pounds each for our passage on deck and, once there, many Indian friends would open their houses to you."

We counted how much money we had in our pockets, and decided to seize the opportunity. We stayed in the train, went to Rome with the party and, there, got the visa and the tickets. We had no luggage, except a tooth-brush and an umbrella, but we bought some bedding at Rome and sent a few telegrams to cancel lectures. Such an adventure is only offered once in a lifetime.

The journey on the S. S. Pilsna was wonderful. We all slept in row on deck, and Gandhiji was very jolly, full of wit, and very kindly teaching us about Indian ways, Indian food, and taking trouble for his friends' comfort with a real mother's heart.

They say that a great man is never great to his servant, and that illusions fall when you live near him. Well, Gandhiji is an exception to the rule, and he is still greater when you are his companions day and night. His humour and his kindness are unforgettable. We spent three weeks in close intimacy, sharing all the details of daily routine on deck, even cleaning our common corner when the dogs of the first class passengers invaded it, and we found the Mahatma great as ever.

He does not impose an overwhelming or crushing personality on you as other great men often do. He just makes the atmosphere absolutely honest and clear by his presence and his love of truth. Who could ever lie to such a guide and friend, a real brother of men?

These three weeks with him on the S. S. Pilsna were a rare privilege, and such an introduction to India was unique. Gandhiji's love of his people is boundless, but never blind. Many times he repeated that his mission was to accustom men to use a better method than war in their

struggle for freedom. Indian self-government was not an end in itself: the non-violent fight to achieve it was the occasion for a new experience in human history and a step towards abolishing war.

When a radiogram announced that a girl student had tried to murder the Governor of Bengal, he was as deeply ashamed as if she had been his own daughter, and felt himself responsible. His pain was hard to bear.

His description of Islam and of Muslims to us was the most generous we ever heard. He wanted us to understand the greatness of their religion and their sense of democratic equality.

A few days after Christmas we landed at Bombay, where huge crowds were waiting to welcome him back. The political situation was tense and the atmosphere revolutionary. Jawaharlal Nehru had just been arrested. Lord Willingdon refused to discuss such measures with Gandhiji. The Congress contemplated a new civil disobedience campaign as a protest.

At the mass meeting on the Maidan we could compare the Indian leader's tone with the language of nationalist leaders in Europe and with their brutal appeals to hatred. Gandhiji was reminding the crowds of their promise of non-violence, and was asking every man and woman to be ready to give their life in protecting English officials and their families against any injury or insult. "We are not fighting them, but the system of government that employs them".

Staying with the same friends who were his hosts at Bombay, we could watch his patience and calm in very difficult circumstances. In the early morning there was a meeting for worship in a public square, where a silent mass of white-clad men and women squatted around their beloved leader. He only said a few words, mostly against fear, which is the chief cause of violence. If you are free from any dread, either of losing your possessions or your life, you can remain calmly brave and love your opponent while resisting his intrusions.

Early another morning before sunrise, we saw the

police arrest him on the roof of his host's house, and two very tall officers standing on both sides of the stairs with tears in their eyes. We shall never forget that scene. Even then he found time to scribble a few words of general introduction for us, a sort of Indian passport on a precious scrap of paper. It opened all doors through India and, while he was in jail, at Poona, in that winter of 1932, we found his spirit and his inspiration alive everywhere from North to South. Travelling third class and wearing khaddar, we made hundreds of friends in the trains.

Two testimonials impressed us specially. A woman with white hair explained why she and so many of her sisters had come out of their homes to take part in the Gandhi-led movement, much against old customs: "We felt that he would never ask us to do anything against love or truth."

In Calcutta, the great Poet of India, Rabindranath Tagore, told us what he thought was Gandhiji's greatest achievement: "He taught our people to cast away fear and so to free themselves from hatred and hypocrisy, for both go together."

The world owes a deep debt of gratitude to India for having chosen such a leader and shown mankind a way out of war in following his prophetic vision.

Neuchatel (Switzerland),
25-3-1946.

REMINISCENCES

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas

APART from learning from newspapers about the fame of Gandhiji in connection with his satyagraha in South Africa, my first knowledge about his firm views was when he returned from overseas and there was a move on the part of the orthodox members of the Modh Bania community in Bombay to put Gandhiji out of the caste. There were many who did not approve of this. When mention was made of this move to Gandhiji, he simply said: "Why take the trouble of passing a resolution putting me out of the caste? I am prepared to go out of the caste myself." This deservedly curt treatment of the orthodox element in the caste has had its own effect, and those who felt that they would in the least degrade him by their resolution, if carried, reconciled themselves to doing nothing. Gandhiji's attitude regarding matters concerning his caste of Modh Banias has been a consistently cold and indifferent one all through, without being in any way provocative or disrespectful. The net result today is that the Modh Bania community feel proud of him, and caste restrictions are slowly but most definitely being worn out, if not effaced.

My first contact with Gandhiji was in 1920 when he was about to launch the non-cooperation movement for the first time. I then saw him by appointment through the late Revashankar Jagjivan, who used to be his host in Bombay at Mani Bhuvan. I was trying to understand from Gandhiji how the non-cooperation movement could at all succeed under the circumstances of the country and the people at the time. Gandhiji's one reply, after I explained my point of view to him, was: "I will make this experiment with such as choose to follow me. There is such dire poverty in the country that I shall get my following from the masses, even though I may not get it from the classes." As I was leaving Gandhiji after the interview, Pandit Motilal Nehru came in to see him, and that was the first time I met the Panditji. He enquired of Gandhiji about me, and Gandhiji said that I was the Sheriff of

Bombay. Panditji, half jocularly, remarked: "He will have to give this up now;" and Gandhiji, without waiting for me to say a word, rejoined: "He will do it more thoroughly than many, but he will only do it when he is convinced of our line of action being the correct one." As Revashankarbhai said good-bye to me at the threshold of the staircase of the second floor of his building, he asked if I felt that the interview had been a useful one. I replied in all earnestness: "It is a serious move and will require to be watched at every turn."

My next interview with Gandhiji was in 1921 immediately after the landing of the Prince of Wales at Bombay when commotion took place in Bombay and Gandhiji went on fast. It was decided that, when Gandhiji was to break his fast, a few friends should be present. I was specially invited to this, and there were a few speeches requesting Gandhiji to break the fast and assuring him of the loyalty of all India to him. At the end of these speeches, he asked me to say a few words. This took me by surprise, as nothing in that direction was indicated to me. But on his repeating his request, I referred to what I felt was most lacking in Indian public life or private, namely discipline. A few friends from the Congress circle were upset by my few words, but I was given to understand that Mahatmaji said to them: "Purshotamdas touched the correct thing, and I am glad he said it on this occasion."

Gandhiji's father had been Dewan of Rajkot; and during the agitation against that State, which developed just before the Tripuri session of the Congress over which Subhash Babu presided, Gandhiji decided to follow Kasturba who had gone to Rajkot, having been brought up at Rajkot though her birth-place was Porbandar. When I heard about this, I particularly asked friends in Bombay to arrange that I should be able to see Gandhiji in Bombay on his way to Rajkot. It was a Monday, his silence day, and he was to be in Bombay only for a few hours. As soon as he learnt that I was anxious to see him, he very kindly sent a message back saying that he would start his silence an hour or two later, so that I might go

and see him at his host's place in Juhu. I particularly appreciated this, and had about half-an-hour's talk with him at Juhu. I suggested to him that in my opinion Rajkot was too small a problem for him to go personally to solve. Gandhiji's only reply was: "I know it, but I feel that, if I can go, I should not avoid it." I reminded him of the divided loyalty which was bound to worry him, and he said quite seriously: "That is exactly why I am going. The people are not in the wrong, and the Dewan has a great hold over the young Thakore. Perhaps I may be able to render a small service to the State which was served by my father." I left Gandhiji convinced that he would, with his tact and usual resourcefulness, bring about the best solution permissible under the circumstances there. And so it did happen. Gandhiji has proved that whenever he wills it so, he can stretch a thing without making it snap.

The last incident that I may refer to is what took place during my recent illness in 1945. He had had kind enquiries made after my health fairly regularly, and on the very first day after his arrival in Bombay, after the evening prayers, he told his host, Mr. Birla, that he was calling on me. When Mr. Birla said that at about 8-30 p.m. I might not be able to see him, all that Gandhiji said was: "Anyway I will see him, if he cannot see me." He called at my residence with Dr. Sushila Nayyar and another friend. My daughter and grandson had left me for the evening just a few minutes before, and the nurse was preparing me for the night's rest. A servant brought the message that Mahatmaji had arrived. My wife was wondering what to say to him, but she forthwith went down to meet him. Gandhiji at once asked: "Is Purshotamdas in?" When my wife said: "I am afraid he cannot come down, but he is a little better," Gandhiji smilingly said: "Oh, I can go up and, if you like, I will take you up with me to convince you that I can go up the stairs comfortably." Without waiting any more, he started going up the stairs, and as soon as he was at the entrance of my bed-room, he said in his cheerful voice: "Don't move at all. I will come and sit by you." He was one of the

very few who, instead of enquiring of me as to the why and wherefor of my illness, kept on talking to me merrily, as if bracing me to the course of recovery. He left me after twenty minutes, and the nurse in attendance, who saw him for the first time, said: "If only I could be sure that patients would have such visitors calling on them, they would do more for a patient's recovery than doctors themselves."

Bombay,
July 1946.

SINCE MY STUDENT DAYS

T. S. S. Rajan

VANITY is a part of human nature. We always like to exhibit ourselves to our best advantage, particularly when we happen to be on view. True greatness rarely exhibits itself in such a way. God's good man never seeks occasions to display his good nature. It is inherent in him. This was the lesson I learnt when I happened to meet Mahatma Gandhi, a plain Mr. Gandhi, South Africa's Indian barrister Gandhi if you like it, in about the year 1909 in London. I was merely a medical student—one of the many that flocked to the London University even in those days. I had no occasion to know or see Mr. Gandhi. Like many young men, I felt I was intensely patriotic if I joined any movement, national in outlook, which had for its motive the freedom of India. To have the courage to talk of Indian freedom in those days was a great patriotic act, and I had a great veneration for those young men who talked loudly of revolution leading to freedom for India. A handful as we were, we became a dreaded lot in the Indian world that lived and moved about in London.

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was our chief, and the late V. V. S. Ayyar his lieutenant. We decided bringing together all Indian students scattered about Great Britain just to remind ourselves of our national solidarity in an alien land. A search was made amongst the leading Indian front-rank politicians who had then congregated in London, to request them to preside and take part in the function. We had a categorical refusal from every one of them till at last it was left to Mr. Gandhi to agree to our request but with a condition.

The function consisted of a dinner and a post-dinner talk. Over one hundred and twentyfive students agreed to partake in the subscription dinner, and it was to have been arranged in some hotel or restaurant in London. But the chief guest of the function, Mr. Gandhi, our last hope as a president, would not have anything of the kind, and insisted on a pukka vegetarian Indian dinner, to be managed in whichever way we thought best. The condition was agreed to, and we straightway engaged a hall, bought provisions, and decided to cook various Indian dishes for the function. A part of us volunteered to do the cooking, and we entered on our duties in the underground cellar and kitchen of the building early in the day so that we might be ready to lay the table at 7.30 p.m.—our dinner time. At about 2 p.m. a small, thin, wiry man with a pleasant face joined us in work and was making himself very useful. He volunteered to do the washing of plates and cleaning of vegetables with such gusto and willingness that we were only too willing to give him the joy of his performance. Hours rolled on, and there was no abatement in the work turned out by this man. Later in the afternoon when Mr. Ayyar turned up in the kitchen, did we come to know that our unannounced worker was Mr. Gandhi, the great man of Indian South Africa, the president of our evening function. It took my breath away to see the great man of whom we had heard so much and to witness his utter humility and willingness to share with us the work we were engaged in. Our importunity in dissuading him from his services did not prevail, for he continued his work

well on into the evening when he helped us to lay the tables and the plates, and serve the dinner we had prepared. At long last after strenuous work of hours did he consent to sit at the head of the table and preside over the function. At the beginning of his speech, a very simple and hesitant one, he told us how pleased he was to see us tuck up our sleeves and do the work in the way we had done. He said he knew the difficult task we had undertaken, and was agreeably surprised to know that the Indian students in London, sons of well-to-do parents, did not consider it mean to serve their fellow-men in the way we had done, and that it augured well for the future of our land. He spoke of many other things besides, but I have forgotten them all now. What persists in my mind even at this distance of time is the picture of my first meeting the Mahatma in the underground kitchen cellar of a London restaurant. I have often been a prisoner in the jails of our country during the many occasions of the satyagraha struggle conducted by Gandhiji; and during all those occasions I have found myself voluntarily working in the kitchen. During our last internment, Rajaji made a casual remark about me, saying: "Rajan, how is it that I find you gravitating to the kitchen whenever you happen to be imprisoned?" Has Gandhiji's example in the kitchen cellar in London got into my blood and stuck there? I do not know. But I do remember I found greatness in the Mahatma of the future years, long before the world knew of him.

(2) I had an impression that Mahatma Gandhi did not care for money, and did not worry himself about losing it if it so happened. It was one of the impossible, crowded meetings usually held in Tamil Nad whenever Gandhiji happens to be the guest of the evening —one of the many visits he has paid to Karaikudi, the chief town of Chettinad in Ramnad district. The reception committee had made elaborate arrangements for receiving Gandhiji. A decorated *mandap* in a huge open space had attracted the crowd long before the arrival of the guest. As often happens, thousands had besieged the approach to

the *mandap*, the members of the reception committee being careful to secure their attractive seats round the dais put up for Gandhiji. It was nearing dusk when he arrived at the meeting only to find he was yards away from the *mandap* which he was expected to reach, God only knew how. The gentlemen of the committee sitting in the *mandap* stood up, waved both their hands frantically, imploring Gandhiji to reach them in the reception shed. The people in the crowd were well entrenched in their seats, and would not budge an inch even for Gandhiji's car to pass. After a vain struggle and waiting for a few minutes, Gandhiji said: "Let us conduct the meeting from the car as it stands here." He stood up and began to receive the many addresses and purses that were literally pouring in one after the other. Several caskets of silver and one of gold were received, and the purses were all deposited near his feet in the car as they were received. It was dark when the meeting was over. It was a job to extricate the car from amidst the maddening crowd, and after a struggle we worked the car out without killing or injuring anyone. On reaching home we gathered the pile of purses and addresses, when to my grief I missed the gold casket—the one I considered most precious among the caskets presented. Late at night I was feeling miserable and hesitantly appraised Gandhiji of the loss. I expected him to lose his temper and go at me for my negligence. Nothing of the kind happened. He had a hearty laugh and said: "It is a good riddance. What is the good of throwing valuables at me when I can neither pick them up nor keep them safe? Mahadev was asking for a box to keep these things safe. Now he won't ask for it. I do not want a boxload of silver and gold caskets to be carried about along with my luggage." This incident, which took place in 1927, gave me the impression to which I have given expression in the opening paragraph. But I had my disillusionment later.

(3) It was during the Harijan tour in Tamil Nad after his historic fast, i.e. in 1934. After touring Kerala he began his tour in Tinnevelly. We started early morning

from Tinnevelly, and covering over a hundred and fifty miles by car reached Tuticorin towards dusk. For miles near the town the route was choked with crowds, and we could not drive fast to the meeting place. It was dark when we reached there. The meeting place itself was brightly illumined with myriads of electric lights, and the platform was a feast of coloured bulbs. Gandhiji came up the platform, was vociferously cheered, and when he settled down on his seat he called me and asked: "Rajan, what is this brilliant illumination? Who pays for it? Is the reception committee spending out of the money raised for the Harijan Sevak Sangh? I am out begging even for the poor man's coppers. Surely money collected for the Harijans should not be allowed to be wasted like this." Knowing the facts I assured him that not a pie of the funds collected for Harijans had been spent for these decorations, and that it was a voluntary offer of a contractor of the place. Gandhiji refused to conduct the meeting till he was satisfied that what I said was a fact. I called to my help the organisers of the function, and they bore me out. But no, Gandhiji won't have it. "Is the contractor present? Please call him here." The contractor was brought before him. He questioned the former, and made sure that it was a voluntary contribution by him, and that he did not expect to get a single pie from the funds of the reception committee for this illumination. It was only after this explanation that he started the meeting. This came to me as a rude shock. "Suppose some thoughtless committees in the hundreds of places he has planned to visit in Tamil Nad have spent some money out of their collections in a frivolous way, and Gandhiji comes to know of it, as he has done here at Tuticorin," I said to myself, "how am I to manage the tour to his satisfaction and to that of the members of the many committees who have arranged the functions in various places?" I had to send instructions in advance from Tuticorin that not a pie of the Harijan fund should be expended on giving receptions to Gandhiji, and that strict account had to be maintained of the money collected and submitted to him before he left the place.

It was a job, and a difficult one at that, but never did the Bania in him reveal itself in such perfection as in this tour. I had to change my opinion of him considerably at the close of his tour, and to thank my stars that I had not to pay in my money to make up for any loss in counting or for any ill-conceived expenditure not duly accounted for.

Tiruvengimalai,
10-5-1946.

