

# HARIJAN

Editor : MAHADEV DESAI

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[ FIVE PICE

## Notes

### States and Their People

I have suggested in these columns that the people of the States should remain calm and so far as possible not precipitate a clash, as events are shaping themselves in spite of us. But there is a limit to every such proposal. In Travancore, Mysore and Jodhpur things seem to have gone beyond endurance.

I have already referred to Travancore where two of its best workers have been cast into prison for the simple reason that they are too public-spirited to submit to autocracy.

The same thing is happening in Mysore though in a slightly different manner. The cause is identical. The Mysore State Congress must not be tolerated. I know how the members have tried to placate authority. They have refrained from raising large issues save that they must keep the goal of liberty before the Mysoreans.

And now comes serious news from Jodhpur. There, as in the other States, the local Parishad people have tried to work in cooperation with authority. They have raised no awkward questions. But the Rajputana States, like many others, have many jagirdars who are co-sharers with the Princes and derive authority from them. They may be termed States within States. These have no law governing them. The British Power has no direct control over them. The Princes are ever afraid of them. They dare not interfere with the exercise of the jagirdars' authority over the people within their jurisdiction. The result is that the people within these jagirdaris are the worst off in the Indian hierarchy. There was a clash, as far as my information goes, between the people and one of the jagirdars. This incident promises to lead to a major issue. Associations favoured by authority as in British India are, it is said, being set up against the popular Parishad. If a deliberate attempt is being made to suppress the local associations, the latter must accept the challenge and risk the worst in the full faith that liberty and truth cannot be suppressed for ever. But I would fain hope that the Princes and their advisers will, for their own sakes and for the good of India, curb the tendency in many States which cannot be described by any other adjective than lawless.

### Opium Addicts

A correspondent writes as follows:

"I do not know whether you are aware that in Rajputana (Marwar) the inhabitants are terrible opium addicts. A wedding or death or any ceremonial occasion necessitates the offering of opium to the visitors. It

may even mean the pawning of goods or mortgaging of property, but the opium has to be offered. It is quite an ordinary matter for a person to take 1½ or 2 tolas of opium per day and sometimes even more. I know of some who can swallow as much as five. When my father died I went home. A Brahman friend came to condole. The first thing was to offer him opium which is generally kept in a special box. There were three tolas in it. The Brahman said he would help himself. To my astonishment he emptied the entire contents on the palm of his hand and swallowed them. Having done so he said he was not satisfied. When I asked him how much was sufficient he replied 'four tolas'! And of course, if opium-eaters do not get their dope at the proper time, they are no better than useless lumps of flesh. This drug habit is eating as a canker into our society."

Deenbandhu Andrews and Pearson laboured on behalf of these addicts. We have not cared for them half as much as we have for the drink addicts. The effects of opium are not so patent as of drink so far as society is concerned. But both the vices have nothing between them to choose. Slaves of opium have their reason atrophied. They become living automata, having no interest in anything but their opium. How to deal with them is a tremendous question. Not until we have an unlimited band of workers, well-trained and seasoned, will it be possible to produce an effect on these helpless members of society. The medical profession can render valuable assistance by carrying on researches and discovering remedies for dealing with this social disease.

Sevagram, 4-5-42

M. K. G.

### Interesting Figures

The following figures re: the work of the Spinners' Association in the famine-stricken areas of Hissar are illuminating. They should banish all foolish doubt regarding the efficacy of spinning and weaving centres for relieving distress as also prove the selfless nature of the work done by the Association.

1. The number of centres in January, February and March were 8, 12, and 13 respectively.

2. The number of spinners in January, February and March were 2,042, 4,588 and 5,914, and the wages paid to them were Rs. 3,213, Rs. 6,913 and Rs. 12,919 respectively.

3. The number of carders were 148, 223 and 274. Their wages were Rs. 855, Rs. 1,657, and Rs. 2,593.

4. The number of weavers were 308, 360, and 563, and the wages earned by them Rs. 354, Rs. 723 and Rs. 889.

Total number of artisans 6,771.

Total amount of wages paid Rs. 29,628.

Total amount of yarn purchased Rs. 38,042 worth.



Because there are very few weavers in Hissar District the amount of khadi actually produced there is only Rs. 6,797 worth. The yarn will of course be woven elsewhere.

It is interesting to note that Rs. 1,818 only were spent on salaries of workers.

