

# HARIJAN

Editor: PYARELAL

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TWO ANNAS

## KASTURBA MEMORIAL TRUST

(By M. K. Gandhi)

It is alleged by some that the funds collected with much speed for this Trust are not being spent at the same pace and that the general public are unaware of how the money is being spent. Both allegations are baseless. While it is true that for the most part the donations to the Trust came from city-dwellers, it is equally true that the aim of the collectors was that the money should be spent in the villages for the benefit of village women and children. Those who do not see the Trust accounts cannot be aware of how the money is being spent. The critics are all city-dwellers. Villagers do not read newspapers nor do they care about how the money is spent. Those who live in the villages, where work, if any, is being done, see the same for themselves.

Any work done for city-dwellers is broadcast at once. A building or a statue is advertised in the papers. Its foundation stone is laid or its opening ceremony performed with due pomp and ceremony. Any such propaganda is impossible for village work among village women. The reader will today have to be content with knowing through whom Kasturba Trust work is being done. When work has been accomplished in even a few thousand out of the seven lakhs of our villages and the women and children of those areas have become ready to play their proper part in life, then will all become *ipso facto* aware of the work. Today it is enough for all to know that village midwives and nurses are being trained.

At the last meeting of the Executive Committee held recently in Poona, it was resolved to sanction money for the holding of training camps in several out of the twenty-one provinces. But since all the workers trained here will go to the villages, city-dwellers will know nothing about them unless they were to be paraded in the cities. And it is neither the intention of the Committee nor would it be proper to do so. Another point to be borne in mind is that the work undertaken is of a new kind and can only be tackled in new ways. Therefore, progress must perforce be slow just as was and is the case with Khadi and other village industries.

Scant attention has so far been and is even now being paid to the villages. Only when the town-dwellers become village-minded, will any real change take place. Until then neither newspapers nor city-folk will take much interest in village organizations.

Sometimes, quite rightly, the money collected for a specific purpose is expended on it straightaway. But in the case of the Kasturba Fund, it was necessary to proceed with caution. The donors may be numbered in thousands but the field in which the money is to be spent is 1900 miles long and the population to be served numbers 40 crores. How to work, where to commence, are matters that require thought and time. Workers could not be found at once and now time is required for their training too. Therefore, donors must have confidence that the Trustees will neither waste money nor will they lazily refuse to spend where it is necessary.

Ever since committees were formed in various centres, there have been complaints that these should have been composed solely of donors and that the latter have been taken in very small numbers. It does not follow that donors are always the best judges of how the money should be spent. Several persons may, for example, donate 10 crores for the construction of an artificial lake. What can they do without the help of engineers in whose hands the expenditure of money and work must naturally go? Many similar instances may be cited in support of the argument. In the first instance, provincial committees were formed in the manner described. Later, it was felt that it was woman's work and should be run, as far as possible, by women agents. By such a course of action it is sought to give the requisite confidence to women workers, so that the responsibility of running the organization eventually comes into their hands. All this must take time. There are difficulties to surmount. But it is hoped that ultimately the work will grow and women will be prepared to shoulder the burden. Results will show whether the experiment is worth-while.

Panchgani, 14-7-'46

(From *Harijansevak*)



## GANDHIJI'S SPEECH AT THE A. I. C. C.

The following is the text of Gandhiji's speech in the A. I. C. C. meeting held at Bombay on the 7th July.

"I have often said that man plans but the success of his plans depends not on him but on the will of the Providence which is the supreme arbiter of our destinies. Unlike you, I am not in my own right but on sufferance. I have been told that some of my previous remarks about the Cabinet Mission's proposals have caused a good deal of confusion in the public mind. As a Satyagrahi it is always my endeavour to speak the whole truth and nothing but the truth. I never have a wish to hide anything from you. I hate mental reservations. But language is at best an imperfect medium of expression. No man can fully express in words what he feels or thinks. Even seers and prophets of old have suffered under that disability.