SINCE HE CAME TO CHAMPARAN

Rajendraprasad

MY first acquaintance with Mahatma Gandhi in person was in April 1917. I had heard and read about him and his work in South Africa. On his return to India sometime in 1915 I had seen him from a distance at a meeting organised to give him reception in Calcutta. I had also seen him from a distance at the Congress session held in Lucknow in December 1916, and again just a few days before my actual acquaintance at Calcutta at a meeting of the All India Congress Committee. Some people of Champaran had met him at the time of the Lucknow Congress and related to him their grievances against the Indigo planters. He had listened to their stories of woe and suffering, but was not prepared to accept all that they said without personal verification. He promised them to visit Champaran for a few days for this purpose. In fulfilment of this promise he started with Shri Rajkumar Shukul, the leader of the tenants, for Champaran from Calcutta after the meeting of the All India Congress Committee there. I also attended the meeting of the A.I.C.C. and was seated near him in the meeting; but not having personal acquaintance, I had no talk with him and I did not know that he was going to Bihar from there. I

went away to Puri for a holiday, and Rajkumar Shukul took him at Patna to my house where there was nobody except a servant. Not knowing who he was and taking him to be some villager who had come there as a client (I was then practising as a lawyer), he did not pay any attention to him and put him up in some room where such people used to be put up. He was there for a few hours. When people in the town came to know about his visit, the late Mazharul Huq took him to his own house from where Gandhiji left the same evening for Champaran. The town of Muzaffarpur falls on the way to Champaran from Patna, and so he stopped at Muzaffarpur where Acharya Kripalani was a professor in the G. B. B. College. The train arrived there at midnight. Acharya Kripalani had been informed that he was coming, and so he was at the station with some of his students to receive him. He stayed at Muzaffarpur for two days with Prof. Malkani.

The rayats in Champaran had been so badly treated and oppressed for a long time that they were afraid even of complaining against the planters to a magistrate or to any Government official. A story was related that when a rayat took courage to approach a magistrate, the men of the planters used to drag him out even from the presence of the magistrate in court and give him a beating, to be followed by various other kinds of harassment. The rayats, therefore, were afraid even of lodging a complaint. But as soon as the news that Karmavir Gandhi of the South African fame was coming to help them, after the return of Rajkumar Shukul from the Lucknow Congress, somehow or other a change came over many of them. By the time he reached Muzaffarpur the news had gone ahead of him, and many tenants of Champaran came to see him at Muzaffarpur. When he reached Motihari, the headquarter of the district, there was a crowd to receive him at the railway station. When on the day following his arrival he started to visit a village, from where intimation of looting and arson by planters' men of villagers had reached him, he was asked by the District Magistrate to see him, and was served with a notice to

leave the district by the first available train. He of course disobeyed it, and on the following day he was prosecuted before a magistrate for disobedience of the District Magistrate's order. When he went to court to answer the charge, there was a crowd of thousands that had assembled, and a scene was witnessed the like of which had never been seen before in the court precincts of Champaran. He made up his mind to disobey the order because he felt that he could not give up the cause of the rayats for whom he had come; and the very fact that the district officials did not want him to hold the inquiry which he intended to hold, made him suspicious, and he felt that there must be something which they wanted to conceal from him. After the notice was served and he disobeyed it, he wired to me asking me to go to Motihari. He had heard about me from Rajkumar, and also perhaps from other friends whom he met at Muzaffarpur and Motihari. My acquaintance with Champaran was of the flimsiest kind. I happened to be a practitioner in the High Court, and some of the poor rayats had to come to the High Court occasionally for their cases, and I used to help them. The late Babu Brijkishore and the late Babu Dharnidhar had extensive practice in the District Courts, and the former was also a member of the Legislative Council. He had become the champion of the Champaran rayats in the Council where he used to put questions, move resolutions and do such other things as could be done to help them in the Council. Both of them used to help them as lawyers in their litigation against the planters and to send such of the cases as went up to the High Court to me. That is how Rajkumar Shukul had come to know me, and on the strength of that kind of acquaintance he had taken Mahatmaji to my house at Patna in my absence.

I, along with Babu Brijkishore Prasad, Mazharul Huq Saheb and some others, started for Motihari on receipt of this telegram. We arrived there at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. The case had been taken up by the magistrate earlier in the day, and after Mahatmaji made a statement admitting that he had intentionally dis-

obeyed the order and was prepared to take the severest penalty that the magistrate could impose, the magistrate had adjourned the case for four or five days for passing orders. The magistrate had expected that there would be legal arguments, and that witnesses would have to be examined and cross-examined, and then argument for the prosecution and for the defence and so on. The trial started in the usual way; but as soon as the prosecuting pleader had started examining a witness, Gandhiji said it was unnecessary to call witnesses as he was ready with a statement admitting that he had disobeyed the order. When he read it out the magistrate did not know what to do. The statement did not say in so many words that he pleaded guilty. It was one of those magnificent statements with which the country became familiar in course of time but which was altogether extraordinary and unfamiliar then. The magistrate pointed out that it did not amount to a plea of guilty, and so he would have to go through the formality of examining witnesses. As a matter of fact the magistrate did not like such a speedy conclusion of this trial as he was not prepared to deliver a sentence then and there. So he put forward this plea that the statement did not amount to a plea of guilty. But Gandhiji was not prepared to allow the proceedings to be prolonged; and so he said that, if the magistrate insisted, he would plead guilty. The magistrate then had no option but to pass a sentence. He said he would pass sentence two hours later, and asked Gandhiji to furnish a bail which he refused to do. Ultimately the magistrate let him go without any bail on promise that he would attend when required. Gandhiji waited there; and when the two hours were over, the magistrate said he would deliver the judgment some days later.

Gandhiji had returned from court, after this trial, to his residence when we arrived there. I had of course heard how he had been taken to my house and how my servant had treated him, and was naturally abashed. When my name was mentioned to him as one of the new arrivals, he simply laughed and stated that he had been to my house in Patna in my absence. Without going into formali-

ties, he at once came to business with us, the new arrivals. He told us what had happened in the court, and said that it looked as if the magistrate would drop the proceedings and let him proceed with the inquiries; yet one could not be certain about it. His reading, which turned out to be perfectly correct, was that the magistrate had taken time, after consultation with the District Magistrate, to make a reference to the Provincial Government, as to what should be done; and he felt that probably the Provincial Government would not like to take the responsibility of sending him to jail, particularly because the first World War was then going on and they would not like any serious agitation at that time. But, he said, we should be prepared for the worst; and he asked us what we would do in case he was imprisoned. We were wholly unacquainted with his method of work, and we had not gone there prepared for any action which might involve our absence from our work, much less our imprisonment. We were not in a position to answer the question without knowing what he would expect us to do. While going to Muzaffarpur he had taken two lawyer friends with him, who knew the local language, to help him as interpreters as he did not understand the dialect of the people of Champaran. After he had disobeyed the orders and had been summoned before the magistrate, he had put the same question to them. Babu Dharnidhar, who was the seniormost among them and who was a most frank, honest, plain and blunt man, said: "We came here to interpret to you what the people of this place said. When you go to jail there will be nobody to whom we shall have to interpret, so we shall go home." This was the reply from a lawyer, but they were themselves not satisfied with it; and they began to think and, after cogitation, the next morning they decided to follow him and to do what he would ask them to do. He suggested to them that they should carry on the investigation after he had been sent to prison and, if they were ordered to leave and if they were not prepared to disobey, they might go away and send another batch to carry on the inquiry to be followed similarly by another batch and so on. This was

acceptable to them. But they thought, amongst themselves, that Gandhiji was totally a stranger, and yet he was prepared to go to prison for the sake of the rayats; if, they, on the other hand, being not only residents of adjoining districts but also those who claimed to have served these rayats, should go home, it would be a shameful desertion. Ultimately they made up their minds to go to prison. They conveyed this decision to him just when he was going to court. He was very much pleased, and at once said that the battle in Champaran was won. When the question was put to us we did not know all this, and so we took a little time to consider and to consult those friends who had been with him from before. They related to us the whole story as to how they had arrived at the stage when they expressed their preparedness to court imprisonment. All of us now gathered for consultation, and had of course no difficulty after this in coming to the same conclusion. We told him that, and he was pleased. He was a pukka businessman. He at once took a piece of paper and a pencil and took down the names of all of us. He divided us into batches of two each, and put down the order in which each batch would disobey the order. There were some days still intervening before the date fixed for the judgment. We were permitted to go home, settle our affairs and return; and the first batch, which was to consist of Mazharul Huq Saheb and Babu Brijkishore, was expected to be ready on the date of the judgment. It was this very first incident which left on his mind a very favourable impression about Bihar, and he was never tired of repeating how happy he was and how he had acquired such confidence in Bihar.

The inquiry into the grievances of the rayats proceeded, and after some time he was summoned by the Lieutenant-Governor to meet him. We had, in the meantime, collected a great deal of evidence in support of their complaints. We had examined something like 20 to 25 thousand witnesses, taking down statements in full of about ten thousand and summary of the rest. We had also collected thousands of documents which we had sorted and classified, and we knew

every little detail about the district. All this had created a panic among the planters and the officials, and they had sent frantic reports to the Lieutenant-Governor. When Gandhiji was summoned it was apprehended that he might not be permitted to return and would probably be either detained or externed from the province. So before he left for Ranchi to meet the Governor, we had again prepared a list of satyagrahis and the order in which they were to court imprisonment, and we were expecting a message from Ranchi. The result of three or four long interviews with the Lieutenant-Governor was that he appointed a Commission to go into the grievances, and made Gandhiji a member of that Commission. The Commission, which had on it representatives of the planters, zamindars and the Government officials with one single representative in Mahatma Gandhi of the rayats, gave a unanimous report and made certain recommendations which the Government implemented by legislation.

This unanimous report also has a history. It is not necessary to give the details of the grievances, but the unanimous recommendation was that the grievances which arose on account of the compulsory cultivation by every rayat of indigo on his own land for the benefit of the planters should be abolished. The planters had imposed enhancement in the rent of the rayats and realised a large amount of money from them for which there was no legal justification. The recommendation on this point was that the enhancement should be reduced by about 25 per cent and the cash should be refunded also to the extent of 25 per cent. Gandhiji had secured the unanimity in the recommendation by allowing the enhancement to remain to the extent of over 75 per cent and giving up the claim to the cash exactions to the same extent. This appeared to many as a compromise which yielded too much. I remember, Gandhiji told us that these planters had been able to lord it over the rayats because of their prestige; the mere fact that they had been obliged to give up a part of the enhancement and to refund a part of the cash was enough to damage, if not altogether to destroy, their

prestige; and therefore we need not entertain any apprehension that the rayats would submit to the planters any more. He saw clearly that it would not be profitable for the planters to remain there if they could not exact illegal perquisites, and when the rayats had learnt to refuse to pay what was not legally payable, the planters' game would be up. This turned out to be literally true. Although he had given up the demand of the rayats to the extent of 75 per cent in the compromise, the planters left Champaran within a few years after his visit; and at places where there used to stand their well-furnished bungalows, well-kept gardens and big stables the rayats have now got their houses, and every inch of land which the planters had in their possession has passed to the rayats. This process had started by 1920-21 when Gandhiji initiated the non-cooperation movement; and no wonder those of us who had the privilege to be associated with him in Champaran, had seen his work and his method and the achievement, could easily foresee that the same process would be repeated on a tremendously big scale in India if only we remained true to his principles and followed his lead. He was in Champaran for seven or eight months at one continuous stretch before the report of the Commission was submitted; and no less than a year's time was taken before the legislation incorporating the recommendations was passed and the end of the planters' oppression commenced. It has taken some thirty years to complete the work of gaining freedom for India, but it has come, and that more or less in the same imperceptible way. Whenever Gandhiji appeared to compromise with the British Government or to withdraw any of the movements which he had started, people used to find fault with him just as some had done in Champaran; but we know the result now.

I will mention one or two instances of those early days of my association with him which have left a deep impression on my mind. When Mr. Charlie Andrews got the information about his prosecution in Champaran he came to Motihari. He was about to go to the Fiji Island a few days later, and came just to see Gandhiji

before leaving India. We were waiting in Champaran for the magistrate's judgment when he came. We came to know from Mr. Andrews that he would have to leave the following day. Some of us felt that it would be helpful if he was induced to stay, and so we asked him to stay in Champaran at least for some days more. The good man that he was he agreed provided Mahatmaji allowed him, and so we pressed him to speak to Gandhiji and get his permission to stay. He mentioned the matter to him, and we had a talk with Gandhiji about this matter. When we insisted that Mr. Andrews should be allowed to stay, Gandhiji became more insistent and more firm, and said that Mr. Andrews must go. The whole thing was unintelligible to us. But he had read our minds, and he came out. He said: "You all feel that here we are all engaged in a fight against English planters who have great influence with English officials and perhaps also with the Central and Provincial Governments, and even in England; and you think that in this unequal fight if we have an Englishman on our side it would be helpful. This shows the weakness of your heart. The cause is just, and you must rely upon yourselves to win the battle. You should not seek a prop in Mr. Andrews because he happens to be an Englishman. Because I understood what is passing in your minds, the more you have insisted the more have I become convinced that Mr. Andrews should go, and so he must leave tomorrow morning." He had read our minds correctly, and we had no reply. Mr. Andrews left the following morning, but before he left he went to see the District Magistrate who gave him the news that the Provincial Government had ordered the case to be withdrawn and to allow the inquiry to proceed. He gave this intimation, to our great joy and relief, before he left for Fiji. Gandhiji, however, taught us a lesson, in this way, of self-reliance.

Another instance. When we were carrying on the investigation there was naturally a consternation amongst the planters who used to send all kinds of reports against Gandhiji and more particularly against Babu Brijkishore Prasad who was known to them as an agitator on account

of his work in the Legislative Council of which he was a member. One I.C.S. magistrate, an Englishman, who later became the Governor of a province, used to have very friendly talks with Gandhiji about his South African experience, his non-violence, and kindred subjects. But he used also to send very alarming reports to the Government about the situation. In one of these reports he had drawn a very lurid picture of how on account of the presence of Gandhiji an atmosphere had been created of disregard for law, that the British Government had ceased to function in that part of the country, and that Gandhiji was looked upon as the person to whom complaints could be carried even against the magistrate and the Government, and so forth. The idea of course was that the Government should take some action and remove him from there. But he was fair enough to send the report to Gandhiji for his comments which, he said, he would forward along with it to the Government. The note also mentioned that the paper was to be treated as confidential. Gandhiji never kept anything back from us. So he did not like to keep this document from us, and he wrote to the magistrate in reply that by confidential he meant that the document would not be published, but that he could not keep it from his co-workers without whose help and consultation he was unable to do anything. So if the magistrate wanted any document not to be shown to us, he should not send it to him because he could not see anything which he could not show to us. We did not like his writing this, because we felt that, if the magistrate acted according to his suggestion, even Gandhiji would not have any information about what was passing between local officials and the Government, and this might hamper our work. We would rather forego the temptation of knowing all that happened, and would be satisfied if Gandhiji knew how the official mind was working so that he might take decisions with full knowledge. But Gandhiji said that this would not be right. It would be wrong to let the magistrate remain under the impression that nobody saw these documents when as a matter of fact we were reading them,

and, Gandhiji added, he did not like to read them alone. He taught us how scrupulous we should be in such matters.

Another instance will illustrate the same point. We had many acquaintances among Government servants. Many of them felt that it was their duty to help us in our work, and some of them used to send us confidential documents. They were supposed to contain information of great value for our work. Once such a document came to our hand, and we placed the paper in his hand. When he heard all about it he did not open it, and said that unless he was assured that the document had been honestly secured he would not look at it, and that we too should not look at it. We have adhered to this principle ever since.

Another instance. In those days the Home Rule agitation was at its height. Mrs. Annie Besant had been interned, and there was a great agitation going on all over the province. All of us used to take some interest in Congress work as it used to be in those days, and we felt that we too should do something to carry the message of Home Rule to the villages. Gandhiji forbade us, and none of us including himself opened his lips on any political subject anywhere in the district of Champaran. He used to tell us that we were doing really genuine Home Rule work and establishing Swaraj there. We did not fully realise the significance of this, but we obeyed him; and, I feel, we should not have improved the situation in Bihar if, instead of concentrating on the work in hand, we had gone about talking of Home Rule in those days. He used to tell us that we were winning credit which would be of immense help to us later; and I have seen the truth of this in my everyday life.

I will give an incident of a later date. There was a special session of the Congress at Bombay in 1918 which was presided over by Mr. Hasan Imam. Gandhiji could not attend it as he was lying very ill at Ahmedabad. After Champaran he had been called away to Kheda where there was satyagraha which took the shape of non-payment of Government revenue. He had to work very hard there, and subsequently he also interested himself and moved a

great deal in connection with recruitment which was then going on for the war. As a result he was taken very seriously ill. From Bombay I went to Ahmedabad to see him. He was then living in a big house in the city. I stayed there for a few days. He was not feeling very happy in that house, and was insisting that he should move to the Sabarmati ashram. The ashram had been opened while he was in Champaran. There were just a few rooms which had then been built, and he wanted to shift there leaving the big palatial house in the city. All friends and doctors felt that his stay in the city was more convenient both because of the house and because doctors and others were more easily available although he was not taking any medicine. One afternoon he was very insistent. I had gone away to see the city, and on my return I found that he had gone to the ashram. So I followed him there, and I learnt that, although he had high temperature, they could not induce him to stay, and so he had to be taken to the ashram. I was to leave the next day, and I went to his room early in the morning. He was then very weak and looked much distressed. When I told him that I would be going, he kept quiet for some time and then began to talk. He said he had insisted upon coming to the ashram in spite of his high temperature because he was feeling very unhappy in that big palace. Then he related how he had been keeping awake and revolving in his mind all the time his own life and activities and how distressed he was. He had started so many projects, but had not completed anything to his satisfaction. How would he fit in with a big palace like that? How could he live there? and so on. He had started work amongst the mill-labourers of Ahmedabad, but before it made any progress he had to take up something else. He had thought of starting the ashram and had made arrangements for it when he was called away to Champaran. He had hoped to finish the work in Champaran in a few days and to go back by the time fixed for the opening of the ashram. This he could not do as he was held up there for months. In Champaran he had succeeded in getting some relief for the rayats, but to

him that was not enough. He had started schools and wanted to have close contact with the district so that the people might be trained, but he could not give time to this work as he had to go to Kheda. There also the plan had succeeded in the sense that relief had been obtained, but before he could train them he had to take up the work of recruitment, and now he was so ill. He did not know if he would recover from this illness, and he was doubtful if he would be able to do anything more. So his whole life had been one in which he had taken up things, left them half done, and now he was to pass away; but if that was the will of God, there was no help; and he began to cry like a child. Some of us who were present there could hardly offer any words of consolation. After some time he collected himself, and said that he had been feeling very miserable all the time, and that the tears which had been shed had consoled him; and then he talked about other things.