Sevagram, 3-5-42

A. K.

### TRAINING IN COTTAGE INDUSTRIES

Powerful forces are driving us to realise the importance of resuscitating the village and its economic life. In the first place, our country is a land of villages; so if we would work for the country, we must work for the villages. In the second place, young men educated in schools and colleges are more and more left unemployed. Literacy education has left them helpless in the face of the economic struggle for existence. Even in their own interests such men have to turn to village and cottage industries to earn their living. In the third place, the present uncertain conditions prevailing in towns and cities prevent young men from going back to colleges, which may not even reopen. In the fourth place, with war at our door, and with the consequent difficulty of transport, it has become essential for people wherever they are to produce all that they require for themselves. With the scanty capital available to us, the only possibility is for each family to take to some home industry or other and thus become self-dependent. And when our people have become self-dependent we shall have won real national independence.

With the object of preparing young men and women for village work and of teaching them a village industry, the All India Village Industries Association has been conducting courses in its Gram Sevak Vidyalaya at Wardha.

1. The next session for the Gram Udyog Vinit (Elementary General Course) of the Gram Sevak Vidyalaya, A. I. V. I. A. Wardha, is from the 1st July 1942 to the 30th April 1943.

2. Applicants for admission should not be under 22 years of age, should be healthy and fit for hard manual work, and should in education have reached at least the matriculation standard.

3. Students will have the option of taking one of the following two groups: 1. Oil-pressing, 2. Paper-making. Instructions in Bee-keeping and Soap-making will be given to both groups of students.

4. Expenses including fees, board, lodging and incidentals will amount to about Rs. 20 a month.

5. Students will reside in the Vidyalaya Hostel and take their meals there. The food served will be vegetarian.

6. No one should come before receiving a letter of admission from the Superintendent of the Vidyalaya.

Detailed prospectus and application forms may be had from the Superintendent, Gram Sevak Vidyalaya, Maganwadi, Wardha, C. P., to whom all applications in the prescribed form must reach before the 31st May, 1942.

### A RURAL ANTHOLOGY

I have been turning over the pages of *The Open Air*, an anthology of English country life by Adrian Bell (Faber and Faber), and I was delighted but not surprised to find that rural culture in Britain is or rather was very much the same as in India, for all mankind is one in essence.

Handicrafts played as important a part in the English countryside as in an Indian village. As Mr. Bell says in his introduction, "before the tension of competitive money-making, of the need to support a certain social standard of amenity, paralysed the individual life; before water and heat became commodities, and the machine departmentalised and insulated vocations one from another; before the grooves of specialisation became so deep that the mind was blinkered and ran in one track, the knowledge of a craft gave a man intuitively a power of judgment over all other branches of life. Because the basic arts of life were homogeneous. Broadcasting, swift communications, give an illusory appearance of unification; they mask the real dispersion of mind that is taking place, the insulation of man from man. The different social temperatures in a modern railway carriage and in a stagecoach might be compared. Even the old horse-bus driver was a conversational person, to sit beside whom was something of a privilege; the driver of the motor vehicle is necessarily insulated." (The italics are mine.)

Here is an idyllic picture of a Scottish family in the middle of the eighteenth century from the pen of William and Robert Chambers taken from their *Memoir*:

"The farm of Tedderfield, situated on the hillface above Neidpath Castle, . . . . . the property of the Earl of March, was occupied at a rent of eighteen pounds, by an honest man named David Grieve . . . . This family (of fourteen children) afforded an example of the virtuous frugal life of the rural people of Scotland previous to that extension of industry which brought wealth and many comforts into our country. The breakfast was oatmeal porridge . . . . . Strange as it may seem, a people of many fine qualities were reared in this plain style, and people of bone and muscle, mentally as well as physically. There was not a particle of luxury in that Sabine life; hardly a single article of the kinds sold in shops was used. *The food was all obtained from the farms, and the clothing was wholly of homespun.* I cannot be under any mistake about it, for I have often heard the household and its ways described by my maternal grandmother, who was David Grieve's eldest daughter. Even the education of the children was conducted at home, *the mother giving them lessons while seated at her spinning-wheel.*

Janet, the eldest girl, was wedded at eighteen by a middle-aged farmer who rented a farm called. . . . . The marriage took place in 1768. On the day preceding the event, Janet's 'providing' . . . . was despatched in a cart from Tedderfield to what was to be her new home; *the load of various articles being conspicuously surmounted by a spinning-wheel decorated with ribbons of different colours . . . . .* Although the (Newby) homestead consisted of only a cottage,



containing a kitchen and parlour, with the appendages of a barn etc., it gave shelter every night to groups of vagrant people.