### NO INCONSISTENCY

"I have not seen what has appeared in the papers about what I am supposed to have said regarding the Cabinet Mission's proposals. I cannot read all the newspapers myself. I content myself with perusing only what my co-workers and assistants may place before me. I hold that I have lost nothing thereby. Because of what has appeared in the press, an impression seems to have been created that I said one thing at Delhi and am saying something different now. I did say in one of my speeches at Delhi in regard to the Cabinet Mission's proposals that I saw darkness where I saw light before. That darkness has not yet lifted. If possible it has deepened. I could have asked the Working Committee to turn down the proposal about the Constituent Assembly if I could see my way clearly. You know my relations with the members of the Working Committee. Babu Rajendra Prasad might have been a High Court Judge, but he chose instead to act as my interpreter and clerk in Champaran. Then there is the Sardar. He has earned the nickname of being my yes-man. He does not mind it. He even flaunts it as a compliment. He is a stormy petrel. Once he used to dress and dine in the Western style. But ever since he decided to cast his lot with me my word has been law to him. But even he cannot see eye to eye with me in this matter. They both tell me that whereas on all previous occasions I was able to support my instinct with reason and satisfy their head as well as heart, this time I have failed to do so. I told them in reply that whilst my own heart was filled with misgivings, I could not adduce any reason for it or else I would have asked them to reject the proposals straightway. It was my duty to place my misgivings before them to put them on their guard. But they should examine what I had said in the cold light of reason and accept my viewpoint only if they were convinced of its correctness. Their decision, which they have arrived at after prolonged deliberations and which is almost unanimous, is before you. The members of the Working Committee are your faithful and tried servants. You should not lightly reject their resolution.

### DEFEATIST LOGIC

"I am willing to admit that the proposed Constituent Assembly is not the Parliament of the people. It has

many defects. But you are all seasoned and veteran fighters. A soldier is never afraid of danger. He revels in it. If there are shortcomings in the proposed Constituent Assembly, it is for you to get them removed. It should be a challenge to combat, not a ground for rejection. I am surprised that Shree Jaiprakash Narain said yesterday that it would be dangerous to participate in the proposed Constituent Assembly and therefore they should reject the Working Committee's resolution. I was not prepared to hear such defeatist language from the lips of a tried fighter like Jaiprakash. One line from a song composed by the late Choudhary Rambhaji Dutt has always made a very deep appeal to me. It means: 'We will never be defeated — nay, not even in death.' That is the spirit in which I expect you to approach this resolution. A Satyagrahi knows no defeat.

"Nor would I expect a Satyagrahi to say that whatever Englishmen do must be bad. The English are not necessarily bad. There are good men and bad men among the English people as among any other people. We ourselves are not free from defects. The English could not have risen to their present strength if they had not some good in them. They have come and exploited India, because we quarreled amongst ourselves and allowed ourselves to be exploited. In God's world unmixed evil never prospers. God rules even where Satan seems to hold sway, because the latter exists only on His sufferance. Some people say that Satyagraha is of no avail against a person who has no moral sense. I join issue with that. The stoniest heart must melt if we are true and have enough patience. A Satyagrahi lays down his life, but never gives up. That is the meaning of the 'Do or Die' slogan. That slogan does not mean 'Kill or be killed'. That would be wilful distortion and a travesty of its true meaning. The true meaning is that we must do our duty and die in the course of performing it if necessary. To die without killing is the badge of a Satyagrahi. If we had lived upto that ideal we would have won Swaraj by now. But our *ahimsa* was lame. It walked on crutches. Even so it has brought us to our present strength. I know what happened in 1942. You will perhaps say that it was sabotage and underground activity that had brought the country to its present strength. It cannot be denied that sabotage activity was carried on in the name of the Congress during the '42 struggle, but I deny *in toto* that the strength of the masses is due to that. Whatever strength the masses have is due entirely to *ahimsa* — however imperfect or defective its practice might have been. Our *ahimsa* was imperfect because we were imperfect, because it was presented to you by an imperfect being like myself. If then, even in the hands of imperfect instruments it could produce such brilliant results, what could it not achieve in the hands of a perfect Satyagrahi?

"In 1942 our people showed great valour. But greater valour will be required of us before our goal is reached. We have done much, but more remains to be done. For that we must have patience and humility and detachment. You should try to understand what



happened in 1942, the inner meaning of that struggle and the reason why it stopped short where it did.

#### NO BED OF ROSES

"This is no time for dalliance or ease. I told Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru that he must wear the crown of thorns for the sake of the nation and he has agreed. The Constituent Assembly is going to be no bed of roses for you but only a bed of thorns. You may not shirk it.

"That does not mean that everybody should want to go into it. Only those should go there who are especially fitted for the task by virtue of their legal training or special talent. It is not a prize to be sought as a reward for sacrifices, but a duty to be faced even like mounting the gallows or sacrifice of one's all at the altar of service.