On many occasions, during the long course of more than thirty years' intimate association in his work, I have not felt convinced about the correctness and expediency of the line of action which he was suggesting, and I have expressed to him my doubts. He used to argue and try to convince, sometimes without success; but I acted according to his advice, and on every occasion I have ultimately found that his view was correct and my reasoning, though correct logically, was not right in action. This has happened from the very beginning of my association. After some time I used to feel there might be something wrong in my own reasoning, and I became what may be called a 'blind follower', as a result of experience. I will mention just one instance. When the movement in 1930 was about to be started Gandhiji suggested that we should break salt laws. Many of us could not see how this could affect the British Government. Many expressed their doubts about it, while others openly ridiculed the idea of winning Swaraj by disobeying salt laws. Considering the condition of Bihar which had no seacoast I felt we should select some other law which the people could easily understand and disobey.

There is a tax called the chaukidari tax which almost every villager has to pay. It is a small tax, but it is regarded as an oppressive one by the poorer people. There is always a great amount of discontent against it. So I suggested to Gandhiji in the course of argument that he should permit us in Bihar to refuse to pay the chaukidari tax rather than to disobey the salt laws. He said we would be beaten in the very first round if we did that; if, however, we succeeded in disobeying the salt laws, we might try it afterwards; but even then it was doubtful whether we would succeed. I was not convinced but I obeyed, and we started the salt campaign. It was so very successful in Bihar that there was hardly any corner of the province where the law was not openly and defiantly disobeyed. The same thing happened all over the country, and all sceptics realised the strength behind the movement and how he had laid down this apparently innocuous programme which had created such mass energy. After we had disobeyed these salt laws for some months the rainy season came, and it became physically impossible to do anything by way of disobeying salt laws. I therefore advised that the Bihar people should start non-payment of the chaukidari tax. They did it, but the Government came down upon them with such tremendous force that in many places they succumbed; and had not the Gandhi-Irwin truce come, we would have been beaten.

I could mention many instances, but I would stop here.

Wardha,
12-4-1948.

LETTERS FROM BAPU

Reginald Reynolds

A WEEK or two after the murder of Gandhiji I took down an old file in which I had kept all the letters I ever received from him. There were not very many, partly because I knew something of the vast mail with which "Bapu" had to deal, and never added to his burdens if I could help it. I think most of the few letters I wrote to him in recent years contained a statement that no reply was necessary or expected.

But such as they are, these few letters are among my greatest treasures. They bring back to my mind not the great leader but the kindly friend—the man who could always somehow find time, no matter how occupied with important affairs, to attend to the smallest needs of the most insignificant member of his household. I suppose that is why I love more and more to think of him as "Bapu". He was our "Dad", with a father's care and kindness, a father's right to reprove us for our faults—and that he did freely, as these letters testify.

My earliest letter from "Bapu" was received before I had actually met him. I had gone to the ashram at Sabarmati, and was there awaiting his return. Evidently I had written to him, because this first letter (dated 28-10-'29) mentions one received from me. This reply is chiefly concerned with advice regarding my health—what to eat and what to avoid, etc. Also Gandhiji wanted me to "get the meaning of the verses and hymns sung at the prayer time. These two prayer times I hold to be more essential than meal times." And I was to write to him each week until his return to Sabarmati, giving him freely my impressions of life there.

Next there are two letters, the second from Shahajanpur (11-11-'29). We had still not met, and evidently I had told him, in a letter, of my being refused entry into a Hindu temple. To me it had been no true humiliation—only a happy experience of "the boot being on the other leg" for once. I had seen so much and heard and read

so much of the humiliation of Indians in their own country (and often in England, too) that it had given me positive pleasure, as I well remember, to find the tables turned on the Englishman—even though the Englishman happened to be myself!

But "Bapu" could not look at it that way. I'm afraid he mistook my ironical glee for charity, giving me credit for it in his letter—"and it is right," he said, "for us all to be so towards one another. But the hideous truth is that this bar is a variety of the curse of untouchability...." For the rest, this letter warned me against being "greedy about doing many things at once." He wanted me, he said, to "do some things at least well." This referred to things taught at the Ashram.

I have next two undated letters, evidently written between Gandhiji's return to the Ashram, at the end of November, 1929, and his departure for Wardha (to which place I accompanied him, and later to Lahore for that memorable meeting of the Congress). One of the two notes is concerned with the welfare and comfort of some guests—two Americans who were coming to Sabarmati for a day or two. Written on a "Silence Day", this note expressed "Bapu's" anxiety that "they should have the necessary creature comforts supplied to them so long as it is in our power to do so." Would I act as "co-host" with Sitla Sahai "and see that they do not feel strangers in a strange place?"

Only those who remember the pressure of work under which such notes were written will fully appreciate their value. Never too busy to be the perfect host and—in the best sense—the perfect gentleman (as my own father would have used that word) he had time for every child in the Ashram. Perhaps the second of these undated notes (also written on a "Silence Day") best illustrates this attention to the small needs of others. "Bapu" had passed me, coming from his bath, and noticed that my nose was bleeding. The few lines he wrote were by way of advice as to what to do about it!

The next letter was received on February 2nd, 1930.

After the Congress at Lahore I had set off on my own towards Calcutta and Santiniketan, staying at various places on the way. This time "Bapu" apologised for a long silence —"my correspondence is lying neglected; I simply cannot cope with it." (How well I could imagine that—and have so often, in after years, had to make the same excuse, without a tenth of the work on hand to justify it.) At last there is a political reference. I don't know what I had written, but Gandhiji said: "I have been thinking of your letter for the last three days. The real thing is likely to begin not before March."

"Come when you can," he wrote, "I wish you were here on 14th February. But I don't want to interrupt your experiences. The Ashram is your home to come whenever you like." "The real thing", to which Gandhiji referred, was the civil disobedience campaign projected for the spring of 1930, in the event of the anticipated failure of further negotiations. I continued to travel about, and next received introductions from "Bapu" to friends in the U.P. and Bengal. I dare not quote them—they were kind and too good to be true. Reading them today I feel as though I had imposed upon a mind that always believed the best of everybody. But he was soon to discover some of my faults; and (with characteristic frankness) he told me of them. In the covering letter to these introductions "Bapu" asked to hear of my experiences since we parted at Lahore. He hoped I was reading *Young India*, which he called his "weekly letter to friends".

I returned to Sabarmati in time to be sent to New Delhi as Gandhiji's "messenger boy", with his historic letter to the Viceroy. From New Delhi I came straight back to the Ashram, but (to my great disappointment) was not allowed to accompany "Bapu" on the salt march when civil disobedience began. Left behind with the women and children, and a very few men who remained at Sabarmati, I was restless and have no doubt that my own letters to "Bapu" reflected the fact. But with the daily arrests of "key-men" it seemed as though my time was coming for some useful service. A letter of March 13th refers to my

helping with *Young India*, and on April 24th he asked: "How will you feel about *Young India* now Mahadev is off?" (i.e. in prison).

In the letter of March 13th "Bapu" had written of the Ashram: "I am anxious for it to become an abode of peace, purity and strength. You I hold to be a gift from God for the advancement of that work." Less than three weeks later (31-3-'30) he was compelled to write in a very different strain. Untruthful statements and attacks on his character had deeply embittered me, and I had "let myself go" in an attack on one of his traducers. My article had appeared in the *Bombay Chronicle*.

"I did not like your writing in the *Chronicle*," wrote "Bapu", "it is not ahimsa.....When you have a good cause never descend to personalities..... So you see what I want to emphasise is not merely bad manners. It is the underlying violence that worries me. Is this not quite clear to you? If it is, I would like you to promise yourself never to write any such thing without submitting it to someone in whose non-violence you have faith." He also asked me to apologise to the man whom I had attacked. I was only 24 and very hot-headed. Many years were to pass before I began to appreciate fully the teachings of the Mahatma—or (indeed) the Quaker view of life to which I had been brought up. But I am glad to remember that such was my love for "Bapu" that I wrote that apology, which was kindly received. I remember that I deliberately "rubbed it in" that I apologised at "Bapu's" request, so that the man to whom I wrote might know the magnanimity of the Great Soul whose integrity he had queried. The fact evidently impressed this man, as it had impressed me.

A letter of April 14th speaks again of this matter. "Bapu" was "delighted" to have my letter—evidently expressing regret and reporting on the fact that I had written the apology. "There is no question of restoration of confidence," he wrote, "for it was never lost." (Not unreasonably that had been my fear, and I had expressed it). He spoke of the "slow and sometimes painful process" of assimilating ahimsa. There was a mental violence that

needed to be eradicated. Two days later he had evidently received the reply to my apology, which I had sent on to him. He was pleased with it and said: "God will keep you out of harm's way."

About this time Gandhiji was arrested and imprisoned at Yeravda. His next letter (22-5-'30) was certainly from Yeravda, inviting me to visit him while I was staying at the Christa Seva Sangha Ashram, as the guest of Verrier Elwin. But I have kept with "Bapu's" letters the brief, curt refusal of the jail superintendent, stating that "Mr. Reynolds is informed that his request for an interview cannot be granted." According to a letter from Narandas Gandhi, some two months later, "Bapu does not take interviews since you went to Yeravda." I can only take this to mean that he refused to see other visitors as a protest against the refusal to admit me. It would certainly have been quite typical—a punishment of himself for the unkindness of the superintendent!

There were no further letters from "Bapu" until the following year. I was back in England and had written a bewildered and distressed letter because of the sudden abandonment of civil disobedience and the re-opening of negotiations with the Government. Gandhiji's reply (dated Camp Delhi, February 23, 1931) was longer than most of his letters to me. And, unlike most of his letters (which were in his own hand, or, very rarely, that of an amanuensis —generally Pyarelal), this one was typed. He said he honoured me for my "long, frank and emphatic letter." After this, and some other kind remarks, he went on to say that he completely disagreed with me, and to explain why. I was not in any way entitled to such an explanation, but he found time to offer it, as he did to other critics, on all occasions. Among other things he asked me to "remember too that satyagraha is a method of carrying conviction and of converting by an appeal to reason and to the sympathetic chord in human beings. It relies upon the ultimate good in every human being. . . . . ."

"If this does not satisfy you," wrote "Bapu", "do by all means strive with me. You are entitled to do so. . . ."

There followed words of appreciation and encouragement, with reference to the work I was attempting to do in England, on behalf of Indian freedom. "May God bless you and give you strength," he said. But I remained unconvinced; and a further long letter from me, criticising his change of policy, was honoured by publication in *Young India*, with "Bapu's" reply. I have no copy with me of that published correspondence, and in any case I am concerned here with Gandhiji's unpublished letters—published matter is already on record for those who wish to consult it. But I have the note which he wrote me from Sabarmati in April, 1931 (the day of the month is indecipherable) informing me of the way in which he had dealt with this second letter of criticism from me. I was still little more than a boy, and my support could have made only an infinitesimal difference to him. Yet he wrote—because, I think, each human soul mattered to him so much—: "Don't therefore desert the cause or give me up." I feel deeply moved as I re-read those words. And then, because I was going through a difficult time and must have mentioned something about it: "But I am more concerned with your personal references than with your spirited attack.... If you are not at peace with yourself there, will you not come here? You know that the Ashram is your second home."

Had I been able to afford the fare to India at that time, I think I should have gone in response to that warm invitation. But it was not to be. However, we were to meet again before the end of that year, when "Bapu" came to England, to join in the Round Table Conference. His next letter is again a reply to a critical query relating to policy, written "whilst I am sitting at the Conference." He was justifying economic concessions which I had wrongly attributed to weakness—that is, to lack of firmness. But in his letter he made it clear that the motive of these concessions was sympathy with the difficulties facing the British people, and especially the people of Lancashire. It must often have been hard, faced with the misrepresentation of his words and actions to which his opponents so

frequently resorted, to be so misunderstood by his friends, also! How many knew that when he gave way it was from sympathy, never from weakness? How many who saw in him a "fire-brand" and fermenter of trouble guessed at the truth—the continual, vigilant censorship he quietly exercised on his many followers, when they tended to become bitter or unjust in their judgment of his opponents?

On a grey morning—was it in January 1932?—he left London, with few to bid him farewell, though his welcome to England had been worthy of the occasion. I am glad that I was one of those few who "saw him off", for I never saw him again. He returned to a country where repression had already broken out again, even before he left London; and he was soon back in Yeravda Prison. My next three letters from him are from Yeravda, and the date of the third is December 1932.* It was evidently dictated to Mahadev Desai, a beloved friend whom we were so soon to lose. This is very much a "family news" letter of who was there and who was gone. The fast Gandhiji had undertaken against the Government's "Communal Award" (which had stigmatised the Depressed Classes and would result in perpetuating their untouchability) had succeeded. I am glad to remember that I was once more whole-heartedly supporting Gandhiji at this time, and had been active, as speaker and writer, in explaining his position with regard to the Harijans—that affectionate name he had given to those whom orthodox Hindus called "Untouchables". But this was such a letter as a father might have written to a son, mentioning letters received from me with "You do not know how glad we all are when we hear from you." It would have been unbelievable, had one not known that he was incapable of flattery. The two earlier letters from Yeravda in 1932 I cannot quote—they are too personal, but full of this same fatherly affection and of a gratitude (for so little that I had been able to do) that even now embarrasses me as I read his words.

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* The day of the month is obliterated by the prison superintendent's rubber stamp.

After that there is a long silence, broken only by a post-card in 1935, saying that he had written to an English friend whom I had recommended to him as he was going out to India. "Why don't you tell me something about yourself?" he asked. The reason was that I had drifted a long way from his gentle teachings, and did not like to say so. By 1938 I had moved even further from his way of thinking. But out of respect and affection for "Bapu" I wrote to him on one matter about which I felt that I wished him to know directly from me, and not at second-hand. It is not a matter that I need discuss here, but I blessed him indeed for some words in his reply (dated 14-4-'38). "My heart goes out to you," his letter began. "What does it matter that on some things we don't see eye to eye?" And then, at the end, he wrote: "The fact that you are a seeker of truth is enough to sustain the bond between us." The letter was written in his own hand, on a train, and signed "Love from us all, Bapu". We had never been further apart in thought and in our objectives; yet he could write these unforgettable words of true comradeship and affection.

Nevertheless I am happy to be able to turn to one more letter. The long war years had intervened, during which I had written very little to friends abroad, and not at all (as far as I remember) to "Bapu". I had felt too hopeless of such correspondence when all that was most important was likely to be deleted by the censor. If one wrote, it was with a feeling of omitting deliberately what mattered most, of prying eyes that read what remained, and of considerable doubt whether a letter would arrive at all, "enemy action" being liable to intercept it at any point. But those years were for me years of re-thinking my own "pacifism", which I still believe had been for years very clear-headed in its analysis of the political and economic factors that contributed to peace or war. What it had long lacked was spiritual vision, with the human understanding, the tolerance and charity that I might have learnt from the greatest man of our time. In fact for years I had been anti-war, but not really a pacifist at all.

At last some measure of vision came to me, with the close of the war; and in the moment of awakening it was natural that I should write to "Bapu" to tell him that I stood once more with him, a very new recruit in those ranks of which he was the undisputed leader among all living men. It was not the first time I had looked to him as a leader; but fifteen or sixteen years before I had followed very blindly, without real understanding, and consequently very badly. Yet what I had learnt from him in those days had slowly germinated and grown, unnoticed, in my heart. And in 1945, when I returned to the faith of my fathers and made up my mind to be a Quaker in more than name (for sentimental reasons had caused me to retain throughout a nominal membership of the Society of Friends), I wrote to "Bapu" and told him that I was now trying at last to live in this spirit. At least I could say that I began to understand some of the things he had tried to teach me so many years ago.

His reply was characteristic. It is addressed to "Dear Angad"—a name that I treasured as a reminder of the one small service I was able to do for Gandhiji while I was in India. He had received my letter on New Year's Day, 1946, and replied the same evening. "Your letter," he said, "just presents you as I have known you." He always saw people, not simply as they were, but as they could be. He saw the best in them—"that of God" as we Friends say—and what they were in their best moments, knowing that it was what they could become by the Grace of God. So, it seemed, *he had never doubted.* And once more there was the welcome back to India—a visit for which I was hoping up to the moment when I heard of Gandhiji's death. Perhaps it should make no difference. Whether I ever succeed in returning to India or not, I know now that I have Bapu's blessing, and that our friendship is secure in the mind that never despaired of me, the Great Soul who will always see the Divine in all of us, however blurred the image of God may become to common sight.

In writing about these letters I have found it necessary to give a good deal of my own history, because the letters

are so intimately linked with it that it would be valueless to quote them without explaining the circumstances in which they were written. In the most critical period of my own life the writings of John Woolman (in my view the greatest of the Quaker "saints") confirmed and gave form to the new faith by which I have since tried to live. But, growing unseen, unnoticed, like flowers in a garden of weeds, my memories of "Bapu" were certainly the principal means by which that faith first came into being. Things said, written and done by "Bapu" stirred in my mind and moved my heart even when we seemed furthest apart in our ideas. A Hindu was therefore the chief instrument of my re-conversion to Christianity. For this alone I am eternally in debt to the Great Soul of Mohandas Gandhi. As I continue to learn from him, the debt will grow greater with the passing years.

London,
4-4-1948.

HIS DAYS IN SOUTH AFRICA

L. W. Ritch

IT is a far cry from 1946 back to somewhere about 1895 when I first met Gandhiji in person. He had already become famous as champion of the claims of his Natal countrymen, and I, as one interested in the welfare of the non-European peoples and their disabilities, and being also an eager student of Hindu philosophy, opened up correspondence with him. The outcome of our exchange of letters was Gandhiji's invitation to visit him at his home near the Bayside, Durban. This I was able to do not very long after, and I may perhaps be allowed to add that this contact I was thus privileged to make was doubtless one of the most important milestones in my life.