My grandmother and her maids were generally up at an early hour in the morning to attend to the ewes, and their time for going to rest must have consequently been an early one. There was always however a period called 'between gloaming and supper-time', during which *another industry was practised*. Then it was that the *wheels were brought out for the spinning of the yarn* which was to constitute the clothing of the family. And I often think that it must have been a pleasing sight in that humble hall — the handsome young mistress amidst her troop of maidens, all busy with foot and finger, while the shepherds and their master would be telling stories or cracking jokes for the general entertainment, or some one with a good voice would be singing the songs of Ramsay and Hamilton." (The italics are mine.)

It is a curious but happy coincidence that the spinning-wheel, the only article that Gandhiji 'provides' for the girls whom he gives away in marriage, should also have been provided for Janet Grieve, and the handsome young mistress amidst her troop of maidens, all busy with foot and finger in the humble hall, remind us of fair Nausicaa's description of her mother Areta in the Odyssey:

"My mother; she beside a column sits  
In the hearth's blaze, twirling her fleecy threads  
Tinged with sea-purple, bright, magnificent!  
With all her maidens orderly behind."

(To be continued) V. G. D.

## MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

(By Shriman Narayan Agrawal)

Now that the problem of the medium of instruction has evoked fresh interest in the country, it will be useful to know the present position in the various Indian Universities. I wrote to the Registrars of the different Universities in this connection, and a gist of their replies is given below:

In the Universities of Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Delhi, Punjab, Agra, Patna, Dacca, Mysore and Andhra, the medium of instruction after the Matriculation stage is English. No immediate change is contemplated.

In the Muslim University, Aligarh, the medium of instruction in High School classes is Urdu, and the question of introducing Urdu as the medium of instruction in the Intermediate classes is under consideration.

The Registrar of the Allahabad University writes that "the University is fully alive to the necessity of making Hindi or Urdu the medium of instruction, and it will surely take steps as occasion arises."

In the Benares Hindu University "the examinees up to the Intermediate examination are permitted to answer their optional papers in Hindi. Further there is no restriction imposed on teachers and professors to teach their classes in English only. In case they so desire, they can teach in Hindi."

The Academic Council of the Lucknow University has recommended that the medium of instruction and examination should be Hindustani. Final decision has yet to be taken by the Executive Council. The

following is the detailed recommendation regarding the language and the script:

"(a) The language used for instruction and examination should be Hindustani, which signifies the language in our everyday use, supplemented when necessary by words drawn from Sanskrit, Persian, English and other languages. In special cases the Executive Council may exempt individual teachers and paper-setters from the application of this rule.

(b) The script used for all scientific work written or printed, including question papers and answers, should be Roman, supplemented by new letters or signs whenever necessary.

(c) The language of books should be left to the discretion of the authors."

It is a pity that the Lucknow University is thinking of introducing the Roman script. It is hoped that wiser counsels will prevail and in place of the Roman script both 'Devnagri' and 'Persian' scripts will be introduced.

The Nagpur University Court has accepted the principle of my resolution regarding the gradual introduction of the mother-tongue medium. The details have yet to be worked out by the Academic and Executive Councils.

The Registrar of the Travancore University writes thus:

"This University fully appreciates the need for reform in this direction, but practical difficulties, such as the lack of suitable text-books of the right standard in the various subjects, the problem of the migration of students to and from this University etc. have stood in the way of any scheme of an extensive reform being adopted. This University has, however, organised a Department of Publications, which is engaged in the preparation of glossaries of scientific and technical terms in Malayalam, which will remove the chief obstacle in the way of the production of scientific books. It is hoped that the activities of the Department will pave the way for the production of suitable text-books and thus ultimately make University teaching possible in Malayalam. It has also to be borne in mind in this connection that, unless a well-planned and uniform policy is adopted in this matter by all the Indian Universities, reform is difficult if not impracticable. This University will always be prepared to consider and to fall in line with any well-considered scheme in this respect which may be sponsored by a competent body."

The Registrar is right in pointing out the desirability of concerted action. I expect that the Inter-University Board will tackle the problem in all seriousness at an early date.

In the Annamalai University "instruction through the medium of an Indian language has not yet been attempted. But, as decided by the authorities, arrangements are being made to get ready suitable text-books in Tamil of the Intermediate standard on the various optional subjects of study for the Intermediate course. So far text-books in Logic, Economics, Physics, Chemistry have been published and text-books in other subjects — Mathematics, Botany, Zoology, History will be published shortly. As soon as text-books are got ready, the question of teaching them in the language will be considered."