"There is another reason why you should join the Constituent Assembly. If you asked me whether in the event of your rejecting the proposed Constituent Assembly or the Constituent Assembly failing to materialize, I would advise the people to launch civil disobedience, individual or mass, or undertake a fast myself, my reply 'No'. I believe in walking alone. I came alone in this world, I have walked alone in the valley of the shadow of death and I shall quit alone when the time comes. I know I am quite capable of launching Satyagraha even if I am all alone. I have done so before. But this is no occasion for a fast or civil disobedience. I regard the Constituent Assembly as the substitute of Satyagraha. It is constructive Satyagraha.

#### DUTY OF A SATYAGRAHI

"The alternative is constructive work which you have never done justice to. If you had, you would have today got the Constituent Assembly of Jaiprakash's dream instead of the present one. But a Satyagrahi cannot wait or delay action till perfect conditions are forthcoming. He will act with whatever material is at hand, purge it of dross and convert it into pure gold. Whatever may be the defects in the State Document of May 16th, I have no doubt as to the honesty of those who have framed it. They know they have got to quit. They want to quit in an orderly manner. And to that end they have produced the Document they could under the circumstances. I refuse to believe that they came all the way from England to deceive us.

"A Polish lady has sent me a note just today saying that all Europeans had received secret instructions to leave India as the British army would no longer be able to give them adequate protection. If it is so, it is a sad reflection on us. We would be unworthy of the name of Satyagrahi if even an English child did not feel secure in our midst. Even if we succeed in driving out the Europeans by these tactics, something worse will take their place. Our Quit India resolution has no malice about it. It only means that we will no longer be exploited.

"Let us not be cowardly, but approach our task with confidence and courage. Let not the fear of being deceived dismay us. No one can deceive a Satyagrahi. Never mind the darkness that fills my mind. He will turn it into light."

## Notes

### When a Bullock Ghani is 'Furniture'

The Railway Priority Rules have been used to kill Village Industries. The interpretation of Priority Rules would be amusing, were not the results so tragic. For months on end we have not been able to send out equipment for village industries such as, paddy husking, floor grinding, oil pressing, beekeeping, paper-making etc., because of the ludicrous ideas railway servants have. As our implements are made of wood they refuse to classify them as "Machinery and its parts or tools". According to them machines etc. are always of steel or iron! So we cannot be placed under Class IV "Maintenance of Industrial Production". Hence the Ghani is classified as 'Civilian' furniture which is Class VI and even the Ghani models about 1 foot in height are so classified. Stone *chakkis* are classified as personal luggage!

It is interesting to note that cigarettes, liquors, empty bottles etc. get a priority over us as they are placed under Class V.

The clause provides for the transport of paper from "Mills" but the railways refused to book hand-made paper because we do not call ourselves a "Mill". The Chief Traffic Manager writes that "paper cuttings is considered as raw material, only when consigned to paper Mills" and that as we are not a "Mill", it cannot be booked for us as "raw materials". Can stupidity go further? Or is it a wanton attempt to destroy artisans? It would appear that these are not the whims of an ignorant "goods clerk" but the obduracy of highly placed officials at Headquarters.

### Controls and Controls

Government controls are the order of the day, but how many of these controllers understand the principles underlying controls? Controls are being used indiscriminately and their very purpose is being frustrated.

Where return on capital and profits are the objective of a business — as in centralized industries — price control checks accumulation of wealth and profiteering. On the other hand, in decentralized industries, where the return the artisan gets is a wage, such price controls will act as an obstacle on distribution of wealth. The latter is harmful in a poor country like ours.

Where certain articles are produced both by centralized methods and by decentralized processes, as in the case of cloth or oil, price controls may be applied to mill products but not to handmade goods, if we follow the fundamental principles of public finance and abstain from restricting the much desired distribution of wealth.

Many provincial governments are killing village industries by their indiscriminate use of price controls. Practically, they have brought the Ghani oil pressing to the brink of ruin by their control of prices of oil seeds, Ghani oil cakes and oils. Is it too much to expect that our representative governments will alter this state of affairs by an intelligent use of controls?

J. C. K.



# HARIJAN

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1946

## KHADI IN TOWNS

(By M. K. Gandhi)

"Your scheme for making village India self-sufficient in the matter of clothing has hit town lovers of Khadi pretty hard. You have gone so far as to say that sales bhandars may close as such and that townfolk may even revert to the use of mill cloth.

"While there is no quarrel with the new ideology and the consequent basic change in the running of bhandars nor with the introduction of a certain quota of yarn currency for purchasing Khadi, I would like you to solve the difficulty of town buyers who must use only Khadi."