I can still see the room wherein we first met, with dear old Nazar seated in an easy chair in one corner smoking one of the blackest of black cigars. Naturally I cannot recall details of our conversation, but I seem to recollect that, while I sought to discuss the Gita and direct the conversation into a philosophical and religious channel, Gandhiji's mind appeared to be primarily occupied with the political struggle and its incidence. One little incident that occurred on this occasion I have never forgotten. Nazar was a profound student of philosophy, but at that time a sick man. Exactly what in our discussion immediately gave rise to it I don't remember, but turning to Gandhiji Nazar remarked: "You really should take a course in logic!" Will Bapuji be able to recall this? I wonder.

After the Boer War Gandhiji decided to remove from Natal to the Transvaal, and I succeeded in hiring a house for him in one of the eastern suburbs. I seem to remember that some little trouble arose when the new Indian tenants moved in.

Exactly at what stage in our association it was I can't recall, but Gandhiji required (it must have been on the occasion of one of his visits to Johannesburg) hotel accommodation for a short period. Heath's was the leading hotel at the time, and so I interviewed Heath personally in the matter. Heath was a kindly soul, but also a licensed hotel-keeper whose patrons were rather "superior" people and more than likely to resent the presence of Indians as fellow-guests. Poor Heath was torn between a desire to accommodate and his dread of repercussions. Eventually we arrived at a compromise. If Mr. Gandhi would take his meals in a lobby instead of in the public dining room, the difficulty might be overcome. With characteristic consideration for his host's dilemma Gandhiji agreed; he and I dined together and the "superior" people were spared the indignity of our company.

If I were asked to describe Gandhiji during the years we were associated—professionally, socially, politically and, if I may coin the adverb, religiously—I should, I think, best be able to do so in three words—Sweetness, Light,

Joyousness. A more active man it would be difficult to imagine; but his actions were always, in my experience of him, pervaded by the 'sattvic' quality and that, as I seem to see it, was the secret of the influence he exercised over even his fiercest opponents. Not that Gandhiji was any man's fool. On the contrary, insincerity, camouflage and sophistry never escaped his detection, though he would be, and generally was, immeasurably tolerant and forgiving.

Engaged as he was in the conduct of 'the struggle', as the South African Kurukshetra has always been called, Gandhiji nevertheless somehow found time to advise and help others in troubles that many people would have considered too trifling to be bothered with. One housewife of Gandhiji's acquaintance was helped by him to balance her domestic budget by reducing her milk account! Nobody else's needs were too small for his attention and assistance.

A mutual friend of ours professed that he could at will give up cigarette-smoking. A packet of his cigarettes lay on the table at which the three of us were seated. "Could you give it up now?" asked Gandhiji. "Yes!" was the reply. "Do so then," said Gandhiji, making as if to possess himself of the cigarettes. It was our friend's hand, not Gandhiji's, that reached the packet first. Gandhiji smiled.

I have listened to Gandhiji's patient attention to lengthy arguments, plausible and full of sophistry. He never interrupted or interposed but let the talker talk himself out. It rarely took more than two or three leading questions for the hollowness of what he had listened to patiently for perhaps half an hour to be demonstrated. His methods were Socratic (or Platonic).

Gandhiji's tastes in music were extremely catholic. He would have detested jazz, swing, and the like rubbish that nowadays passes for music. Syncopation he would, I think, have abhorred for the vandalism it is. One evening at a friend's house music had been played and songs sung. They were selections of the better kind but secular, i. e. not 'religious', music. Gandhiji, who was the guest of honour, was invited to choose something he would like played. Amid the silence of the company he asked for

'Lead Kindly Light'. He got it of course, but I felt somehow that his taste was not shared by the rest of the company.

Gandhiji was the recipient of many presentations, addresses and testimonials. How far they represented sincere expressions of gratitude for services rendered or were "but the lively anticipation of favours to come" it were perhaps more charitable not to discuss. They were usually made at big public gatherings which afforded the sectional 'leaders' of the several communities an opportunity of displaying, on the platform, their talent for leadership.

On one such occasion, the presentation to Gandhiji took the form of a massive gold watch and chain. I watched Gandhiji's face as he received it, and I can still see the look that for a split second came but as quickly went, as he balanced the bauble in his hand before puting it down. A gold-bedecked Gandhi was as inconceivable then as it would be now. We never could coax him to indulge even in the luxury of a new (and at times rather badly needed) suit of clothes! I don't remember, but have a shrewd suspicion that this gift, like most other of Gandhi's worldly wealth, went into the community chest. I have good reason to believe that Phoenix Settlement—the house of *Indian Opinion*, and the press that is established there—owes its existence to Gandhiji's self-denial. He had only one use for money, its employment for the service and uplift of his people, and it was probably his own example more than his persuasiveness that influenced the contributions he obtained from others to finance the public work.

The story of the passive resistance movement is too well known to need repetition. I can still see Gandhiji handing out the loaves of bread on our march from the Natal coalfields into the Transvaal. What an army that was! Not altogether dissimilar from my own Punjabi army of railway strikers, which I was destined to lead in East Africa, some years later.

Gandhiji loved physical exercise. "Come along! Give me a walk!" he would say, and away we would go at quite a stiff pace. It was the same in London during the life of

the Transvaal British Indian Committee. Gandhiji was ever a glutton for exercise.

His forgiveness of dear old Jamadar Mir Alam for the assault committed on him by that misguided zealot has, I believe, already been told. I recall it only to mention that this to my knowledge was but one of Gandhiji's "Go thou, and sin no more!" reactions to the wrong-doer.

This very incomplete tale of reminiscences will perhaps most fittingly be concluded by reference to what constituted Gandhiji's most outstanding characteristic. He was always the Servant, the Server.

At the many banquets and receptions given, from time to time, to prominent visitors and actual or prospective champions of the cause Gandhiji's rôle was invariably that of the menial, the helper in the kitchen, the waiter upon the guests, never in the 'front row', never courting the limelight, always identifying himself with "the least of these", the humblest and lowliest, even as he does today with the Harijans. If ever any man dignified and truly interpreted the word 'Servant', it was he. No wonder he compelled the respect, if not the love, of all who knew him.

For myself, my own debt to Gandhiji can never be repaid. The relationship to him of us lesser ones was, perhaps, never better expressed than by the late Herman Kallenbach. He was accustomed to address Gandhiji as 'Upper House' and to subscribe himself as 'Lower House'.

"For their work continueth,
And their work continueth,
Deep and long continueth,
Better than this knowing."

Johannesburg,
25-3-1946.

SOME REMINISCENCES OF THE VISIT OF MAHATMA GANDHI TO ROMAIN ROLLAND IN 1931

Madeleine Rolland

ONE of the most precious memories of my life is that of the visit which Gandhi paid to my brother, on his way back from the Round Table Conference at London, in 1931. We were then residing in Switzerland, near Villeneuve, at the eastern end of Lake Leman. We had long looked forward to this meeting, and more than once we had been disappointed. What was, therefore, our joy when we received a wire announcing that the Mahatma would arrive on the 6th of December!

We were tenants of two small villas at ten minutes' distance from Villeneuve, enclosed within a large park and separated from each other only by their own small gardens. It was in one of these villas, the further of the two from the road, that we arranged to offer Gandhiji and his party our modest hospitality with, however, the advantage of complete independence.

On Sunday, the 6th of December, as night was coming on, Gandhi arrived by train from Paris. It was cold; it was raining. My brother, still suffering from an attack of bronchitis, was unable to go to the station to welcome his revered friend. But he was waiting for him at the threshold of the Villa Lionnette when Gandhi, enveloped in his big white shawl and followed by friends, some Indian and some European, appeared. My brother moves forward, his hands held out; Gandhi, pressing his cheek on his shoulder, puts his arm around him in a moving brotherly embrace. A few words of welcome are exchanged, and we take our guest to the upper floor where a room almost unfurnished is reserved for him, with one window overlooking the Lake and two others the beautiful Alps of Savoy, the wide valley of the Rhone against the background of the glaciers of the Dent du Midi.

It is there that he will stay during his all too short visit, from that Sunday evening of December 6th to the following

Friday, the 11th; there, too, that the morning and evening prayers will usually be held; there that, seated at his spinning wheel, he will receive the many visitors of all races and all strata who will stream in ceaselessly. His son Devadas, his disciples and secretaries, Mahadev Desai and Pyarelal, and the devoted Mira supervising everything, will share the other rooms.

Henceforth, letters, telegrams, messages, telephone calls (the latter, fortunately, received only at the Villa Olga) will keep up uninterruptedly. Now it is Lausanne reminding the Mahatma of his promise to address several meetings; then, Geneva, notified of his visit later, feeling desperate at having to take second place and claiming the immediate presence of Gandhi at a large public meeting; then there are all the press correspondents, most of them ignorant enough of the real life and teaching of the master; and above all come all the fervent admirers of non-violence (amidst whom, of course, there are a few prompted by curiosity) requesting interviews and vying with each other in offering the greatest service. Two reverend fathers place their car at the disposal of Gandhi during the entire period of his stay; a young musician, every morning at dawn, plays the violin under his windows; a Japanese artist comes hurrying from Paris to make sketches; school children bring him flowers; and on the eve of his departure the choir of Villeneuve will sing popular songs in the garden, including the celebrated *Ranz des Vaches* (Calling the Herd), that song which even more than the national anthem touches the heart of every Swiss away from his motherland, arousing patriotic love coupled with a feeling of home-sickness. And let me not forget to mention the Syndicate of the Milkmen of Leman who, even before Gandhi's arrival, had phoned to express their desire to supply milk to the "King of India"!

Amidst that seeming confusion, Gandhiji remains calm and smiling, punctual at every one of the engagements he makes, and yet managing, somehow, at dawn or during any moment of leisure in the course of the day, to slip out

of the house and to stride briskly along through the neighbouring country, accompanied by the faithful Mira, but watched by photographers hidden behind trees and followed (we blushed to witness this!) by British and Swiss policemen, entrusted, so they pretend, with "protecting" him! On Wednesday afternoon, he asks to be driven by car to a mountain village where he calls on an old peasant woman whom Mira had known when she was still Madeleine Slade and used to come to us at Villeneuve; that old woman spins and weaves her own garments; and so Gandhi is happy to shake hands with her, to sit at her loom and to fraternize with her before proceeding along the steep road up to Leysin where he says a few words to the tubercular students of the University Sanatorium.

But before all else, he gives preference to his daily interviews with Romain Rolland for which he sets aside jealously two to three hours. Is not that the sole reason for his having come? And so, sometimes in the morning and sometimes at the end of the afternoon, he will go across the little garden of the Villa Lionnette and enter through the gate that of the Villa Olga to go up to my brother, since he does not wish the latter, in his indifferent state of health, to be exposed to the cold and dampness of a specially rainy season. Then, Romain Rolland at his desk and Gandhiji facing him cross-legged on a settee, talk to each other as if alone, for the rest of us are silent listeners—Mira, Mahadev, Pyarelal, my future sister-in-law and myself. We are there only to take notes or to be called upon as interpreters. They discuss the grave problems which they have at heart. My brother describes for Gandhi the tragic situation of Europe: the sufferings of the people oppressed by dictators; the drama of the proletariat who in their desperate effort to break the shackles of an anonymous and ruthless capitalism and pushed forward by their legitimate aspiration for justice and freedom, see only one way out, that of rebellion and violence. For man in the West is by education, by tradition and by temperament unprepared for the religion of ahimsa.....Gandhi listens, reflects..... When he answers, he reaffirms his unshakable faith in the

full power of non-violence. Yet he understands that to convince sceptical Europe the concrete example of a successful experiment in non-violence would be necessary. Will India furnish it? He hopes so.....Many are the burning topics that are touched upon during these intimate talks, in the course of which the two speakers open their hearts without any reservation. At times their conclusions vary; yet always they commune with each other through their common love for humanity, their identical desire to alleviate its misery, their fervent search for Truth in its multiplicity of aspects.

On Tuesday the 8th and on Thursday the 10th, the Swiss Pacifists (headed by Edmond Privat and Pierre Cérésole) organized public meetings in Lausanne and Geneva, respectively. Gandhi, refusing the motor car which is offered him, takes the train to Lausanne, travelling in third class, as his custom is. There a large crowd awaits him, eager to hear him speak, and receiving enthusiastically the answers that Gandhi gives to the various questions put to him at the public meeting, answers which are remarkable for their precision, their clearness, for the presence of mind they show, as also for their biting frankness. But the two private gatherings at Lausanne are more moving still. Of these one is set apart for his personal friends, at which Pierre Cérésole, founder of the Civil International Service, states to Gandhi his point of view on the practice of non-violence. Cérésole (that noble personage who has just passed from the scene) believes that he can reconcile with his duties as a loyal citizen his passionate fight against war and militarism. He thinks that, if a conscientious objector refuses to comply with the obligation of compulsory military service, because to him it represents a maleficent and destructive force, he owes the State voluntary service, beneficent and constructive, in exchange for the protection it gives him, and hence should pledge himself to assist the victims of national and international calamities. On this basis was created the Civil International Service. Gandhi, on the other hand, explains that for him there is only one logical attitude possible towards a militaristic Government,

and that is total non-cooperation. A painful and perplexing inner conflict for a sincere soul who in all loyalty, as in all humility, cannot and does not wish to resolve it on the spot.

The other private gathering, held in a church, is for the representatives of the Pacifist groups in Switzerland. It is permeated by a religious atmosphere which becomes more striking still as Gandhi speaks of his experiences and explains how he passed from his first definition of God, "God is Love," to "God is Truth," and finally to "Truth is God."

Meanwhile the public meeting at Lausanne, which had been broadcast, was having its repercussions. Gandhi's voice had aroused echoes throughout Switzerland as well as abroad. Some of his statements had awakened fear in the minds of the narrowly conservative. Furthermore, Gandhi had dared to protest openly against the way in which his words and even his motives had been misrepresented by two of the leading newspapers of Switzerland. These did not forgive him. Overnight the press, until then rather favourable, changed its tone. As a result the public meeting at Geneva took place in an atmosphere altogether different from that which had prevailed in Lausanne. On Thursday the 10th of December, the large amphitheatre of Victoria Hall was filled with a dense crowd among whom one could sense conflicting tendencies. The upper bourgeoisie were there, capitalistic and militaristic, and hence hostile to Gandhi; some Socialists, sceptical and curious, wanting to hear him speak of social problems; and some Pacifists, his followers. Most of the questions raised were but traps behind their insidious simplicity. One of them brought up the case of a neutral country, such as Switzerland—what should it do faced with foreign invasion? Must it not defend itself, and therefore did it not need an army? In a tranquil yet firm voice Gandhi answers: "An army is useless. It would be enough to have all citizens, men, women and children, making of their bodies a wall against the enemy. And if the latter should be barbarous enough

to butcher them, their death at least would bear good fruit."

The other question refers to the class struggle. And Gandhi answers: "Labour does not know its own power. Did it know it, it would only have to rise to have capitalism crumble away. For Labour is the only power in the world."

Such statements fill the bourgeoisie with silent fury while most of the audience applaud.

One can understand, however, that such declarations by Gandhi were looked upon as dangerous by the authorities and commented upon with indignation by the press. It is very likely that, if the departure of the Mahatma had not already been fixed for the next day, his expulsion as an undesirable, might have been considered.

That same day, Gandhi, indefatigable and having taken only a few minutes' sleep on the hard benches of the third class compartment, was back in Villeneuve to have one more talk with my brother, in the short free interval before the evening prayers. These were held on this day, on the ground floor of the Villa Olga, so as to allow Romain Rolland to be present. Afterwards, in the silence which followed the last hymn, my brother, accompanied only by Gandhiji, Mira and myself, went up to his little music room. There, at the request of the Mahatma, he played on the piano an *andante* movement of a symphony of Beethoven, an invocation without words to the Deity, by the religious soul of the great composer. For Gandhi knew that it was through Beethoven that Mira had known Romain Rolland, and that it was to Beethoven therefore that he owed his faithful disciple.....

The following day, Friday the 11th of December, the sun, which on the previous days had hidden itself, flooded the country, revealing to our guests for the first time the mountains and glaciers clear of mists, and the sparkling lake. That morning there took place the last interview, even more intimate and more affectionate than the preceding ones. Then the preparations for the departure. The good weather fortunately permitted my brother to go to the station. On the square, a sympathetic and curious crowd

had gathered, as also friends who had come to greet Gandhiji who was to cross through Italy, halting at Rome, before embarking at Brindisi. My brother had warned him against the tricks of the Fascists who might try to get hold of him and thereby compromise him. To protect him my brother had succeeded in having Gandhiji invited to stay at Rome with a friend whose integrity was beyond doubt and whose hospitality was therefore above any possibility of suspicion.

We stand beside those who are about to leave us, reflecting sadly on the fact that most likely in this world we shall not see each other again, yet deeply grateful that Providence should have granted us the privilege of living a few days near Gandhi, to feel the radiance of his presence, as also to be richer through the affection of new spiritual brothers, for it was thus that we looked upon Mahadev, Pyarelal, Devadas.....

Then, Gandhi, coming towards my brother, gives him a farewell embrace and gets into his compartment. We stay a long time looking at Mira who waves a last good-bye. The train starts, carrying our friend towards his destiny of earthly trials and spiritual victories.*

Paris,
14-2-1946.

(*Translated, from the original French, by Shrimati Sophia Wadia.)

WHEN GANDHIJI CAME TO BENGAL

Nalini Ranjan Sarkar

MY first opportunity for close personal contact with Mahatma Gandhi came in May-June, 1925, when he made a long tour in Bengal. While Mahatmaji was away in the Bengal districts, a great calamity befell Bengal and India: Deshbandhu C. R. Das suddenly breathed his last. Mahatmaji returned to Calcutta immediately on receipt of the news of this calamity, and lived for a time in the late Deshbandhu's residence which the latter had made over to the nation under a trust deed. Gandhiji busied himself then in efforts to raise funds for the implementation of the work of the trust as a memorial to Deshbandhu, and also in settling certain questions of a political nature which arose in Bengal consequent on Deshbandhu's death. Deshbandhu was at the time of his death Mayor of the Calcutta Corporation, President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, and Leader of the Swaraj Party in the Bengal Legislative Council. Gandhiji selected the late Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta as the person who should undertake this triple burden after Deshbandhu's demise.