# HARIJAN

May 10

1942

## ONE THING NEEDFUL

( By M. K. Gandhi )

"To those of us who love India and Indians and have tried to serve her people faithfully, the fact that in our hour of distress the hatred against us is growing is a matter of infinite sorrow. I admit we have not played and are still not playing fair by India; but can two wrongs make a right? When even the 'enemy' is in dire distress should he not be given some quarter? In asking us to withdraw are you not inviting your own people to bend the knee to Japan, knowing full well that you have not the non-violent strength as a country to resist any foreign aggression or domination? If you had had it, we could never have kept our hold on you. Will you not forgive past sins and rely on the goodwill of the new generation of Englishmen and women who can no longer think in terms of empire? Barring you, among the Congress leaders, is there anyone who believes whole-heartedly in non-violence? Yours is the only logical position, and you alone are a real friend of Britain."

This is an epitome of a pathetic English letter. I can but repeat what I felt and said in my letter to Lord Linlithgow recording my impressions of the first interview with him after the declaration of war. I have nothing to withdraw, nothing to repent of. I remain the same friend today of the British that I was then. I have not a trace of hatred in me towards them. But I have never been blind to their limitations as I have not been to their great virtues.

I do not deny the existence of hatred among the people at large, nor its increase with the march of events. But I claim that my national prescription has kept it under subjection and even sterilised it to an extent.

I am convinced, therefore, that the time has come during the war, not after it, for the British and the Indians to be reconciled to complete separation from each other. That way and that way alone lies the safety of both and, shall I say, the world. I see with the naked eye that the estrangement is growing. Every act of the British Government is being interpreted, and I think rightly, as being in its own interest and for its own safety. There is no such thing as joint common interest. To take the extreme case, a British victory over the Japanese will not mean a victory for India. But that is not a near event. Meanwhile the introduction of foreign soldiers, the admitted inequalities of treatment of Indian and European evacuees, and the manifestly overbearing behaviour of the troops are adding to the distrust of British intentions and declarations. I feel that they cannot all of a sudden change their traditional nature. Racial superiority is treated not as a vice but a virtue. This is true not only in India; it is equally true in Africa it

is true in Burma and Ceylon. These countries could not be held otherwise than by assertion of race superiority.

This is a drastic disease requiring a drastic remedy. I have pointed the remedy — complete and immediate 'orderly withdrawal of the British from India at least, in reality and properly from all non-European possessions. It will be the bravest and the cleanest act of the British people. It will at once put the Allied cause on a completely moral basis and may even lead to a most honourable peace between the warring nations. And the clean end of Imperialism is likely to be the end of Fascism and Nazism. The suggested action will certainly blunt the edge of Fascism and Nazism which are an offshoot of Imperialism.

British distress cannot be relieved by nationalist India's aid in the manner suggested by the writer. It is ill-equipped for the purpose, even if it can be made enthusiastic about it. And what is there to enthuse nationalistic India? Just as a person cannot feel the glow of the sun's heat in its absence, even so India cannot feel the glow of freedom without the actual experience of it. Many of us simply cannot contemplate an utterly free India with calmness and equanimity. The first experience is likely to be a shock before the glow comes. That shock is a necessity. India is a mighty nation. No one can tell how she will act and with what effect when the shock is delivered.

I feel, therefore, that I must devote the whole of my energy to the realisation of the supreme act. The writer of the letter admits the wrong done to India by the British. I suggest to the writer that the first condition of British success is the present undoing of the wrong. It should precede, not follow, victory. The presence of the British in India is an invitation to Japan to invade India. Their withdrawal removes the bait. Assume, however, that it does not; free India will be better able to cope with the invasion. Unadulterated non-cooperation will then have full sway.

Sevagram, 4-5-42

## NEGATION OF DEMOCRACY

An American reader of *Harijan* writes :

"For many years my husband and I have been enthusiastic readers of *Harijan*. We have looked upon it as an indispensable aid to the understanding of essential Indian thought and leadership. And because it has meant so much to us personally, we have tried to encourage others to read it — especially those who come from the West.

On the front page of the recent issue of *Harijan* for March 22nd there appears another article continuing the theme of British and American Nazism. I believe firmly that in justice to truth and the ideal of human brotherhood all examples of race discrimination or disrespect for personality in any form should be ferreted out and corrected. As one looks over the face of the globe today one is sobered by the fact that no race, country or group is free from this disgraceful behaviour. This fact alone should be enough to foster deep, penitent humility on the part of all, and at the same time encourage cooperative endeavour among men and



women of all groups and nationalities who are sensitive to the needs of this problem. Thus you render America a service when you call her attention to such forms of discrimination and challenge her in her supposed stand for democracy. It is extremely helpful for an individual, class, country or civilization to see itself as others see it. And no brief can be held for America's share in class distinction, whether it be toward the Negro, her own semi-literate poor, or people of other nationalities.