Let the readers fully understand the so-called new plan for Khadi. I call it so-called, because what is being done is the logical step, if Khadi is to clothe the villagers, as from the very start it was intended to do. Khadi was never meant merely for the townspeople, it was never meant to bleed the villagers as they are being bled so that the townspeople can live. Khadi was from its inception conceived for the sake of reversing the order though never to bleed the townspeople. To reverse the order was to restore the natural relation. Towns there were before the British arrival. Things were bad enough then. Now they are much worse. Towns became cities. The latter, in spite of their Indian millionaires, lived mainly for the British masters. Khadi was to undo the grave mischief. Mill cloth is the symbol of the slavery of village India as Khadi is or should be the symbol of its freedom, both economic and political. If it cannot be that, it is meaningless. Therefore, any healthy change undergone in the process of Khadi development is to be welcomed.

The defect in the existing development, good though it appeared, was not good enough for the villagers who spun yarn and wove Khadi but did not use it themselves. They neither understood nor appreciated the dignity and value that its use carried. The fault was not theirs. The workers themselves did not. The town dwellers had to wear Khadi and do the penance. They were willing to buy penance for a few extra rupees which they could easily spare and be called patriots in the bargain. But how could the Charkha Sangh (called in English All India Spinners' Association) belie its faith by ignoring the very foundation of Khadi? And so it is employing its resources to making the villagers Khadi-clad. It naturally begins with the spinners and weavers of hand-spun. If the move succeeds, as it is bound to, there will be after a time, ample Khadi in the city and town markets. Then the only cloth available in India will be Khadi. The A. I. S. A. is diligently

working at the consummation. If its researches show that Khadi has no such potentiality, it will have no hesitation in declaring its insolvency. Let the reader remember that it is a science which deals with the psychology of forty crores of people in the machine age. Thus considered, it is a tremendous problem, though at the same time fascinating and interesting. The very defeat, if defeat it is to be, will itself be no defeat. Let it be understood that it is not an attempt to go back to the dark ages when the Charkha was the symbol of the slavery of the masses. Surely it will be a triumph of human understanding, i. e. of the soul of India, when India makes an effort through the Charkha to break her bonds asunder. The free man eats the same bread as the slave. The one eats the bread of freedom, the other of slavery.

But if the city dwellers and the town dwellers would learn the glad tidings that the Charkha has to give, they will willingly employ their leisure time in carding, spinning, and weaving rather than in gambling on the race course or drinking and idling away their time in their clubs. And their children? Why—they could spin for their parents for the liberty of India and have education of the type that India wants. I was in Rome and Mussolini's officials took pride in showing the graceful manoeuvres of the little children who were being taught all naval tricks. And do the English children do otherwise than learn in their mother tongue what England needs? It is only reserved for India to teach her children the foreigners' language and through it, such things as the latter need. Who but a foreigner has devised the education code?

The A. I. S. A. sales depots will be used for a better purpose than before. They will teach the people, who, I hope, will flock to them, all the tricks of spinning and weaving. If they do, they will have all the Khadi they need. Where there is a will, there is a way.

Lastly, let the reader know too that nowadays Khadi like mill cloth is scarce. Let me not go into the reason why.

Panchgani, 14-7-'46

### The Drink Evil

"The first glass makes a man animated, his vivacity great, his colour heightened. In this condition he is like the peacock. When the fumes of the liquor rise into his head, he is gay, leaps and gambols as an ape. Drunkenness takes possession of him, he is like a furious lion. When it is at its height he is like a swine; he falls and grovels on the ground, stretches himself out and goes to sleep."

The above is said to be an old Mohammedan account of the stages of intoxication. The drink habit is growing in the West. We copy much that is bad from them. Let us avoid this evil, which is alien to our soil.

Bombay, 7-7-'46

A. K.



## JEW'S AND PALESTINE

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Hitherto I have refrained practically from saying anything public regarding the Jew-Arab controversy. I have done so for good reasons. That does not mean any want of interest in the question, but it does mean that I do not consider myself sufficiently equipped with knowledge for the purpose. For the same reason I have tried to evade many world events. Without airing my views on them, I have enough irons in the fire. But four lines of a newspaper column have done the trick and evoked a letter from a friend who has sent me a cutting which I would have missed but for the friend drawing my attention to it. It is true that I did say some such thing in the course of a long conversation with Mr. Louis Fischer on the subject. I do believe that the Jews have been cruelly wronged by the world. "Ghetto" is, so far as I am aware, the name given to Jewish locations in many parts of Europe. But for their heartless persecution, probably no question of return to Palestine would ever have arisen. The world should have been their home, if only for the sake of their distinguished contribution to it.