It was about this time that Gandhiji one day asked me most casually what time I generally got up in the morning. The question was asked without any context and seemed inconsequential. However, I told him I was an early riser, whereupon he said to me: "Very well, get up as early as you can tomorrow and join me in my morning walk in the maidan." He added that he had something to tell me. As he did not say anything more, I was naturally left to guess what the matter might be that he wanted to talk to me about. This took place in Deshbandhu's house in the early part of the day. In the evening, however, as Mahatmaji was coming out of Sreejukta Basanti Devi's house, I accidentally met him near the staircase, and he told me as soon as we met that I need not come next morning to meet him, since the matter on which he had wanted to talk to me had been settled meanwhile. Then he mentioned to me the incident in regard to which he had thought

of speaking to me. A very prominent person of Bengal, who was then a member-designate of the Viceroy's Executive Council, had made to Gandhiji certain serious allegations against me on the strength of reports of some friends of the former. Gandhiji had told this gentleman that he would not accept anything on hearsay, he wanted him to give to Gandhiji concrete evidence, and Gandhiji had asked me to meet him the following morning to answer any concrete charges that might be forthcoming. The gentleman in question had, however, subsequently met Gandhiji, and informed him that his informants could not substantiate their charges against me with any concrete facts and evidences, and therefore he, "like the true gentleman that he is,"—that was the expression Gandhiji used—had apologised to Gandhiji; what was more, he had expressed a desire to apologise to me personally, and Gandhiji said he would for that reason take me to the gentleman's residence. I was moved beyond words. I told Gandhiji that I was quite used to unmerited vilification, and that I was much too humble a man for a person of eminence such as this gentleman was, to personally apologise to, and that such apology was not necessary. Gandhiji, however, insisted that I must accompany him to the gentleman. But I said I would meet the gentleman myself, which of course I did.

When Gandhiji was on tour in the Bengal districts, a prominent member of the Bengal Council belonging to the Independent Party, who met him at Comilla, made the allegation that the Swaraj Party was resorting to corrupt practices such as the purchase of votes, with the object of defeating the Ministry on the floor of the Bengal Legislature. Gandhiji told this member that he would on return to Calcutta enquire of Deshbandhu regarding this matter. But Deshbandhu unfortunately expired meanwhile. During his stay in Calcutta, however, though after some lapse of time, Gandhiji asked me, as the Chief Whip and Secretary of the Swaraj Party, to meet in his presence the complaining member and certain others

of his party and answer the charge. At the meeting they mentioned the names of two or three Muslim members of the Council whose votes, they alleged, we had influenced by payment of money. I pointed out in reply that both the Councillors named belonged to the Swaraj Party, and we had on occasions paid them money to meet debts incurred at the time of the elections, or in similar other circumstances, but in no case had we paid money to any member outside our party for securing his vote. Gandhiji asked our accusers if they could give names of any members outside our party whom we might have tried to purchase by money. As they apparently had no concrete facts of this nature to put forward and remained silent, Gandhiji dismissed the whole matter with the remark that there was nothing wrong in helping comrades in work with money in cases of genuine necessity.

His attitude regarding public funds is brought out by an incident within my personal knowledge. He was then organising collections for the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund and Congress workers had been asked to make house to house collections. One worker charged Rs. 67 out of the collections he had made, for taxi hire incurred by him. Gandhiji strongly objected to this, and said that the worker had no business to pay taxi fare out of the collections; that, if such practices were allowed, the sanctity of public funds would be in jeopardy. He was so stern about the matter that the worker in question had to make good the money from his own pocket, or, maybe, from some other source.

There is just another small incident in connection with the memorial of Deshbandhu Das. A bank manager volunteered to collect money for the memorial fund, and Gandhiji agreed. Later on, however, in Deshbandhu Das's correspondence Gandhiji found a reference to this gentleman, from which he came to learn that Deshbandhu had a very poor opinion about this particular gentleman in financial matters. No sooner did he come to know this than he issued instructions that this gentleman should not be

allowed to make collections for the memorial of Deshbandhu Das who had a poor opinion about him.

Towards the end of 1937 when I was a Minister in the Bengal Government, there was a strong agitation for the release of detenus and other political prisoners. Gandhiji also was very anxious for their release. I wrote to him that this matter being ultimately within the jurisdiction of the Governor's special responsibilities, it would be indeed very good and effective if Gandhiji could kindly see his way to meet the Governor, the Chief Minister and the Home Minister and discuss the matter with them. Gandhiji agreed. Sir John Anderson, who was the Governor in those days, was in Darjeeling; and Gandhiji, on arrival in Calcutta, agreed to proceed to Darjeeling to meet the Governor and the Ministers. Dr. B. C. Roy, however, after examining Gandhiji's health, found him unfit to proceed to a place at such a high altitude as Darjeeling is, and he telephoned to me suggesting that I should persuade the Governor to come down to Siliguri for a meeting with Gandhiji. I told Sir John all about it. He did not, however, consider it nice to drag down Gandhiji to Siliguri, when he was unwell, and instead Sir John decided to come down to Calcutta and hold the meeting at Burrackpur Government House. The meeting took place on the appointed day, and it was arranged under a tree, where the Governor and he had a long conversation on the question of the release of political prisoners and detenus. I subsequently learnt that Gandhiji had, in order to facilitate the release, even offered to stand guarantee that the released prisoners would not engage in terrorist activities. Gandhiji spoke also to the Chief Minister, Mr. Fazlul Huq, and the Home Minister, Sir Nazimuddin. The main objection to the release came from the European Group in the Assembly, from the Commissioner of Police, and the *Statesman*. I told Gandhiji that it would be helpful if he spoke to them also, and a meeting was arranged with the Leader of the European Party in the Bengal Assembly at the time, the then Calcutta Police Commissioner,

and the then Editor of the *Statesman*. Gandhiji spoke to them assuringly, and they seemed to be more or less reassured. What followed is now history. About 3,000 detenus were immediately released. With regard to convicted political prisoners a policy of gradual release after individual review of cases was decided upon. On this last point Gandhiji could not reconcile himself. He pressed time and again to stand security for the convicted political prisoners so that they could also be released immediately. Unfortunately the Government did not agree to this, and Gandhiji felt sorely about it even long afterwards.

After the first Bengal Ministry under Provincial Autonomy, of which I was a member, had been formed, Bengal Congress leaders began an agitation for the overthrow of the Ministry, and I was requested to resign. It was suggested to me that my resignation would strengthen their hands in regard to the overthrow of the Ministry. I felt that the proposal of overthrowing the Ministry was not based on any clear issue or principle; the objective seemed to be just to break the Ministry. In the circumstances I did not consider resignation at the time justifiable. The Congress leaders thereupon approached Gandhiji for persuading me to resign. I received a wire from Gandhiji asking me to see him at Wardha in this connection. In pursuit of Gandhiji's behest I saw him and put my viewpoint before him as objectively as possible. He was thoroughly convinced that I should not resign at that stage. Consequently he addressed a letter to Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, which is being quoted here from a copy:

"I must dictate this as I am wilfully blind. Whilst I am dictating this, Maulana Saheb, Nalini Babu and Ghanashyamdas are listening. We had an exhaustive discussion over the Bengal Ministry. I am more than ever convinced that we should not aim at ousting the Ministry. We shall gain nothing by a reshuffle. And, probably, we shall lose much by including Congressmen in the Ministry. I feel, therefore, that the best way of securing comparative parity of administration and a continuity of a settled programme

and policy would be to aim at having all the reforms that we desire, carried out by the present Ministry. Nalini Babu should come out, as he says he would, on a real issue being raised and the decision being taken by the Ministry against the interests of the country. His retirement from the Ministry would then be dignified and wholly justified. I understand that so far as the amendment of Municipal Law is concerned, separate electorate for the scheduled class is given up. There is still insistence on separate electorate for Mussalmans. I don't know whether opposition should be taken to the breaking point. If the Mussalman opinion is solid in favour of separation, I think it would be wisdom to satisfy them. I would not like them to carry the point in the teeth of the Congress opposition. It would be then a point against the Congress.

"If my opinion is acceptable to you, the release of the prisoners becomes a much simpler matter than it is today. And if this opinion commends itself to you, there should be an open declaration about the new policy. This ought to result in easing the tension that prevails in Bengal, and Bengal will be automatically free from the state of suspended animation. Maulana Saheb is in entire agreement with this opinion, and so are Nalini Babu and Ghanashyamdas."

Gandhiji was considerably surprised at my acceptance of the Viceroy's offer of membership of his Council in 1941. "I was taken aback," wrote he in one of his letters, "when I heard of your acceptance of office. I can only hope that your expectations will be realised. My advice, whenever you want it, will always be at your disposal." That was the best encouragement I could have under the circumstances then prevailing. In Delhi when I was attacked with a mild stroke, Gandhiji came to know of it from newspapers. He anxiously sent in a wire enquiring: "I hope it is not serious. Wire how you are." Later on when Shri Mahadev Desai paid a visit to Delhi for some important work, he was specially instructed by Gandhiji to see me and enquire about my condition. When I was a

member for the Department of Education, Health and Lands, Gandhiji was kind enough to write to me on occasions advising about such matters as public health improvement, cow protection, etc.

Calcutta,
7-1-1947.

HOW SOME OF HIS DECISIONS WERE MADE

Chandrashanker Shukla

AT the Kanpur session of the Congress in December 1925, Gandhiji, in consultation with friends, decided to spend the whole, or the better part, of the next year at the Sabarmati Ashram. The decision was primarily due to a breakdown in his health a month earlier. In order to enable him to take the maximum of rest it was suggested to him that, besides dictating his English correspondence to a stenographer as he was doing, he should abstain from writing even Gujarati letter. I, then being the youngest member of the teaching staff at the Ashram school, was asked to act as an amanuensis to take down his Gujarati letters and, occasionally, notes and articles for the weekly *Navajivan*. The time set apart for this purpose was an hour or so from 1 p.m. after his siesta was over. At times this period would lengthen beyond the fixed limit. "This is a relaxation for you," Gandhiji once said to me; but I knew what a rare good fortune it was for me, this being my first real opportunity to come into closer contact with him.

During the summer that year a Conference of the World's Y.M.C.A.s was to be held at Helsingfors (now Helsinki), the capital of Finland, and Gandhiji had been prevailed upon to accept an invitation to attend it.

Arrangements for his voyage had been entrusted by the organizers of the Conference to the late Mr. K. T. Paul of Madras, who had even arranged to take a goat on board the ship, according to a report he sent to Gandhiji.

At times when I went to Gandhiji at 1 p.m. he would not be ready to start work, and would either have the siesta which he could not have earlier, or would go to the 'library', asking me to wait a while. The 'library' was the name given by him to the lavatory—firstly because he insisted on the lavatory being as clean as a library, and secondly because he did much of his reading there (once I saw him taking *Selections from Dickens* with him). He did not, however, like others to emulate him in this practice. In August, 1927, at Kumara Park, Bangalore, he was going one afternoon to the 'library' with a sheaf of letters in his hand, when I happened to be standing near. He turned to me and said: "I am doing this (meaning reading in the 'library') out of sheer necessity, but no one should imitate me here!"

This, however, is by the way. To return to our story, one afternoon he asked me thus to wait till he would return from the 'library'. In about half an hour he came back, and suddenly called Shri Mahadev Desai and other members of the Secretariat. "I heard the inner voice just now in the library," he said. "It told me that there was much important work for me to do here, and that I should not leave the country at present." The decision, made at the dictate of the inner voice, was irrevocable. There was no scope for argument, nor did anyone attempt to argue; and the decision was communicated to the proper quarters in due course. The trip to Europe was given up.

A little later, on learning that Gandhiji was not to go to Europe, Pandit Motilalji invited him to stay with him at Dalhousie (a hill station in the Punjab) where he was going to spend a few months in the summer. Gandhiji accepted the invitation, and his visit to the summer resort was looked upon as a certainty. In the meantime Shri Vallabhbhai Patel (he had not yet become the 'Sardar')

once called on Gandhiji. This was the time of the day when he occasionally dropped in and regaled Gandhiji with his jokes and humorous 'stories'. On this particular occasion he was accompanied by Dr. Kanuga who examined Gandhiji and found him quite well. Shri Vallabhbhai then told Gandhiji—gently but with a touch of humour—that he was quite well where he was, and that he need not go to a hill station or anywhere else. The doctor supported him. It was amazing to see that the Sardar had to say no more than these few words in order to dissuade Gandhiji from leaving Sabarmati. The projected visit to Dalhousie was cancelled without any further ado. Shri Mahadev Desai said to me that evening, not without a trace of disappointment at having had to forego a little hard-earned rest: "You have seen how, with us, man proposes and Vallabhbhai disposes!!" (It may be remembered in this connection that in 1936 the Sardar, who was then ill, agreed to accompany Gandhiji to the Nandi Hills at the latter's behest.) The Sardar, presumably, had good reasons for the suggestion he made on this occasion. Very probably he thought Gandhiji would be mentally happier, in spite of the heat, in the midst of the Ashram inmates than on the cool heights of the Himalayas. The Ashram he considered to be his "best creation", and this was the first time he was making a prolonged stay there since its establishment in 1917. Indeed I had heard Gandhiji saying once in the hectic days of his hurricane tours: "Whenever during the tours my inner battery gets exhausted, I come back to the Ashram, stay here for a while, recharge the battery, and start again on another journey!"

During the same period Seth Jamnalal Bajaj, who was on a visit to Sabarmati, got Gandhiji to agree to a small, one-storied building being put up at the Ashram, where the latter could work undisturbed by prying visitors who came at all odd hours. The plan was welcomed by many. The next day, however, Gandhiji announced after the evening prayer that, though he had been unwarily betrayed into agreeing to the plan, he had been ill at ease since then.

He was of the earth, earthy, he said; and, moreover, for a farmer and weaver, as he described himself to be, as also for a servant of the people, it was highly improper to live on an upper storey and thus lose touch with Mother Earth. He had, therefore, rescinded the earlier decision, and said he was quite satisfied with the room which he had occupied till then during his stay at the Ashram.

On the 8th of May, 1933, at noon, Gandhiji entered upon a 21 days' fast while still a prisoner in the Yeravda Jail. He was released that very evening, and was brought by the Inspector General of Prisons in his own car to 'Parnakuti' where arrangements had already been made for his stay during the fast. On arrival he was met by two press correspondents to whom he dictated a fairly long statement at a stretch. It was re-read to him, and he found no alteration necessary. The statement was read by Shrimati Sarojini Naidu who was on the spot. But it was to be released only after Shri Bapuji Aney read and approved of it. I was sent to call Shri Aney from Shri Tatyasaheb Kelkar's house where he had put up. Gandhiji considered this necessary, as he had in the statement advised the suspension of civil disobedience for six weeks, and this step must have the approval of Shri Aney, who was then the Acting President of the Congress. He came and entirely approved of the advice tendered in the statement, which was then released late at night. Speaking of this decision for temporary suspension of civil disobedience Gandhiji said later, in the course of a conversation: "I had never thought, while I was in jail, as to what I would do in case I was suddenly released. But as soon as the prison gates were opened, the gates of my mind also were opened, and before I reached 'Parnakuti' (a distance of about a mile and a half) I had taken the decision to suspend civil disobedience for six weeks!" Of this decision he said again to a co-worker at Wardha a few months later: "I suggested the suspension in the belief that people would not have the zest to offer civil disobedience while my life was hanging in the balance. It came to me as in a flash as

soon as I came out of the prison. You can call that a gesture, if you like."

On the second day of this fast Gandhiji wired to Pandit Malaviya: "Your blessings comfort me. Have been carrying out your advice in spirit. From childhood *Rāmnām* has been my talisman. Am well and at peace. Pray do not trouble come."

To Dr. Ansari he wired: "Sarojini mentioned your press statement. Dread trouble you. But it is your right and duty. Come when you feel like it. You know my faith in you. Love to you all." The good doctor left Delhi the next day for Poona, and remained there throughout the duration of the fast.

On the 3rd day of the fast Gandhiji wrote to an inmate of the Ashram at Sabarmati: "I see that there is more effort in dictating than in writing. As days proceed I may not be able to write or dictate. Then you will know that my thoughts are speaking to you.....Do please fill your mind with the task before you, i.e. to become an ideal member of the Ashram, no matter what the others are."

Gandhiji continued to receive letters during the fast from loving and devoted friends and co-workers from India and abroad. Many of these in India were scattered far and wide at the call of duty, and were serving their terms of imprisonment in different jails in the country. At the end of a letter, in French, dated the 2nd of May, M. Romain Rolland said: "If the Cross has not—alas—saved the world, it has shown to the world the way to save itself; it has illuminated with its light the nights of millions of unfortunates.

"—But may this sacrifice be spared today. May you remain long yet—I will not say amongst us (because I doubt if my life—ill as I am—will be very prolonged now) —but amongst our brothers and sisters of India and of the world who need your presence on the boat to guide them in the tempest.

"Give us your blessing—sister Madeleine and myself. Yours affectionately, Romain Rolland."[1]

Mlle Madeleine Rolland said in a separate letter, written in English : "I cannot help being filled with fear; but I know it is God's call to you, and hope and pray all will be well. In the present state of the world you are the one leader who gives us faith in the progress of mankind. May the Eternal Being keep you still among us to help us through the Slough of Despond. With love and reverence your daughter Madeleine Rolland."