But I should also like to comment on a few statements or quotations from your articles which appear misleading. Going back to an earlier issue (Feb. 15, '42) I was surprised to find the statement that Dr. Carver, the great American scientist, 'remains in America the shunned Negro that he was nearly eighty years ago.' Judging from personal experience this is a misleading statement. *The Readers' Digest* has carried a number of excellent articles on the life and spirit of Dr. Carver, as well as accounts of his unique discoveries. During my stay in U. S. A., in '38-'39, I noted innumerable occasions on which he was quoted, admired, in New York and other parts of the East which singled him out as the important speaker on many special occasions. It is also interesting to recall that at federated meetings, Columbia University lectures, the Riverside pulpit and elsewhere he was the scientist most frequently referred to either because of his scientific achievements, or because of his spiritual leadership, or both. Neither Einstein nor the Compton brothers who were so frequently before the public in the early thirties received such ovations.

In another article you bring to the attention of the reader the painfully neglected truth that 'there is no doubt that there cannot be a peace to which Indians or the Negroes can give assent unless it has for its foundation democracy broad-based on the freedom and equal citizenship rights of all — white, black, yellow, etc.' But without in the least detracting from this matter of major concern may a few brief comments be made in regard to points (1) and (5).

To one who has attended a variety of schools and universities in the U. S. A., it is difficult to see how the statement that 'Negro students are not admitted to common educational institutions nor are separate equal facilities provided for them' is not misleading. At Ohio State, Union Seminary, Columbia University, and Northfield Seminary, to name just a few, Negro students have been admitted, and have achieved high positions of leadership.

The quotation under point (5) that 'Niggers must be made to know their place, with violence and terror if necessary,' America certainly needs to face and rectify. The question which interests me here is how we can reveal national or individual shortcomings in such a way as to arouse the least amount of self-defence and the most determined action for change. Knowing the human weakness of jumping to the defensive, which besets us all to a greater or less degree, I am afraid many Americans would miss the challenge behind point (5) and say here India—and perhaps the West have themselves to thank for this—is giving general significance to an attitude which large

areas of American opinion itself condemns, and overlooking the growing endeavours that are being put forth to give the Negro his rightful inheritance.

My husband joins me in sending you our sincere greetings. India is much on our hearts, especially during these fateful days that lie just ahead."

I gladly publish the American friend's letter in full. As regards the two inaccuracies she has pointed out, I am thankful for the facts, but let me make one or two things clear. It is not that conditions have not improved or are not improving, but it is still true that even a person of the spiritual status of Dr. Carver does not enjoy the same citizen rights as a White American. That he is respected by some of the enlightened Americans is not to be disputed. To take an example of the unfortunate condition in India, Dr. Ambedkar is respected by most of the educated people in India, but even he suffers from the same disabilities as other Harijans, so far as temples, residential quarters etc. are concerned. The colour bar should be an offence in democratic America, even as untouchability should be an offence in a free and democratic India.

As regards students, segregation is not so bad in Northern States, but my remark is absolutely true in respect of most of the Southern States. "After 1938 U. S. Supreme Court Decision ordering the State of Missouri to admit Lloyd L. Gaines to the University of Missouri Law School or provide equal facilities within the State, a separate Law School for Negroes authorised by the Taylor Bill has been organised at St. Louis as an extension of the State-supported Lincoln University." (*Enc. Britt. Book of the Year 1940*) Even the Supreme Court decision could not secure to the Negroes entry into the common law-school.

Regarding the last remark, let me say that I had only summarised in two or three sentences a series of very unpleasant incidents. If the general attitude were sound and these incidents only exceptional, I should have nothing to say. *The New Republic* devotes a long article to the question, and points out that resentment had reached a white heat among Negro circles because of incidents of this character. I had deliberately refrained from mentioning another factor which is equally galling. As a rule Negroes are debarred from jobs in the defence industries. "Of 1400 boys," wrote *Time* (Nov. 41), "recently trained by the City's schools for defence work only 70 got jobs." And *The New York Times* wrote: "If the nation is engaged on the side of democracy, it must leave the doors of opportunity open to all, regardless of race." Again: "Discrimination against opportunities for the Negro to learn and practise skilled trades is not confined to the South, nor is it practised only by the employers . . . This is a situation in which men and women are being held back not by lack of ability and trustworthiness but because of race . . . The issue is more than factional. It involves simple justice and loyalty to the democratic ideal."