But, in my opinion, they have erred grievously in seeking to impose themselves on Palestine with the aid of America and Britain and now with the aid of naked terrorism. Their citizenship of the world should have and would have made them honoured guests of any country. Their thrift, their varied talent, their great industry should have made them welcome anywhere. It is a blot on the Christian world that they have been singled out, owing to a wrong reading of the New Testament, for prejudice against them. "If an individual Jew does a wrong, the whole Jewish world is to blame for it." If an individual Jew like Einstein makes a great discovery or another composes unsurpassable music, the merit goes to the authors and not to the community to which they belong.

No wonder that my sympathy goes out to the Jews in their unenviably sad plight. But one would have thought, adversity would teach them lessons of peace. Why should they depend upon American money or British arms for forcing themselves on an unwelcome land? Why should they resort to terrorism to make good their forcible landing in Palestine? If they were to adopt the matchless weapon of non-violence whose use their best prophets have taught and which Jesus the Jew who gladly wore the crown of thorns bequeathed to a groaning world, their case would be the world's, and I have no doubt that among the many things that the Jews have given to the world, this would be the best and the brightest. It is twice blessed. It will make them happy and rich in the true sense of the word and it will be a soothing balm to the aching world.

Panchgani, 14-7-'46

[Note: The following are the four lines referred to in the foregoing: "Gandhi also discussed the Palestine problem. 'The Jews have a good case', he affirmed. But he hoped the Arabs too would not be wronged."]

## QUESTION BOX

(By M. K. Gandhi)

### PRAYER

Q. Is it possible during prayers, for thousands who assemble at your prayer gatherings, to concentrate their minds on anything whatever?

A. I can only answer yes. For, if I did not believe in mass prayer, I should cease to hold public prayers. My experience confirms my belief. Success depends upon the purity of the leader and the faith of the audience. I know instances in which the audience had faith and the leader was an impostor. Such cases will continue to happen. But truth like the sun shines in the midst of the darkness of untruth. The result in my case will be known probably after my death.

A wag asks three questions in this matter. One requiring an answer runs: "Is not political education infinitely superior to the religious?" In my opinion, political education is nothing worth, if it is not backed by a sound grounding in religion by which is not meant sectional or sectarian belief. Man without religion is man without roots. Therefore, religion is the basis on which all life structure has to be erected, if life is to be real.

### THIEVING

Q. What is the employer to do when an employee of his is addicted to stealing and is not amenable to correction whether it is by way of entreaty or the cane?

A. It may well be that the others too are addicts though they may not be found out. Observation would show that we are all thieves, the difference being that most of us are tolerant towards ourselves and intolerant towards those that are found out and are not of the ordinary run. What is a man, if he is not a thief, who openly charges as much as he can for the goods he sells? If the reply be that the buyer is a willing dupe, it begs the question. In reality the buyer is helpless rather than willing. The stealing referred to is one of the symptoms of a deep-seated disease of society. It is symptomatic of the eternal strife between the monied few and the many paupers. Therefore, my advice to the employer will be to remove all temptations in the way of the thief, to treat him as if he was his own brother and, when he refuses to yield to any treatment, however humanitarian it may be, to ask him to go his way. Let the employer always ask himself whether he would treat his own brother in the same way at the given stage.

Panchgani, 14-7-'46

By M. K. Gandhi

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## WEEKLY LETTER

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru made a pregnant remark in the course of his A. I. C. C. speech. He was making an impassioned plea for regarding the questions facing the house not in a spirit of narrow isolationism but in the larger context of world events. The world had gone topsy turvy, ancient landmarks had disappeared, time-honoured ideals had crumbled or been given the go by. But India was still holding fast to her fundamentals. As an independent country, they would soon have to take their due share in shaping world affairs. What contribution would India make to the solution of the world's problems? What would be her guiding principles then? "That is what you should keep in mind" he said, "in shaping your present policy. Ours is a big country. On whatever side she throws in her weight, it will affect the current of world's history."