Pandit Jawaharlalji had already sent him two telegrams from prison.[2] On the 5th he sent a letter[3] (received at Poona on the 15th) in which he said : "It is hard to be so far from you, and yet it would be harder to be near you. This crowded world is a very lonely place, and you want to make it still lonelier. Life and death matter little, or should matter little. The only thing that matters is the cause that one works for, and if one could be sure that the best service to it is to die for it, then death would seem simpler. I have loved life—the mountains and the sea, the sun and rain and storm and snow, and animals, and books and art, and even human beings—and life has been good to me. But the idea of death has never frightened me; from a distance it seems fitting enough as the crown of one's endeavour. Yet, at close quarters, it is not pleasant to contemplate.

"The last 14 or 15 years have been a wonderful time for me, ever since I had the good fortune to be associated with you in various activities. Life became fuller and richer and more worthwhile, and that is a dear and precious memory which nothing can take from me. And whenever the future happens to be dark, this vision of the past will relieve the gloom and give strength."

Verrier Elwin said in a letter dated 7th May : "You have been more than a father to me. I can hardly visualize

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1. The earlier portion of the letter was reproduced in *Harijan* at the time.
2. Quoted in his *Autobiography* (1936), p. 373.
3. Not quoted in the *Autobiography*.

life without you. But I am surer that I am nearer to you here than I would be even at your side. Last evening I was by the side of a little starving child. Her fast was involuntary, and as I looked at the protruding bones and tiny wizened face, and the poor wasted body, I thought: 'How can I believe in a God that allows such things to be?' And I looked round on the wretched huts of the peasants, symbol of their lifelong struggle with every sorrow, and I could see no evidence for His existence anywhere. And then I came to the Ashram and found the news of the fast: and at once I saw evidence of God who inspires such things. And I felt too that I would be very near you if I was wherever there is suffering.....In the breaking of the frail earthen lantern of your body, Truth will shine to us. My heart is too full to write more. Such suffering as I have had has all become joy through you. In the sacred bonds of Truth we shall be united for all eternity. Your devoted and loving son Verrier."

There was a long letter from the Rt. Hon. Shri S. Srinivasa Sastri dated the 7th of May. He had addressed Gandhiji as "Dearest Brother", and said: "After much thought and destruction of many drafts, I have decided that the best reply to your 'begging' and most touching letter of the 2nd inst. is the enclosed extract.....It would have been useless and, as you said in your first statement, embarrassing for me to try to dissuade. What remains for your friends and associates is to wish that you may come out of the ordeal not merely unscathed, but armed afresh with the strength of *tapas* for the struggle that seems without end."

After expressing his dissent from the decision to fast, he said: "Our *values* are different fundamentally. The difference is radical, no sophistry can abolish it." He then discussed the relative merits of reason and intuition, and concluded by saying: "Treat the letter as if it were nothing but an expression of my unchanged love and of my fervent wish that you should live long and serve the great causes you cherish. For, contrary to your teaching, I hold that you are more potent than your memory can be."

In a letter dated the 9th Shri Jairamdas Doulatram said: "I have no doubt that the body will survive the fast. I have still less doubt that you will survive the body..... What am I that my prayer can help? But weak as it may be, it will go up daily for the success of the glorious fast and its objective. Somehow my heart feels that all will, in the end, be well."

An unknown Britisher wrote from Plymouth on the 11th: "Dear Hindoo, There is no death. I love you. Gerald Taylor."

In a letter dated the 13th Mirabehn wrote from prison: "God gave me the light to recognize His messenger and servant in you. He will therefore give me the strength to go through anything and everything for the fulfilment of His word through you. My love would be a poor thing if it failed at this supreme moment and gave way to misery and despair. God does not care to listen to hopelessness —but He does listen to the cry of hope which is born of helplessness. And that is my cry, borne on the wings of a love which knows no bounds. Bapu, He must hear. Your ever devoted daughter Mira."

Deenbandhu Andrews, who had an "anxiety complex", as Gandhiji used to say, and who was then in England, sent a letter which came as a most agreeable surprise: "I know you are near to Him whom I love more than life itself. So that *this* time, as never before, I have had that inward peace which comes from Him."

Gandhiji offered satyagraha once again on the 1st of August that year, was arrested, and was detained in the Sabarmati Jail, and was that very evening removed to the Yeravda Jail along with Shri Mahadevbhai who too had offered satyagraha with him.

On the 4th they were both tried for disobedience of an order to leave Poona, and were sentenced to simple imprisonment for one year. Gandhiji was now, in the Governmental terminology, a "convicted prisoner", and was given A class. On the 16th he began a fast which

would go on till the facilities to carry on Harijan work from prison were restored to him. As the full reasons for this fast have never been published, I venture to give here the inner story in brief.

During Gandhiji's fast against the British Government's decision re: Harijans in September, 1932, visitors had free access to him. On the 5th day after the termination of the fast, the visits were suddenly stopped. In the course of a letter to the Prison Superintendent Gandhiji said: "The Government cannot be unaware of the phenomenal awakening that has taken place in the country nor of the repercussions of the fast whose limitations have been but little understood and which is being blindly imitated by enthusiastic young men. I, therefore, hold it to be absolutely necessary that I should be left entirely free to see whomsoever I consider necessary regarding untouchability.....Needless to say, what applies to visitors regarding untouchability applies equally to correspondence."

A little later he wrote to the Home Member of the Government of Bombay a letter in the course of which he said: "Surely untouchability reform should be, if it is not, common cause between the Government and the people.....You may know that my fast is only suspended. It has to be resumed, if the Hindu public do not play the game by the Harijans. My contact with the public, therefore, is inevitable if the reform is to be carried out in all its thoroughness."

The facilities then offered by the Government were considered inadequate by Gandhiji; and, at the end of a letter to the Inspector General of Prisons dated 24th October, 1932, Gandhiji said: "Unless, therefore, the restrictions as submitted above are not removed on or before the 1st of November next, I shall be reluctantly obliged to withdraw, subject to the limitations imposed by the law of satyagraha, such co-operation as is possible for me to do. And as a preliminary, I shall deny myself all the feeding facilities permitted to me and restrict myself to such 'C' class diet as I can within my vow consistently

take and so long as my body can accommodate itself to such food. I do hope the Government will not regard this as a threat. The contemplated step is the natural consequence of the Government attitude. I can have no interest in life, if I cannot prosecute without let or hindrance work for which the fast was undertaken and suspended. I would have said nothing, if this moral and religious reform had anything to do with civil disobedience." On the 31st he wrote to the Prison Superintendent that from the next day he would "begin by denying myself the special food issued to me."

In accordance with this Gandhiji had 'C' class diet on the 1st of November. At 9.30 that night the following message from the Government of India was delivered to him: "Mr. Gandhi is to be informed that his letter of the 24th of October reached the Government of India only on the 31st of October, that the subject matter thereof is under the closest consideration of the Government of India, and that they hope to communicate a decision in two or three days. In the meantime, the Government of India suggest that Mr. Gandhi might not start restriction on his diet before they have had an opportunity for fully considering his request."

At 7 a.m. on November 2nd, Gandhiji handed to the Superintendent of the Prison a communication addressed to the Home Secretary, Government of India, with a request to send it as an express wire. In the letter, after acknowledging receipt of the Government's message he went on to say: "It is painful surprise to me that my letter of 24th ult. should have reached Government 31st, not so much because fast covered matter highest urgency and directly arising out of the Yeravda Pact endorsed by H.M.'s Government. In view, however, of this unfortunate delay and suggestion contained in your message I have suspended restriction on diet which commenced yesterday. I trust my letter of the 31st ult. addressed to Superintendent, Yeravda Central Prison, was repeated to you. When he came to me to understand implications of the letter, I told him that, if I did not get relief within

four days from 1st inst., among other things I might be obliged to stop food altogether. This I mention to convey to Government some idea of intensity of my feeling. Almost daily I am getting letters about untouchability, from reformers and reactionaries, demanding immediate attention and reply designed for publication. A matter in which millions of people have to be influenced cannot be handled by private correspondence under ban of publication. I have letters and telegrams from recently formed All India Anti-Untouchability League asking for guidance and advice as to method of work. I have most important letters from Calicut demanding immediate reply and request from 'untouchable' friends seeking emergent interviews. Knowing this and knowing that my life is at stake in anti-untouchability campaign, Government will appreciate my readiness and desire to forfeit it, if in this matter I am not to be allowed full and unfettered facilities as requested in my letter. A prisoner has no other honourable outlet from an intolerable and soul-killing position."

The following orders were conveyed to Gandhiji on 3rd November, 1932:

"Government of India recognise, in view of considerations stated in Mr. Gandhi's letters of October 18th and October 24th that if he is to carry out the programme that he has set before himself in regard to removal of untouchability, which they had not before fully appreciated, it is necessary that he should have freedom in regard to visitors and correspondence on matters strictly limited to removal of untouchability.

"They also recognise that, if Mr. Gandhi's activities in this matter are to be fully effective, there can be no restriction on publicity.

"As they do not wish to interpose obstacles to Mr. Gandhi's efforts in connection with the problem of untouchability, they are removing all restrictions on visitors, correspondence and publicity in regard to matters which, in Mr. Gandhi's own words, 'have no reference to civil disobedience and are strictly limited to removal of untouchability'.

"They note that Mr. Gandhi contemplates presence of officials at interviews and inspection then and there of correspondence, should Government at any time consider such procedure as desirable."

How these limits were observed by Gandhiji both in the letter and in the spirit can be testified to by all concerned. On the eve of his satyagraha on August 1st, 1933, it was given out by pro-Government papers that this time he would not be given the former facilities for carrying on Harijan work from prison. I mentioned this to him when I met him on the 30th of July at Ahmedabad. He gently but firmly replied: "Don't you fear, the gates of the prison *are* going to be opened for this work!"

From the day he was arrested he began correspondence on this subject with the Government. On the 4th of August, 1933, in the course of a letter to the Home Secretary, Bombay Government, he said: "This is only part of the anti-untouchability work I am doing in fulfilment of my promise to myself and the Harijans as an integral part of the Yeravda Pact. This work may not be interrupted except at the peril of my life."

In the course of a letter dated the 8th to the same authority, Gandhiji said: "But I need further facilities which are higher than these, and without them life itself becomes an intolerable burden. They arise from the cravings of the soul. But I am anxious as a prisoner to avoid all controversy with Government. I would ask them, therefore, to be as considerate in regard to my superphysical needs, as they have been in regard to my physical needs."

In the course of a further letter dated the 14th to the same authority he said: "The strain of deprivation of this work is becoming unbearable. If, therefore, I cannot have the permission by noon next Wednesday, I must deny myself all nourishment from that time save water and salt. That is the only way I can fulfil my vow and also relieve myself somewhat of the strain mentioned above. I do not want the proposed suspension of nourishment in any way to act as a pressure on the Government. Life ceases to

interest me if I may not do Harijan service without let or hindrance. As I have made it clear in my previous correspondences, and as the Government of India have admitted, permission to render that service is implied in the Yeravda Pact to which the British Government is consenting party, in so far as this consent is necessary. Therefore, I do indeed want the permission only if the Government believe that justice demands it, and not because I propose to deprive myself of food if it is not granted. That deprivation is intended purely for my consolation."

The facilities offered by the Government were hedged in by so many restrictions that they were considered by Gandhiji to be utterly inadequate for his purpose. He stated his minimum requirements, and as there was no reply to that communication the next day, he began his fast at noon on the 16th, with a reading of chapters 12 to 17 of the Gita, and the song *Uth jāg musāfar bhor bhaì* (The dawn is here, O traveller, arise).[4]

In a letter dated the 19th to the Home Secretary, Bombay Government, Gandhiji said: "But I have now understood through Mr. Andrews that the difficulty in the way of Government carrying out the orders of the Government of India, to which I have already referred, is that instead of being a State prisoner I am now a convicted prisoner. If that be the cause for a radical departure from a policy explicity laid down by the Government, not by way of concession, but, as the Government of India have admitted, "because it is necessary that he (I) should have freedom in regard to visitors and correspondence on matters strictly limited to removal of untouchability," "there being no restriction on publicity," I cannot understand how what was considered to be necessary for me becomes any the less necessary now by reason of my being a convicted prisoner. Just as Government have recognised my physical wants and satisfied them in spite of my being a convict, even so, I venture to submit, my spiritual wants regarding untouchability demand full recognition from Government."

4. For an English rendering, by Shrimati Padmaja Naidu, of this Hindustani song, see Pyarelal : *The Epic Fast*, p. 147.

On his condition taking a turn for the worse he was removed to the Sassoon Hospital, Poona at 3 p.m. on the 20th, and Shri Mahadev Desai, who was hitherto with him, was separated from him and transferred to the Belgaum Prison. Kasturba, who was in jail at Sabarmati, was brought to Yeravda Jail on the 20th, and on the 21st afternoon the Home Member made an announcement in the Council at Poona : " Mrs. Gandhi's sentence is indefinitely suspended." After this she was released, and saw Gandhiji in the evening at the hospital. She had been practically fasting since the 16th, and was very much pulled down. She was not allowed to pass the night at the hospital. Mr. Andrews frequently saw the Home Secretary at Poona, and also wrote to the Viceroy. The *Times of India*, in an editorial on the 21st, giving an inkling of how the official mind was working, said: "If Mr. Gandhi persists in fasting, the Government may release him when his condition becomes serious."

On the 24th, to quote the report that Gandhiji gave to a co-worker later on, "I could not take a sufficient quantity of water. On the last day I could take only 4 or 5 oz. The previous night the thought occurred to me that, since it was well-nigh impossible to take water, I might give up the effort to take it, and might have the joy of entering into a *samādhi*. On the 24th morning I said to the doctor: 'I don't want to resist now. My body suffers because I am fighting against death. Now that I propose to give up the fight, the body will no doubt continue to suffer but the mind at least will be at peace.' I even gave away my belongings—trinkets like little jars, etc.—to the nurses, in preparation for the coming end. I called Ba and said to her : 'Don't you give way to fear. The Government wish to let me die, and I wish to meet death bravely. What can be better or more glorious than that I should die in the cause of Harijan service? The Government have allowed others to die while fasting. How can we then expect them to make an exception in my case? They have even tried to prepare in advance the atmosphere for the event.' " However, he was released that same

day between 3 and 4 in the afternoon; he broke the fast with orange juice, and, accompanied by Ba and Mr. Andrews, was brought to 'Parnakuti' in a very weak condition.

He was then faced with the question as to his future course of action. To a co-worker he wrote on the same day : "I hope you were not worried over my fast, as by now you must be used to these fasts of my life. Heaven knows how many more I would have to go through. Therefore you should take my fast as in the ordinary course without being agitated." To Shri Satish Chandra Dasgupta he wrote : "It is a great question now what to do with this so-called freedom that I am supposed to have got. But God will show a way in His own time." To Shrimati Urmila Devi, sister of Deshbandhu Das, he wrote : "I can picture to myself the agony you must have gone through. .....I am sorry I am without Mahadev this time. It is a funny experience for me to be without him, but we have to take things as God will have them for us." To another co-worker he wrote : "Of course I have suffered, but then you can't lead a true life without suffering." To Janab Abbas Tyabji he wrote : "Well, many strange things have happened in my life, but this discharge is the strangest. However, there it is, and I must take it as it comes; only I do not know what to do with myself. God will clear the way for me. Till then I must wait on Him." To Lala Girdharilal of Lahore he wrote : "As for myself, fasting has evidently become a part of my life. I had not the vaguest notion that I would have to fast this time. But there was no escape from it." He exchanged views with some of the co-workers who came to see him. He was very much hurt by a tendentious report which the Poona correspondent of the *Times of India* sent out one of these days; and he mentioned it to Mr. Andrews as soon as he met the latter the next morning : "I am living like a Prince in a marble palace, and I have cost Lady Thackersey 19,000 rupees! It appeared first in the *Capital*, and now in the *Times of India*. But this is no marble palace, only

the floor is marble. This is not a marble palace as the Viceregal Lodge is." Finally, he announced on the 9th of September his decision to act as if he was in prison till the 4th of August next year, and devote himself solely to Harijan work. He made it clear, however, that he would merely place a voluntary restriction on his action and not on his thought. He would, therefore, speak to Congress workers wherever he went, and guide them in so far as it was possible for him to do so. "So far as, therefore, I am concerned and so far as I have anything to do with civil resistance," he said in a letter to a Congress worker dated 23rd September, "I shall devote my attention to keeping the movement non-violent and otherwise also pure."

In the second week of January, 1934, Gandhiji visited Guruvayur, in Kerala, in the course of the Harijan tour. Shri Raghavan, a young man and a former inmate of the Sabarmati Ashram, who was working with his wife in the khadi bhandar at Trichur, saw Gandhiji by appointment after the 4 o'clock morning prayer. During this interview Gandhiji found that there was not enough work at the bhandar for both husband and wife; and he came to the conclusion, even while he was talking, that khadi alone could not give sufficient employment to young men in need of it, and that while khadi was the central sun it should be supplemented by other small, unorganized industries. Shri Shankerlal Banker, the Hon. Secretary of the All India Spinners' Association who was then touring in that very part of the country, was summoned by Gandhiji by wire to meet him at Calicut three days afterwards, to discuss how to economize in the overhead expenditure on khadi. Since then Gandhiji began to speak, whenever opportunity offered itself, about the need for reviving village industries. In his statement re: civil disobedience issued at Patna on 7th April, 1934, he made a specific reference to these, and said : "These (khadi, etc.) are services which provide maintenance on a poor man's scale. Those for whom the poor man's scale is not feasible

should find a place in small unorganised industries of national importance which give a better wage." Later on, after he settled down at Wardha at the conclusion of the Harijan tour, the All India Village Industries Association was established, and with the passage of years it has grown into a large tree with many branches spreading over the whole of India. But the seed of the tree was sown during the conversation that took place at Guruvayur before dawn on the 11th of January, 1934.