It is this loyalty to the democratic ideal that is woefully lacking both in U. S. A. and the British



Empire. Apart from the numerous instances that even the conduct of the war has disclosed, the Empire itself is a negation of democracy. These instances reduce the much-vaunted 'Atlantic Charter' to a mockery.

Sevagram, 5-5-42

M. D.

### FOR "COMMON FOLK"

Two letters from readers of *Harijan* belonging to different parts of India, and describing themselves as common folk are worthy of notice for the benefit of those who come under that category — indeed, the vast mass of people do not belong to any other category. One is from an ordinary clerk in a small town in the District of 24 Parganas in Bengal. The sentiments in the letter are entirely his, the language is mine :

"I am a regular spinner. I have just finished another year of my spinning *yajna*. In spite of various difficulties and preoccupations this year, I spun 65 hanks (640 yards each) of 16 to 18 counts from cotton collected from the tree-cotton in my own yard and carded by my children. This was enough to give me 3 dhotis, and 5 yards of khadi for two shirts for my own use for a year. I am doing nothing extraordinary, but I should like to give you some details in order to show that the excuse of want of time is after all a lame one. After finishing the morning functions at 5 in the morning I start spinning which I do for a couple of hours. I believe with Shri Vinoba that 'spinning is a daily spiritual sacrifice with a view to identifying oneself with the poor and adding something to national wealth. It disciplines us and helps us to make our lives orderly.' I have to attend office from 11 a. m. to 7 p. m., and naturally I have to attend to my daily duties as householder — making purchases, domestic duties and so on. During the last year I have had to cook for myself and my children for several months. This year I have started the *yajna* with a couple of hours' spinning as I have said, and it begins with the first day of the National Week. Many of my friends, whom I ask to devote at least half an hour to spinning every day, say they have no time, when I know for a fact that they waste two or more hours every day in idle talk or worse. How I wish they could be persuaded to take a leaf from my book."

I too wish that the millions of our common folk could be persuaded to copy this humble man's example.

The other letter is of a different type. The writer is from Bangalore. He does not know English. He reads *Harijansevak*. He writes :

"I was addicted to intoxicating drugs like *bhanga*, *ganja*, *charas*. I could not do without them for a single day. I knew that the thing was bad, I often disliked it myself, as indeed the members of my family did dislike me. But a bad habit is not easy to give up. I often made an attempt, but work became difficult without a puff at my *chilam*. *Harijansevak* opened my eyes. Often enough there would be something in the articles which would make me ashamed of myself and say: 'You must leave this hateful habit.' Once as I was reading your article I resolved to give up *bhanga*, *ganja*, *charas*, and as an earnest of my determination I decided to inform you of

my decision and send you Rs. 1-4-0. Well, I have kept the resolve. You have raised me from the state of a brute to man's estate, and I cannot adequately thank you. I made the resolve four years ago, and thanks to your grace I have never broken the resolve. But I should have written to you when I made the resolve and sent Rs. 1-4-0. I am sending you Rs. 5 now, as a penalty for my failure to do so for four years."

This is a very plain letter from an ordinary man, but it teaches every one of us that ordinary men can take extraordinary decisions and keep them. I do hope the writer has given up tobacco also along with the other drugs, for tobacco is as deadly in its effect as the rest. Tolstoy has said that smoking is worse in its criminal effects than drink, and now America's famous heavy-weight boxing champion—Gene Tunney—has written a vivid article to prove that nicotine knocks the bottom out of our physical, moral and spiritual strength. It is an article which, for want of space, I cannot reproduce. But some sentences in it deserve to be hung up as mottoes in every public place to warn smokers against what they are in for :

"With every puff heavy smokers shorten their own lives. . . . You do get a lift when you light a cigarette. But it is exactly like the lift you get from cocaine, heroin, marijuana. Under the nicotine whip the body burns up faster; heart-action, respiration and blood pressure are kept at a ding dong pitch. . . . Dr. Alexis Carrel states that even one puff from a cigarette contracts the tiniest capillaries in your legs and feet. . . . Too many people accept their craving for tobacco as a commonplace social habit. But I maintain that heavy smoking is a disease symptom. . . . While I was training for my second fight with Jack Dempsey, I was offered 15,000 dollars to endorse a certain brand of cigarettes. I didn't want to be rude, so in declining I merely said I didn't smoke. He came again with another offer—12,000 dollars if I would let my picture be used with the statement that 'stinkies must be good because all my friends smoke them'. That compelled me to say what I thought—that cigarettes were a foul pestilence, and that advertising which promoted their use was a national menace. . . . Ty Cobb, the famous Georgia Peach of baseball says: 'Cigarette smoking stupefies the brain, saps vitality, undermines health, and weakens moral fibre. No one who hopes to be successful in any line can afford to contract so detrimental a habit.' In face of such testimony I can only ask, with Tolstoy, 'Why do men stupefy themselves with tobacco?'"