## THE SOUTH AFRICAN STRUGGLE

Gandhiji's first utterance at Poona on his return from the A. I. C. C. provided, as it were, an apt commentary on Pandit Jawaharlal's remarks. His theme was world significance of the South African Satyagraha. South African Satyagraha is fast becoming the question of the questions. It has become the focus of attention of the Negroes who, disarmed, helpless and groaning under the tyranny of the White usurpation, have begun to see in it a symbol and promise of their own deliverance. They have decided to join the ranks of Indian passive resisters. The South African struggle has thus opened a window on Independent India's future mission in respect of the oppressed people of the world. To realize its full significance it is necessary to know a little of its historical background. Indian emigrants first went to South Africa as 'girmiliyas'—indentured labourers in or about 1840. The Whitemen could not get the Negroes to work for them. So they took labour from India under the indenture system. It was a form of semi-slavery, the difference being that whilst a slave was bound for life, the indentured labourer was bound for five years according to the terms of the indenture. In the wake of these labourers went the Indian traders, Haji Saheb Abubaker Ahmed Zaveri of Porbandar being the first. Then there were small traders from Kathiawad, Memons from Surat and Patidars from Bardoli, who went there and made a living, some as merchants and as hawkers and pedlars. This was in and after 1882. They helped to develop South Africa and made some money. Their children entered the professions, became doctors and lawyers. It was these people, remarked Gandhiji, who were fighting in South Africa today and their fight was not so much for themselves as for Indian honour. "I know what is taking place there because in a way I belong to South Africa, having passed 20 years of the best part of my life there. It was there that Satyagraha was born. The West is passing through a purgatory today. The vanquished lie prostrate at the feet of the victors. But those who have won the war have found that they are no more victors than those who have lost it. Yet it is not in the world war No. II that the Western civilization will have met its grave. It is being dug in South Africa. The White civilization in South Africa looks black in contrast with the coloured or the Asiatic

civilization which is comparatively white. If our people remain steadfast and non-violent till the end, I have not a shadow of a doubt that their heroic struggle will drive the last nail in the coffin of Western civilization which is being found out in its true colours in South Africa.

## FIELD MARSHAL SMUTS' APOLOGIA

"The Whites in South Africa are becoming like brutes. Eastern and Western cultures are pitted against each other. And what a contrast they present! The Whites have enacted savage laws to force the Indians to live in ghettos. Field Marshal Smuts is a great philosopher. He calls me his friend. He has nothing to say against Asiatic culture. But he has to take measures to safeguard the White civilization. He told me that he did not look down upon coloured people. The fact that Mrs. Subbarayon, when she went to England for studies stayed in Field Marshal Smuts' house supports that statement. But, said the Field Marshal, in spite of the absence of prejudice, he was bound to protect Western culture in South Africa and he hoped that an understanding man that I was, I would appreciate it."

Gandhiji failed to understand how a culture or civilization worth the name could require legal protection. The Indians were resisting the ghetto law in a civil, i. e. non-violent and therefore civilized way. They welcomed the penalty for the breach of a law which could not be morally defended. But the White hooligans too were breaking their own laws. Theirs was criminal disobedience. It was a matter of pride for India that the children of indentured labourers and traders—many of them descendants of Harijans—were proving themselves such brave Satyagrahis. As against this, the Whites were resorting to lynch law. "After all," remarked Gandhiji, "civil resistance had its birth in Asia. Jesus was an Asiatic. If he was reborn and went to South Africa today and lived there, he would have to live in a ghetto."

He hoped that as in 1914 Field Marshal Smuts would at long last realize that he could not persecute the Indians in South Africa for ever and come to an honourable settlement with them when he had tried them through and through. A committee of White men had been formed in South Africa to express sympathy with and identify themselves with the cause of the Indian passive resisters there. There was something of that kind in his time also. But this time it seemed to be on a bigger scale. "If this becomes extensive and the hooliganism stopped and anti-Asiatic laws are repealed, there is hope of a blending of Eastern and Western cultures. Otherwise South Africa may prove to be the grave of Western civilization."

## KHADI AT THE CROSSROADS

Gandhiji's four days' stay at Poona on return from the A. I. C. C. was taken up by the meeting of the A. I. S. A. and the Board of Trustees of the Kasturba Memorial Trust respectively.

Thanks to a quarter of a century's start, India need not feel helpless like some other war-battered countries to meet the problem of cloth shortage. She has an invaluable inheritance in her spinning tradition and widely diffused technical skill in textile processes which give her a position of special vantage. If she used her talents to the best advantage, not only could she help



herself but lend a helping hand to some of her neighbours too in meeting the cloth famine. In the course of an address before the prayer gathering on the 10th he outlined his plan which had been discussed by the Executive Committee of the A. I. S. A. in its meeting in the afternoon that day.