In the latter half of May, 1934, Gandhiji undertook a walking tour for Harijan work. The idea first occurred to him during the previous months when during motor journeys three or four stray dogs were accidentally killed, at different times, by the car in which he was travelling. On these occasions he felt very much pained, was disgusted with motor journeys, and giving expression to his agony said he would far rather give up travelling in motor cars and walk on foot from place to place. Once an idea subconsciously found a place in his mind, he would invest it with many other virtues. After his car was wantonly attacked by hostile Sanatanists at Jassidih (Bihar), and he had a providential escape, the idea of the walking tour took a more definite shape. He felt that "the car was a red rag to the bull, and that my walking tour would perhaps disarm the black-flaggers' anger and sober the crowd of sympathisers and admirers." He adumbrated the plan at a private conference of leaders at Ranchi on the 1st of May; and the tour, which lasted from 9th May to 16th May, and from 21st May to 7th June, turned out to be an unqualified success.

A party of Sanatanist young men, headed by one Swami Lalnath, a sannyasi, followed Gandhiji from place to place in North India, obstructed his passage wherever possible, and kept on shouting their slogans at odd hours during train journeys and meetings. At Akola, in the earlier part of the tour, the Swami disclosed to Gandhiji their intention in indulging in what the latter called "a

negation of satyagraha". "We want to be hurt by the police or by your volunteers," said the Swami. "When this happens, I know that you will give up the tour." Throughout the earlier part of the tour the Swami failed to get himself or his companions hurt by the police or the volunteers. At Ajmer, however, on the 5th of July, during the *melee* that took place before Gandhiji reached the big public meeting, Swami Lalnath got a cut on his bare head. Gandhiji was duly notified of the event. First aid treatment was given on the spot, and the Swami was taken by Gandhiji under his own protection. He made a painful reference to the event in his speech, and later at night went at the local workers for their obvious failure to avoid violence. On the next day we left Ajmer for Karachi. The Swami, with a bandage on the head, accompanied our party up to Marwar Junction where our routes diverged. During this journey Gandhiji had fairly long talks with the Swami. Outwardly he appeared calm, but inwardly he was seething with agony. In the very meeting at Ajmer he had declared his intention to undertake penance after inquiring into the details of the happening. As soon as the summary of the speech appeared in the Press, Shri K. Natarajan wired to him from Bombay : "No call for penitential observance. Condemnation sufficient. Pray desist." Shri Ghanshyamdas Birla wired : "Have read with great concern assault on Lalnath. Hope you will not make up your mind about penance without giving chance of discussion." This was on the 6th. The 9th was Gandhiji's silence day, and he spent it at the Mohatta Palace at Clifton. In the afternoon that day he wired to Shri Birla : "Propose taking seven days' fast from fifth or sixth August date after reaching Wardha regarding assault Lalnath. Hold this absolutely necessary. Announcement should be made now. Wire approval." To this a reply came from Devadas at midnight : "While reverentially acquiescing on full consideration humbly urge four days." And the following came from Shri Birla next morning : "Personally hold such a long fast unwarranted. Will give unnecessary shock to country which

hope Lalnath does not desire. Request showing this telegram to Lalnath. Hope you will agree reducing period of fast. Step rather drastic. Finally your discretion." In the morning of the 10th Gandhiji wrote out a statement announcing this decision; and, after it was shown to Sjts. Jairamdas, Thakkar Bapa and Kakasaheb, it was issued to the Press. I had asked him the night before if he would not consider the request for reducing the number of days. He replied: "Seven is the least number. This is to be a penance, and that too a public one. One should not be calculating in such matters." On the 10th he wrote to Mirabehn who was then on a visit to Britain: "The incident calls for the penance, because there was a clear breach of pledge. Nothing on earth is so serious perhaps as breach of pledge of safety. If I had greater capacity, I would have taken a longer fast. You must not be disturbed. You would go on with your appointed task unmoved." To Shri Natarajan he wired: "Cause too great for overlooking Ajmer neglect duty." And to Shri Birla: "Nothing less than seven days meets case." A telegram came from Shri Mathuradas Tricumji that evening: "Postpone decision penance. Letter posted Lahore," to which Gandhiji replied: "Decision taken. Inevitable. Read statement." Another moving appeal came from Shri Mahadevbhai, who was just released from jail, from Bombay: "Pranams. Hoping report myself Lahore fourteenth latest. Pray have mercy Brother Ass. Spare us further earthquake shocks." But it was too late. In a letter dated the 16th Gandhiji wrote to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad from Lahore: "The fast had to come. Such was God's will. So long as He desires service from me, I shall be unhurt."

In September that year (1934) Gandhiji announced his decision to retire from the Congress. It may be remembered that during the Harijan tour Gandhiji paid a three days' special visit to Calcutta from the 19th to the 21st of July; and though handsome collections—over Rs. 72,000 in three days—were made for the Harijan fund, the "primary object this time" was, to quote Gandhiji's own words, "to

try and settle the domestic differences" among opposing groups in the Congress. His efforts did not yield the desired result. "The idea of leaving the Congress first came to me, as in a flash, on the platform of the Howrah railway station as I was going to take the train for Kanpur," I heard him say some months later to a co-worker.

In a letter to an esteemed co-worker, written in the third week of August, he poured out the agony of his soul: "There is no likelihood of my retiring from the Congress all of a sudden, but I must share my heart's agony with you. So long as you all will not permit me to go, how can I go? But it is growing upon me that there is for me no other way. I seem to be arresting the progress of the Congress. To retain the creed and yet to have no faith in it, to profess to have faith in it and yet not to practise it! What a woeful state this! Is it not your duty, my duty, to save the Congress from this plight? So long as we can find out a way to save the Congress from this corruption, we might continue; but when retirement is the only way? My retirement can only lead to purging the Congress of cant and hypocrisy. Today violence and non-violence, truth and untruth, khadi and no-khadi seem to be the same to Congressmen. If that is the real state of things, then they must act according to their convictions. But they will not do so until I have made my exit. I will be no party to the cancellation of the khadi franchise or alteration of the creed. And if the Congress votes for both in spite of me, will it not amount to a vote of censure against me? Is it worth while letting the things drift on to such a pass?"

The retirement, however, when it came, was not properly understood by many. To a friend in London, a Britisher, Gandhiji, therefore, wrote on 23rd November, 1934: "You have misunderstood my retirement from the Congress. I have not left it in disgust. Congressmen as individuals are both good and bad. But Congress is uniformly good. God's creatures are both good and bad. Is God therefore less good? I have retired to give it greater strength. I had become a dead weight. Have you ever

anywhere seen the wonders it has worked during the elections with the least amount of expenses? No, in this matter, your prejudice has got the better of your judgment. Remember that Rajendraprasad, Vallabhbhai, Rajagopalachari, Ansari, Mahadev, and many others, of whom humanity may be proud, are in it, of it, and would die for it."

A little earlier, at the end of the Bombay session of the Congress, i.e. just after the formal retirement, he issued a public appeal to voters for the coming elections to the Central Legislative Assembly (I had the privilege of seeing him write it out), in which he said: "If Congressmen have understood the spirit underlying my retirement from the Congress, it ought to mean redoubling of honest and persistent effort to return Congress candidates to the Assembly. I have retired not to weaken the national organisation but to strengthen it. I have seen notices from adverse parties which, under the guise of praising me, suggest that I leave the Congress in disgust. This is absolutely untrue. I entertain the highest regard for the Congress. When we achieve our goal, as we will and must, the Congress will be found to have contributed the largest share in the attainment. There is thus in the present fight a battle between measures, not men. Every vote given to a Congress candidate means so much progress towards our goal. An institution that has just passed a self-denying ordinance in the shape of the new rigorous constitution, in my opinion, deserves unilateral support. That can just now be best expressed by sending as many Congressmen as possible to the Assembly."

And, after the elections, he wrote, in a letter to Shri Konda Venkatappayya (Guntur) dated 23-11-1934: "Yes, the Assembly elections have been a perfect revelation. The South has easily topped the list with its 100 per cent victories and overwhelming majorities. It is a further demonstration of the unfailing victory of truth and sacrifice."

In April, 1937, after getting large majorities in the

Provincial Assemblies, the Congress refused to take office unless certain assurances were given by the Government. Many prominent Congressmen, with a marked leaning to parliamentary work, had their own misgivings about the wisdom of the decision which was taken primarily at Gandhiji's insistence. In the third week of April the annual conference of the Gandhi Seva Sangh was to be held at Hudli near Belgaum; and Gandhiji reached Poona early morning on the 14th on his way to Hudli. I called on him soon after his arrival at 'Parnakuti', and found him in high glee at the turn events had taken resulting in the formation of 'Interim Ministries' in the provinces! "You see how the whole structure has come down with a crash at the very first whiff of the wind!" he said. "Had we gone in, the British rulers would have declared from the house-top to the world: See how our constitution has begun to work quite smoothly!" Just then a prominent Indian journalist came in. He was coming straight from Delhi. "Bapu," he said, "Sir James Grigg (the then Finance Member of the Government of India), whom I happened to meet a few days ago, told me that this time they were going to put the most stringent restrictions on the Indian Press, to begin with." Gandhiji's face at once assumed a grave expression, and he said in deliberate tones: "When you meet Sir James Grigg on your return to Delhi, tell him on my behalf that this time I am preparing for slaughter. In the coming struggle, if it does come, satyagrahis will be chained to one another, so that they will not be able to run away—even if they wish to—in the face of a shower of lathis or bullets!" "This time, if there is a fight, Bapu," said the journalist, "both my wife and I have decided to join it." And the talk ended there, some other persons having entered in the meanwhile.

Happily a way was found out of the impasse, and the Congress got the assurances it had asked for. A few months later I happened to meet the Premier of one of the provinces, and respectfully asked him: "Don't you think that a large number of sections in the new constitution have become redundant because of the Congress decision

to hold itself in patience for three months and a half?" "Yes," came the candid reply, "we have made a great advance over the Government of India Act." I often heard a Provincial Minister admitting, out of humility, that Gandhiji with his superior vision on this occasion proved to be right, and the others (including himself) proved to be wrong.

The sharp difference of opinion between Gandhiji and a majority of the Congress Working Committee, that came to the fore in the latter part of 1940, is now a matter of history. For the first time in many years Gandhiji did not attend the meeting of the A.I.C.C. held at Poona in July 1940. Later further discussions took place at Wardha in the first week of September. Gandhiji found the restrictions imposed by the Government most irksome, and was keen on fasting as a supreme national protest against it. On the 5th, at Wardha, the Working Committee tried to dissuade Gandhiji from undertaking a fast, but their argume[illegible] had no effect on Gandhiji, and at the end of the day's sitting he declared that the fast was inevitable. On the way back to Sevagram he was accompanied by Seth Jamnalal Bajaj, Shri Mahadev Desai, and Shri Mathuradas Tricumji. During the two miles' walk Mahadevbhai had a long discussion with Gandhiji. At the end of a prolonged argument M.D. said to him: "Bapu, twenty years back you declared from one end of the country to the other that, in Thoreau's words, there could be no place for an honest man except in prison under an unjust government. Why do you seem to forget the same thing now? When was there greater injustice on the earth than today? It is true you wish to cover the whole country by your fast, but you are obviously overlooking the great doctrine which you had yourself placed before the country. Why should small men not offer their small sacrifices? etc., etc." The next morning, during the walk, Gandhiji said: "Mahadev, do you know what a miracle you wrought yesterday?" "No," said M.D. nonchalantly. Gandhiji said: "The last thing that you mentioned in your talk

yesterday gripped me. I kept thinking about it the whole night, and ultimately arrived at the decision that there would be no fast, but that prison gates would be opened for all." The joy of the hearers knew no bounds. "Allaho Akbar" (God is great), shouted the heart of M. D., and he felt thankful to God for "His infinite kindness". "It is surprising how small men like us"—to quote his own words, breathing his inborn humility,—"can on occasions become instrumental in bringing about great things." That very day Gandhiji announced the decision before the Working Committee, to the intense relief of every one of the Members, and discussions began as to the manner in which imprisonment should be courted as a protest against the repressive measures of the Government. These resulted in the birth of the movement of Individual Civil Disobedience, which continued till December, 1941.

I have related this incident on the strength of a Gujarati letter dated 6-9-1940 from Shri Mahadevbhai to me, which is before me as I am writing this, and serves to revive some of the most sacred memories of those days.

Baroda,
21-9-1948.

HIS WAY OF CONVERSION

P. Subbarayan

MY youngest son bears Bapu's name, and I gave it to him out of affection and regard for Bapu. So when he turned Communist and I felt distressed, I wrote to Bapu as to what could be done. He wrote back and said that I must remember Vyasa's saying that 'when a son gets to an understanding age, he should be regarded as a friend and not to be dictated to.' I thought it was the best advice, and have carried it out in my dealings with all my children, as it is best not to meddle in their affairs, specially when they are of an age to judge for themselves what is good.

After Mohan came back from England and actively took part in the Communist Party work, went underground and was finally tried in the Communist Conspiracy Case, I wrote to Bapu whether he had read his statement before the Court, as I wanted to know what his reactions were. He wrote back and told me that he had read bits of it, but that if I could send him the whole statement he would read it again carefully and give me his opinion. This letter touched me deeply as I knew how busy he was at that time; and his offer to read the whole statement which ran to several columns in a newspaper showed his great affection for me and my family. I sent him the cutting out of the *Hindu*. After a week or so he wrote back and said that it was the statement of a brave son of India, and even though he did not agree with the ideology, he said the boy must be allowed to serve the country in his own way.

Afterwards at Ramgarh during the Congress session, in March 1940, I took Mohan to see Bapu, and left him with the latter. When I met Bapu again, he said : "I have had a long talk with Mohan, but I do not think I have converted him. We must not force our opinions on the young, but should go on trying to see whether we can get them to our way of thinking by affection and not by dictation." Mohan was since then in touch with him all the time, and had been to see him several times in connection with

the Communist Party. The last letter he wrote about Mohan was in 1945 when after he had seen Mohan and discussed some matters with him. Bapu wrote to me to say: "Mohan came to see me. I did not try to convert him, but made him perceive my affection for him."

His personal strength and his capacity to convert an opponent can be seen from a letter I had in reply from Lord Willingdon to the one I wrote to him. I said to Lord Willingdon that the British Government lacked statesmanship when he, as their representative, fought shy of seeing Mahatma Gandhi soon after his return from the Round Table Conference in 1931, when he had asked for an interview owing to the arrests of Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan in the Frontier Province and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in the United Provinces. Lord Willingdon was frank enough to write and tell me that he was really afraid to see Gandhiji because he felt the latter would convert him to his point of view; and he was in no mood for such conversion as evidently the British Government had made up their mind not to have any further talks with the Congress. Of course Lord Willingdon did not say this in so many words; but this is what I gathered from his reply. When I conveyed this to Bapu, he exclaimed: "Why should anyone be afraid of meeting me as I never put forward my view in any but the most cordial terms?"

In 1944 when I met him at Wardha soon after he had come out of his internment in the Aga Khan Palace, he was really distressed at the way people had gone underground. He told me that he would advise them all to come out if they really believed in his methods, as it did not conduce to getting the confidence of our opponents.

Madras,
16-3-1948.

GANDHIJI AND MEDICINE

G. R. Talwalkar

IT was in about the middle of 1918 that I first came in personal contact with Mahatma Gandhi. He was then in a bad condition of health due to acute dysentery. Dr. B. N. Kanuga of Ahmedabad was treating him, and was feeling very puzzled as to how to persuade him to take a few injections of emetine which alone was the right remedy for Gandhiji's trouble. But Mahatmaji was firm that he would not allow his body to be injected with the medicine, and he asked for some nature cure method of treatment. We, doctors, have not, I must admit, paid sufficient attention to nature cure methods according to Mahatmaji's conception, but I must say that for acute amoebic dysentery there is no treatment so sure as a few injections of emetine hydrochloride. We were almost at our wit's end how to give Mahatmaji emetine. Suddenly it struck me that, if we proposed to him an enema, he would gladly allow us that procedure. So we proposed to him that we would only give him an enema. He at once agreed, and we added to the enema water a full dose of emetine and morphia. This little procedure had such marvellous effect on our patient within the next twentyfour hours that he voluntarily asked for a repetition of the same enema procedure for five successive days, with the result that his dysentery was cured and he was able to travel from Nadiad to Ahmedabad in a week's time and placed himself completely under my care without questioning my authority. Soon, however, I discovered that he was taking no food and even no milk. He was under the impression that a dozen or two of oranges were enough for maintaining his nutrition; and when I said that it could not support his body and strength for more than a few days, he challenged me to convince him about the fallacy of his fancy. So I showed to him from a well-known authority on dietetics that, if a man wished to live entirely on oranges, he would require about 50 to 75 oranges a day to give him enough nourishment, but that

would more certainly produce diarrhoea. Mahatmaji was at once convinced, and from that day he began to take rice and chapati as his daily diet, but he would not take a single drop of milk. We, doctors, believe that, for pure vegetarians as we Hindus are, milk is the most precious and indispensable animal protein diet. I tried my best to persuade Gandhiji to take milk, but he would not agree on this point. A few months later when he was in Bombay the late Surgeon A. K. Dalal, with the help of Kasturba, was able to persuade Gandhiji to take goat's milk. The story is narrated by Gandhiji in his autobiography.

For some time after Gandhiji resumed to take rice and chapatis, in spite of good feeding, he did not pick up energy satisfactorily, and I was getting anxious about his future. At this juncture came into the field one Dr. Kelkar who had for some time studied the use of naturo-therapy in the form of rubbing the back with ice as a valuable and rapid method of bringing vigour to the body. At first this good and sincere man was a butt of ridicule by some inmates of the Ashram, and Gandhiji would not let himself be experimented upon by this faithful apostle of naturopathy. Gandhiji asked my opinion about this novel treatment. When I whole-heartedly endorsed the views of Dr. Kelkar the ice treatment began, and within a fortnight Gandhiji so much improved in health and vigour that I willingly offered half the credit of having cured him at that time to Dr. Kelkar.