The only thing is to realise that the smoking habit is a devastating scourge, and our friend whose letter I have cited above shows that even common folk can easily get rid of it.

Sevagram, 3-5-42

M. D.

### The Indian States' Problem

By Gandhiji

687 Pages, Price Rs. 4. Postage 10 As. extra.

### Status of Indian Princes

By Pyarelal

Price 4 As. Postage As. 1½ extra.



## HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH

(By M. K. Gandhi)

The Harijan Sevak Sangh met in Wardha on 28th and 29th April. Seth G. D. Birla was considerate and took very little of my time. I have developed a dislike for making speeches, but I consented to answer some of the questions the members had brought with them to Sevagram on the 29th morning. The answers to these will be of use to all Harijan workers. Most were in Hindustani, some in English, and one in Gujarati. I suggested that in future all questions should be in Hindustani. Those who do not know either Hindi or Urdu should make it a point to learn the national language, and until such time as they are unable to write in Hindustani themselves, they must get someone to do so for them.

Q. The Harijan Sevak Sangh is looked upon as a part of the Congress. But very few Congressmen are Harijan workers. Why?

A. The Sangh is not a part of the Congress. It was the outcome of the fast I undertook in 1932 when I was in jail. The meeting of Hindus drawn from every class, which was held under the presidency of Pandit Malaviyaji and which gave birth to the Sangh, deliberately decided to keep the organisation separate from the Congress and non-political. It was this quality of the Sangh that enabled Seth G. D. Birla to become its President and Shri Thakkar Bapa its Secretary. Nevertheless there are and ought to be many Congressmen in the Sangh, because practically all reformers are drawn into the Congress fold. But it is true that there are plenty of non-Congress persons in the Sangh. It is also true that those Congressmen who are only interested in politics do not come into it. It is, therefore, sometimes wrongly thought that Congressmen do not take an interest in the Sangh. It is the duty of every Congressman to remove untouchability, root and branch, from his life.

Q. Harijan service has really developed into mere Harijan uplift. Practically no work is done among Caste Hindus for the removal of untouchability. What is the remedy for this?

A. Experience shows that propaganda among Caste Hindus can only be successfully carried out by influential persons whose word carries weight with the general public. Such persons are hard to find. But it is within the capacity of every Harijan worker to carry on mute propaganda. Our Caste Hindu workers are often satisfied with mere uplift work among the Harijans, which is not sufficient. Many workers, while they do not observe untouchability themselves, are unable even to convert their own families. How then can they influence the outside world? Moreover it is my confirmed opinion that every Harijan worker has to make it a point to beg for even one pice for Harijans from those Caste Hindus with whom he comes in contact. If all devoted themselves, heart and soul, to this task, very good results would ensue.

Q. Should not the Sangh take upon itself the service of those Harijans who have been converted to Christianity or Islam and are yet treated as

untouchables? Are we not out to remove untouchability root and branch and therefore help all who come under its sway?

A. This question has already been answered in the columns of *Harijan* but must bear repetition so long as it is raised. The moment untouchability is utterly banished from Hindu society it will, *ipso facto*, disappear from elsewhere too. Whatever the merits or demerits of the case, it is clear that our interference with converts will be the cause of strife with Muslims and Christians. Such converts have either broken off all contacts with, or they have been in their turn boycotted by, Hindus. They have thrown in their lot with other sects whose leaders will not allow them to maintain their old contacts. Hence the H. S. S. quite rightly decided from its inception to confine its area of work to Harijans who had not left the Hindu fold. A convert, having left his original fold, is no longer guided or controlled by it.

Q. What should be the attitude of the Sangh, if Harijan boys wish to enlist in the army?

A. They should be allowed to do so. They may not be controlled by the Congress policy or ahimsa. They must be given absolute freedom of choice.

Q. Harijans are of opinion that Caste Hindus who are sympathetic to their cause should not use those temples where they are not allowed entry.

A. They are right. It is the bounden duty of Harijan workers not to go where Harijans are not allowed and likewise to dissuade Caste Hindus.

Q. Harijans are legally entitled to send their children to many educational institutions as also to draw water from public wells. But public sentiment still militates against this being put into practice. Should Harijans resort to the law courts for justice in these matters or wait patiently until the Caste Hindus are converted?