The A. I. S. A. had distributed 7 crores of rupees among the poor spinners and weavers. It had done a lot, but, compared to the task before it, its achievement appeared insignificant. It had to clothe the whole of India with Khadi as was the case once upon a time. Not only did India produce enough cloth for itself, she was also able to export it. There were no mills in India then. "I might say that every woman had her own mill in the charkha and the *takli*." Modern mills were evolved from the charkha. Man was a mixture of divine and devilish forces. The force behind the spinning wheel was divine, devoid of any trace of exploitation. The foreigners saw the hidden possibilities that were in it and by the application of steam and electricity created mills and used them as instruments of exploitation of the simple races of the earth. This represented the power of the devil. There were so many cloth mills in India and yet India was about almost naked. There was scarcity of cloth all over the world. The Prime Minister of the Indonesian Republic, Sultan Shariar, had informed Pandit Nehru that they had surplus rice which they would gladly send to India to help meet the threat of famine. In return they wanted no money but would be glad to have cloth as they were suffering from an acute cloth scarcity and could not manufacture it themselves. They had neither cloth mills nor had they taken to the wheel. Pandit Nehru had broached the matter with some mill owners who gladly gave quantities of cloth for despatch to Java. If, out of the 40 crores of India, even 20 crores in 7,00,000 villages took to spinning for 1 to 2 hours a day, they could not only clothe the population of the villages but even supply cloth for the cities. "The conviction dawned upon me even before I came to India that the revival of hand-spinning alone could restore India to its pristine glory. I have since compared the spinning wheel to the central sun round which the solar system of our village economy revolves. It provides the golden bridge between the rich and the poor. To meet the crisis that faces us, I have suggested that the popular ministries should make a declaration that the villagers must produce their own cloth. They would be supplied with cotton, which they must spin and make into cloth. This would enable them to have cloth almost free of cost as it were. The A. I. S. A. will have to work out a scheme and put it before the ministries. If the ministers realize that there is no other way to clothe the naked in India, the scheme would go ahead without any difficulty. Today the city-dwellers complain that they cannot get Khadi at the Khadi Bhandars, that they are required to make partial payment in yarn spun by themselves. If they understood the new spirit behind the Khadi drive, these complaints would disappear. There is nothing to prevent the city-dwellers from producing their own Khadi in the same way that the villagers are expected to do."

#### KASTURBA TRUST

In the course of the same address he referred to the work of the Kasturba Trust which he characterized as being more difficult than that of the A. I. S. A. They had collected one and a quarter crores of rupees but the money had to be spent on the welfare of women and children in the villages. "Take for instance maternity work in the villages. The village midwives are ignorant and dirty. The village women are more hardy than city women. Still laws of nature cannot be defied. To teach clean methods to the village midwife is no easy job. It is a matter of adult education and everyone knows that adult education is a much harder task than the education of the children. I could spend away the one and a quarter crores today by raising one or two big hospitals of the city type. But that would not be rendering real service to women and children in the villages. I am not prepared to squander money I know that the public feel that the work is progressing too slowly. But they must not lose patience. Work is going on slowly but surely. We are sailing on unchartered waters. We must proceed with caution."

#### CEYLON THE GOLDEN

Gandhiji's address at the farewell prayer gathering at Poona was devoted to describing the conditions of Indians in Ceylon. He had visited Ceylon years ago. If Kashmir with its snow-clad Himalayas was the diadem of Mother India, then Ceylon was the pendent of the necklace round her neck. It was rightly called as Ceylon—the Golden. Indians had played an important part in developing Ceylon. Now that the Ceylonese had got a sort of a constitution (there was nothing wonderful in it), they wanted to turn the Indians out of Ceylon. As in the case of South Africa, Indians went there as labourers. They worked under most difficult and unhealthy conditions. They had settled there. It was hard for them to be told to leave that country now. They wanted equal citizenship rights with the Ceylonese. The Ceylonese case was that the Indians could not ride two horses at one time. If they were Indians, they should return to India. If not, they should become Ceylonese nationals. There were others who were not prepared to have Indians in Ceylon under any circumstances. It was strange. Indians and Ceylonese were brothers. A narrow strip of water separated India from Ceylon. A strong man could swim across the channel. They were both coloured people. The Ceylonese followed Buddhism and the birth place of Buddhism was India. How could a quarrel between Indians and Ceylonese be tolerated? They all wished them to bridge the gulf and become one. The A. I. C. C. had passed a resolution appointing a committee of four to go into the matter. It consisted of the Congress President, Shri Rajagopalachari, Shri Ramachandran and Shri Aryanayakam. The Indian labourers in Ceylon had gone on a strike. The Congress had advised them to give it up. They did not wish to embarrass the Ceylonese. They wanted a brotherly settlement.

What was their duty in the matter? he asked them. They should all pray to God to show light to both. It was their duty to know how their brothers overseas were faring. That was why he had told them all about Indians in Ceylon.