In 1935 Gandhiji had high blood pressure, and his condition at times caused much concern to many of his doctors. At this juncture somebody (I do not know who it was) suggested the use of garlic as a remedy against high blood pressure. It was then that I sent to *Harijan* some of my views on the medicinal virtues of garlic, as I had long since known that in the south of Italy garlic was much used by the poor as a remedy against tuberculosis, and one Dr. Minchin in Ireland highly praised the local application of garlic poultice to tuberculous glands and sinuses as an effective remedy. The late Shri Mahadev-bhai got intensely interested in the use of garlic, and wrote

to me a letter asking for my experiences with it. I had been using a concentrated extract of garlic in cases of lung tuberculosis with very gratifying results, but I could not convince my medical brothers about this. However, I found that Gandhiji at once took to the daily use of garlic; and I yet believe that his continued good health for years after his high blood pressure had frightened doctors out of their wits, may be attributed to the regular use of garlic. Gandhiji always had an open mind; and though inconveniently inquisitive at the beginning, he was the most enthusiastic follower of a principle once he was convinced about its soundness. Here is the key of a great mind.

Bombay,
5-6-1948.

MY FIRST MEETING WITH GANDHIJI

Tan Yun-shan

I FIRST met Gandhiji at Bardoli in April, 1931. But I had the first glimpse of him about three years ago at an annual session of the National Congress held at Calcutta in December, 1928. Before going to Calcutta to attend the Congress session, I took leave of Gurudeva Tagore. Gurudeva advised me that I should meet Gandhiji there. "Would you give me a line of introduction?" I asked. "There's no need; Gandhiji will be very glad to meet you," Gurudeva replied.

Calcutta was then quite a strange place to me, for I had only passed through it once a few months back when I came to Santiniketan as well as to India for the first time. I could hardly find out Gandhiji's whereabouts. Moreover, I thought that it might not be appropriate and

right to intrude upon his valuable time on such an occasion when he was so busy with the Congress affairs. I then dropped the idea of meeting Gandhiji for the time being, and only saw him from a little distance at the inaugural meeting of the Congress session. It was indeed a gigantic view. The people numbering more than a lakh shouted thunderously when Gandhiji entered the Congress pandal, and quieted down immediately in pin-drop silence when he began to address them. His figure appeared rather frail, but his face was shining and eyes sparkling. He spoke slowly in a comparatively low voice but with very sweet melody and beautiful tone. I was quite satisfied then with this distant *darshan* of Gandhiji and came back to Santiniketan.

Later on I frequently met friends coming from Gandhiji. All of them asked me to go and stay with him for some time. I told them all about my long cherished hope of visiting Gandhiji and requested them to convey to him my greatest respect and highest admiration. As a matter of fact, I had even contemplated before coming to this country that I would first stay with Gurudeva at Santiniketan for some years and then go to Gandhiji to stay with him at the Satyagrahashram at Sabarmati for two or three years or even to follow him for ever, if possible. But circumstance always compels people to follow its course and alter their own. After having been at Santiniketan for only little more than two years, I went to Tibet in the winter of 1930 quite accidentally, an event which need not be related here. When I returned to India from Tibet, again I was called back home for certain family affairs. Alas! My original plans were upset altogther. However, I could not leave India without meeting Gandhiji.

While in Tibet, staying in the Residential Palace (Noblingone) of the 'Living Buddha' (the Dalai Lama) outside the city of Lhasa, I had to answer many questions put by the late Dalai Lama, the 13th one, and his ministers about India. And by the way, I used to tell them what Gurudeva and Gandhiji were doing in India and what was going to change India's destiny. His Holiness, the late

Dalai Lama, was especially interested in Gandhiji's way of living and his satyagraha movement. He therefore asked me to convey his personal message to Gandhiji when I was returning to India. This added a special mission and urgency to my eagerness to visit Gandhiji.

I wrote to Gandhiji immediately after I had returned to Santiniketan from Lhasa, informing him of my longing to visit him and requesting him to grant me a *darshan*. He responded very promptly and asked me to meet him in New Delhi on any near date which might be convenient for me. On my way to Delhi, I availed myself of the opportunity of making a pilgrimage to all the important sacred places of Lord Buddha along the Ganges, such as Buddha Gaya, Rajagiri, Nalanda, Sarnath, Kushinagara, Lumbini, Sravasti and Sankisa. But after visiting these places, I was much delayed, and when I arrived at Delhi Gandhiji had already gone back to his Satyagrahashram at Sabarmati. I then followed him in his track. As I have mentioned before, the Satyagrahashram was also in my plan where I would stay for some years; although I could not materialize this long-cherished idea, I could at least see the place now. But when I arrived at the Ashram, Gandhiji again had gone to Bardoli for some urgent and important meetings. The Secretary of the Ashram, Shri Narandas K. Gandhi, was very kind to me; he showed me everything of the Ashram and treated me just as a brother. He lost no time to send a wire to Gandhiji for me, and Gandhiji immediately replied that I was welcome to Bardoli, and that he would stay there for a few days more. I then again followed him to Bardoli.

On my way from Sabarmati to Bardoli, a very interesting incident happened which has a vivid impression on my mind even now. It occurred at the Surat station where I had to change and wait for another train. I had just entered the waiting room. A C.I.D. followed me and made some inquiries about who I was, where I came from, what I was doing in India, and what was my purpose of visiting Gandhi. I told him very frankly all the truth, and he was not only satisfied but pleased and left. I then had a

wash and prepared myself for a little rest. But as soon as I came out of the bath room, another gentleman suddenly greeted me and asked: "Are you going to Bardoli to see Mahatma Gandhi?" I was quite embarrassed by such an unexpected compliment and thought that he might be another C.I.D. But he did not await my reciprocation and went on: "I am also going there to pay homage to the Mahatma. I have only recently come back from America where I stayed for more than ten years. I went there first as a student and later on made my business there after finishing my course of studies. My name is Dua. Let us go together." He furthermore showed me some letters of introduction. I was then much relieved and gladdened to have his company. We then went together. In the train, he took off his American dress and put on Indian kurta and dhoti. He was feeling a little shy of doing this, and explained to me: "I bought these clothes from Bombay especially for visiting Mahatma Gandhi." At the same time he looked at the 'Gandhi Cap' on my head and asked: "You also bought this cap for the same purpose?" "No, it was presented to me yesterday by the Secretary of the Satyagrahashram at Sabarmati," I answered him, "but unfortunately I have not got any kurta and dhoti." We laughed and talked and reached Bardoli in no time.

From Bardoli station we took a horse carriage to the Swaraj Ashram where Gandhiji was staying. We were received at the gate by some Ashramites and put in a very neat and tidy guest room but without furniture. Only a few minutes later came Shri Devadas, Gandhiji's youngest son. He asked us how long we could and would stay there. Mr. Dua said that he had some urgent business in Bombay and intended to leave by the afternoon or the next morning train if he could see the Mahatma immediately. Shri Devadas told him that Bapu was having a meeting at the moment and also had several engagements in the afternoon; however, he would see if Bapu could spare some time in the evening. He then turned to me: "May I know your programme? Gandhiji has been expecting you for some

time past. Can you stay with us for some days?" I said: "Yes. I am not in a hurry and would see Gandhiji when it will be convenient for him." He said: "That's very good;" and left. After about half an hour, Devadas came again and told us that Gandhiji would see Mr. Dua in the evening and meet me the next morning, but I could also see him in the evening if I would like to do so. He added that there were prayers every day in the early morning and in late evening, and asked whether I would like to attend these prayers which Gandhiji himself conducted. I told him: "I would certainly attend the prayers, but would like to meet Gandhiji next morning as apppointed by him."

On the next day, the 27th April, 1931, I got up very early and attended the morning prayer which began at exactly 4 a.m. and ended in less than half an hour. As it was still dark and I was a little bit tired after a long pilgrimage, I returned to my room after the prayer and slept again. And Mr. Dua left for his destination. At half past ten, Shri Devadas came and took me to Gandhiji. He was staying in the upper storey of a two-storied building. The room was as neat and tidy as the guest room in which I was put up and also without any furniture excepting a big square mattress and a long pillow both covered with white khaddar. Gandhiji was sitting and spinning on the mattress, backed by the pillow; and the pillow and the mattress were backed by the wall. As soon as I came to the door of his room, he beckoned me with a gracious call: "Come in! Come in!" I paid him my profoundest adoration and salutation. He took the precedence of me and said:

"I have been expecting you for a long time, first in Delhi, then at Sabarmati. I was quite anxious whether anything happened to you. Now, I am very glad that at last you have come here."

"Many thanks for your kindness," I said. "I am extremely sorry that I have been much delayed on the way. But the delay was due to my pilgrimage to the Sacred

Places of the Lord Buddha. For this, I hope, you will pardon me."

"Certainly!" he quickly interjected. "You need not be sorry for that. Now, tell me how long can you stay here?"

"I have come specially to pay my homage to you. As this is done, I may take the first train which is available for Bombay either this afternoon or tomorrow morning," I answered.

"And then?" he interrupted me.

"Then from Bombay I shall go to Madras; from Madras, Calcutta; and from Calcutta, back to China."

"Have you already booked your tickets for all these places?" he joked. "But I am told by Devadas that you are not in a hurry. Fortunately I did not see you yesterday, otherwise you might have gone this morning." We all burst into laughter.

"Then, may I stay with you for ever?" I asked.

"So much I do not expect from you. You only stay here as long as I shall stay and leave when I leave."

"This is a great privilege for me and I shall certainly do so," I said.

"This morning I wanted you to have a walk with me but found that you were asleep," he told me.

I was suddenly abashed by this involuntary and unexpected fact, and could not know how to express or explain myself. I regretfully asked: "Why did you not wake me up?"

He immediately understood my awkward position and came to my relief, saying: "You need not worry about that. It was better for you to have some rest after such a long pilgrimage, journeying in the hot summer of India. You might also have some sweet dreaming in the dawning morning. That's why I did not wake you up."

We all burst again into laughter. I then solemnly presented him the letter which I brought from His Holiness, the late Dalai Lama, and told him how I brought it and what was my communion with His Holiness. He was very much gladdened and delighted at the matter and asked:

"What has His Holiness written? Was it written in Tibetan?"

"I do not know what His Holiness has written. But it might have been written in Tibetan. For, His Holiness does not know any foreign language, and the letter was written by himself with his own hand. To be faithful to him and to you, as a messenger, I did not and could not see it."

"Very well, you can see it now." He laughed and opened the letter. "Oh, you are right. It was exactly written in Tibetan. Can you translate it for me?"

"No, I have no knowledge of the Tibetan language and have only learnt the alphabets while at Lhasa."

"Then it will never be understood by me." We all broke into laughter once again.

The letter was written on a typical Tibetan paper in long shape, bearing two seals in vermillion ink, one of big size, the official one, and the other of smaller size, the personal one. It was wrapped with a long piece of pure white cloth, called "Cartar" in Tibetan. The "Cartar" is an emblem of love, affection and respect. In Tibet, when people meet for the first time or on some special occasion, they exchange their "Cartars" as we exchange our cards. When they receive or visit elderly and respectable persons, they first offer their "Cartars" as we offer our garlands. The Tibetans also do their worship with "Cartars" as we do with flowers. Although Gandhiji could not read the letter, he appreciated and enjoyed it much. I asked him whether he would be so kind as to acknowledge receipt of and reply to the letter. He quickly responded:

"Oh, yes, I shall write to him, but not the reply, because I do not know the contents of his letter. Since I do not know Tibetan, I shall write in Gujarati so that he may also not understand it but enjoy it as I do," he said joyfully.

"But you certainly understand each other without knowing each other's language, as Lord Buddha said that all Buddhas understand each other by heart and not by speech. Don't you think so?"

He looked at me smiling. We then talked about China

and India, about the religious and cultural contacts, the old and intimate friendship in the past, and the importance of reviving these contacts and friendship today, between the two countries. He told me that he had great admiration for Chinese culture and civilization, and love for the Chinese people. When he was in South Africa, he had many Chinese friends there and many of them had even joined his satyagraha movement there. I told him that the Chinese people had the greatest respect and profoundest love for two great persons of Modern India, namely himself and Gurudeva, and regarded them as the living Bodhisattvas of the Buddha country. There had been a long-cherished eager desire of the Chinese people for his visit to China as they had Gurudeva's in 1924.

"It is also my earnst desire to visit that great country," he said. "But there is one thing always standing in my way. That is this, I cannot leave and will not leave India until she is free. However, I hope and wish I shall be able to go to your country at least once in this life of mine."

"Yes, you will certainly be able to do so. India will soon be free. I most earnestly pray for your long life."

As the meeting had been sufficiently long, I took leave of him and said good-bye.

"What! Leave and good-bye? Are you going away immediately, and will you not stay here for some time more?"

"Yes, I am staying."

"Then, take leave when you leave, and say good-bye when you go away." He cast his blessing in joke once again.

In the evening, there was a mass meeting in a distant village. Gandhiji sent Shri Devadas to me asking me to accompany him and to attend the meeting. We went together half the way on foot and half the way by car. For it was Gandhiji's habit to have a walk in the morning and in the evening every day. But as the village where the meeting was held was a little too far away and he could not walk all the distance, a car was waiting for him at half way. While walking along the road, he was inte-

rested in talking about the Chinese way of living.

"Your people are very artistic. They lead even their daily life artistically. But one thing I do not like much, that is that they take too much meat. Is it not so?" he remarked.

"No, it is not quite true, Mahatmaji. Most of the Chinese people do not take much meat. Especially the village people of China are almost pure vegetarians. They may have meat only on a few special occasions in a year, such as the New Year and other seasonal festivals or when they have important guests. Moreover, cow-slaughter is usually prohibited. Your conclusion is drawn perhaps only from the habit of the few Chinese friends living in the few big cities of India such as Bombay and Calcutta or some such place," I explained to him.

"I am very glad to hear your explanation," he intervened. "Are you a vegetarian?"

"No, I have not yet been. But I also prefer vegetarian diet to meat," I told him frankly.

"Then, I would advise you to give up all non-vegetarian food and be a pure vegetarian. Can't you?" he persuaded me.

"Yes, I can," I boldly answered and agreed. "I have been contemplating for some time past to take only pure vegetarian food. Now, as you have so graciously advised me, I will certainly try to be a vegetarian as much as possible and will regard this as a happy memory of our meeting."

He was much pleased with my taking of the pledge and wished me all success.

By the time, we had already come to the place where the pre-arranged car was waiting—the place was surrounded by hundreds of people including men and women, old, young, and children. They gathered together there simply for a *darshan* of the Mahatma. When they saw Gandhiji, they shouted very loudly and unitedly: "Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai!" Then they made *pranama* to him and took the dust off his feet. The men offered him money, some with big notes, some with a few rupees, some with

a few annas. The women offered him yarn which was spun by themselves, and children gave flowers. The same incident occurred in several places on the way, and it took us quite a long time to reach the venue of the meeting. I was deeply moved by the scenes. I had never seen such a phenomenon in the human society, a simple man having such great influence over his people and held in such profound reverence by them. I was immediately reminded of the Chinese sage Mencius' saying: "A man who influences people with virtue gets the heart of people." Also I remembered the saying of the great Chinese philosopher Las-Tzu: "The more one does for others, the more the others will do for him; the more one gives to others, the more the others will give to him." These words uttered by the Chinese sage and philosopher more than two thousand years ago were exactly proved in action by Gandhiji that day.

The meeting lasted for about two hours and we returned to the Ashram quite late in the night.

The next day was Gandhiji's silence day. Although he did not speak, he worked as usual. His programme had been suddenly changed by some urgent important affairs. He had to go to Surat in the afternoon. I too, therefore, prepared to leave Bardoli. I saw him once again in the morning and requested him to bless the Chinese students with a message. He answered me in writing saying that he would send me the message and his reply to the Dalai Lama after some time and asked me to give my Calcutta-address to him. He also asked me to go by the same train if I were so prepared, for I had to change my train again at Surat for Bombay.

We left Bardoli at 5.45 p.m. and arrived at Surat about one and half hour later. The station was already flooded with thousands of people. They shouted on the arrival of Gandhiji. Some local leaders of the Congress came up to the train to receive him. But Gandhiji was still observing silence. He answered the continuously thunderous hail of the people and returned greetings to the leaders with a smiling face and folded hands. I intended to take leave

at this juncture, but those friends very affectionately asked me to go to their place with Gandhiji for a while, and told me that there was still ample time for me to get my train for Bombay. So I went with them. Such was the rush of visitors that we could hardly get out of the station.

I stayed there for about two hours and had dinner with them. After that, Shri Devadas and two other friends took me round the ancient city of Surat and accompanied me to the station. Before leaving, I paid Gandhiji again my profoundest salutation and adoration, and asked him: "May I take your leave and say good-bye to you now?" He grasped my hands, nodded, smiled and looked at me just as a father grasping the hands of his child. I nearly wept by his boundless *Maitri* and *Karunā*, and felt great sadness at leaving him. All friends there said in one voice: "You must come again," and I bade them all farewell!

After touring through Bombay and Madras, I came back to Calcutta on 6th May, 1931. Gandhiji's promised message to the Chinese students along with his reply to His Holiness, the late Dalai Lama, had already reached my Calcutta-address before my arrival. His reply to the late Dalai Lama was really written in Gujarati with his own hand as he said at Bardoli, but his message to the Chinese students, which was embodied in a short letter addressed to me was written in English and this also with his own hand. I posted the Gujarati letter to His Holiness the late Dalai Lama without knowing the contents, and brought the message to China, which had been widely published in almost all the big Chinese journals and had been deeply appreciated and long remembered not only by the students but by the whole people of my country. This was his first message to China.

In conclusion, I quote this message below, not only as a loving memory of my first meeting with Gandhiji but as an emblem of the long, great and intimate friendship which started two thousand years ago and will continue for ever, between our two greatest countries, China and India:

Dear friend,

You must come again whenever you like.

My message to the Chinese students is:—Know that the deliverance of China is through ahimsa—pure and unadulterated.

As at Sabarmati, 4-5-31.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Santiniketan,
14-5-1948.