A. Where there is no danger of violence being done to them, the Harijans should exercise their legal right and where necessary resort to law courts. Harijan workers must continue agitation among Caste Hindus and not rest content with mere legal rights.

Q. Is it not essential to reform the insanitary methods employed by sweepers for cleaning latrines and scavenging?

A. It is most necessary. What is more, until this is done the condition of sweepers will remain pitiable. To this end it is the duty of Harijan workers and Caste Hindus to do sweepers' work themselves. No Caste Hindu will employ the methods used by sweepers. He will do the work scientifically. For example, he will never remove excreta in a basket or carry it on his head; he will cover excreta with dry earth and remove it in a metal vessel. He will avoid touching dirt with his hands as far as possible; he will clean the vessels with water and a rod; he will bathe immediately after doing the work; he will wear special clothes when scavenging. These reforms do not cost much. They require intelligence, hard work, and love of an ideal. We may not relegate sweepers' work to one particular class. Therefore all should learn it in the



same way as cooking. Each person should be his own sweeper. If this ideal were to be put into practice in society, the miserable condition of sweepers would at once be rectified.

Sevagram, 3-5-42

### QUESTION BOX

(By M. K. Gandhi)

#### Barren Cows

Q. Why may not work such as ploughing or grinding corn be taken from barren cows? Would that not be one way of preventing their going to the slaughter house?

A. This question used to be much discussed at one time owing to the enthusiasm of a Punjabi who used to advocate the use even of milch cows for draft purposes. He used to claim that they would yield more and richer milk for the exercise given to them. Anyway my devotion to the cow does not preclude me from taking such labour as she can perform without the slightest detriment to her body. The fact is that our treatment of draft animals leaves much to be desired. I would welcome the use of barren cows for gentle labour, if only it would make people more considerate than they are towards the other animals.

#### From the Frying Pan?

Q. You advise evacuation of cities likely to be bombed and migration into the villages. Do you imagine the villages to be safe? As a matter of fact the villagers are more panic-stricken than the city-dwellers. There is inadequate police protection, and villagers live in hourly terror of dacoits and robbers. Is it not a matter of jumping from the frying pan into the fire?

A. I have not suggested migration to the villages for the soft life they will provide. Fright was no ingredient of my plan. It was and still is good even from a military point of view as has now been made abundantly clear. All the danger you present is undoubtedly bound up with the migration to the villages. But that to my mind is an additional reason for it. Who will put heart into the villagers and dispel panic, if it is not the right type of experienced city people? They will cover not only the aged and the infirm who may migrate to the villages, but they will also help and serve the villagers in the many ways I have pointed out in these columns. Courage is indispensable in these times for every true act.

#### Rotatory Government

Q. In order to solve the communal tangle, why not divide India into two sections as far as population goes, e. g. Mussalmans, Christians and Parsis in one, and Hindus, Sikhs and Depressed Classes in the other. Let the first section rule for a period of five years by means of elected representatives and the second section come in similarly later. Would this not allay the present mistrust? As for Princes' India, could a Committee of elected Princes be entrusted with the work of governing all the States?

A. Your question reads well on paper; but your suggestion, if acted upon, must break down in practice. The act of government is not the simple thing you seem to imagine. What you suggest may work as a toy when the strings are pulled by armed authority. It won't be our Government. The puller of the strings will govern. That is the old way. I have presented the better way—the non-violent method. In either case the first condition is that every trace of foreign authority should be removed from the land. Then and then only shall we know our real selves—our strength as well as our weaknesses. When we are untrammelled by foreign or other authority and free, we shall know how to deal with the day-to-day problems. We won't then be governed in the neat way mentioned by you. The arbiter then will be either the sword or reason. Sevagram, 4-5-42

#### Deceitful Nomenclature

Morley has somewhere protested against the misuse of words, as being one of the causes of loose thinking. The phrase 'National Government' is an illustration of loose thinking. Admittedly none of the political parties—including the Congress—expects that any 'National Government' that may be formed at present will have the right to put an end to the war irrespective of the wishes of Great Britain. It can only be the Indian branch of the British Government. It is self-deception to call such office-taking 'National Government'. The name has already entrapped some of our legislators, and many more of them are yet willing to be entrapped. If we think closely instead of loosely, we will find that we cannot form a 'National Government' in the existing state of things.

Sevagram, 3-5-42

K. G. M.

#### A Correction

In *Harijan*, p. 124, col. 2, line 23, line 26, line 32, for 'mother-tongue', read 'script of the mother-tongue'.

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