## PANCHGANI AT LAST

Hope deferred has not made Gandhiji's heart sick so far as his annual visit to Panchgani is concerned. For, it is no pleasure trip to him but a duty which, he has realized, he owes to Brother Ass. He would have loved to be put up in the *dharmashala* or the *musafarkhana* for the poor which had been projected during his sojourn here last year. But although a suitable house has been purchased for the purpose, it needs reconditioning and would not be ready till the next season. After the ceaseless strain of activity for the last three months, he has come here once more to drink in the life-giving silence and the ozone-laden misty air blown from the green hills that engirdle this place. The public prayer is held as before in the Batha Girls' High School which is next-door to our residence. Gandhiji was touched too by the soulful and melodious songs sung at the prayer gatherings by the Parsi girls of the Batha School. Whether it was the theme of the song that moved him or whether it was due to the natural yearning of the soul for self-withdrawal and repose after an arduous spiritual Odyssey, his utterances at the prayer gatherings for the last two days have breathed a note of pensiveness, one might even say sadness.

"Or, is it that when human soul a journey long has had  
And returned unto itself it cannot but be sad?"

"In the song that has just been sung, the world has been aptly described as the valley of sorrow and suffering," he observed on the first day. "God alone enables us to brave it all. The poet, however, has proceeded to call the world an illusion and a dream. Joy or what men call happiness may be, as really is, a dream in a fleeting and transitory world, where everything is like a dissolving phantasmagoria. But we cannot dismiss the suffering of our fellow creatures as unreal and thereby provide a moral alibi for ourselves. Even dreams are true while they last and to the sufferer, his suffering is a grim reality. Anyway, whether the world be real or unreal, we have certain duties in life which must be faced, understood and duly performed while we are in this world."

The second day's discourse turned on the 'dignity of poverty'. In the song that had been sung it was said that God is the friend of the poor. Poverty, remarked Gandhiji, had a dignity in our country. The poor man was not ashamed of his poverty. He preferred his hut to the rich man's palace. He even took pride in it. Though poor in material goods, he was not poor in spirit. Contentment was his treasure. He might as well say to himself, "since we cannot all become rich and own palaces, let us at least pull down the palaces of the rich and bring them down to our level." That could bring no happiness or peace either to themselves or anyone else, and God would certainly be not the friend and helper of the poor of such description. Poverty, in the sense of inequality of material possessions was there in every part of the world. That was perhaps in a certain measure inevitable, for all men are not equal either in their talents or the measure of their needs. Even in America which was fabulously rich and where

Mammon has taken the place of God, there were many poor. Poet Malabari had come across some relatives of Shah Alam begging in the streets of Rangoon. He had written a beautiful poem about it which had sunk into his heart. The substance of it was that he alone is rich who has God for his friend and helper. In India there was a particular type of man who delighted in having as few needs as possible. He carried with him only a little flour and a pinch of salt and chillies tied in his napkin. He had a *lota* and a string to draw water from the well. He needed nothing else. He walked on foot covering 10-12 miles a day. He made the dough in his napkin, collected a few twigs to make a fire and baked his dough on the embers. It was called *bati*. He had tasted it and found it most delicious. The relish did not lie in the food but in the appetite, that honest toil and the contentment of the mind give. Such a man had God as his companion and friend and felt richer than any king or emperor. God was not the friend of those who inwardly coveted other's riches. Everyone could copy that example and enjoy ineffable peace and happiness himself and radiate it to others. On the other hand if one hankered after riches, one had to resort to exploitation, by whatever name it might be called. Even then the crores could not become millionaires. True happiness lay in contentment and companionship with God only.

Panchgani 15-7-'46

PYARELAL

## "A Dirty Habit"

A sister writes:

"For some years I have been trying to help people to understand the danger of spitting everywhere. The filth and the dirt is so bad on account of spitting and cleaning noses everywhere that one does not know where to begin. Even small boys, girls, educated men and women, apart from illiterate folk, spit on railway platforms, carriages, trams, outside shops, in corridors, outside their houses and everywhere. Our country is getting dirtier and dirtier and diseases are spreading all over. Will not volunteers come forward for spreading the message of cleanliness?"

Promiscuous spitting is a bad habit on which I have commented often enough. It is all part and parcel of the incredible ignorance that exists in our land among all classes of people in regard to the elementary laws of sanitation and hygiene. It is a habit which we must give up, if we would avoid certain diseases. My correspondent's suggestion is certainly commendable.

Panchgani, 14-7-'46

M. K. G.

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