

HARIJAN

Editor: PYARELAL

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[TWO ANNAS

NATIONAL LANGUAGE OF INDIA

Gandhiji has given many things to India, but probably very few people realize that one of the biggest things that she has received at his hands is the idea of national language. Although she could boast of several languages there was none which was universally accepted as her national language.

English came to us through the Government, but soon it so dominated the country that it became the medium for higher education and social intercourse among the educated class. They were ashamed to speak in their national language and considered a mark of honour and distinction to speak in English only on all occasions. Even in their private conversations they could not put away their English.

A new political awakening came over the country towards the close of the last century when the Indian National Congress was founded. The sessions of the Congress were held to make the demands and decisions of the nation heard to the world. But even this voice was not in the national tongue. We wanted to proclaim to England that India was for Indians and for none other. But to say that, we could find no language of our own and were content to express our longing in a borrowed tongue.

The entry of Gandhiji in the political field spelt a complete revolution—the country began to speak in its own tongues. To speak in the national tongue ceased to be regarded as a shame. Gandhiji reminded the people that the thing to be ashamed of was to forget one's own tongue. He toured all over the country in 1920-21 and delivered hundreds of speeches but without exception they were in Hindustani.

When I was under detention at Ranchi during the Great War, I remember having read in the newspapers the report of the War Conference which Lord Chelmsford had summoned in 1917. Gandhiji participated in it, but he had made it a condition that he would speak in Hindustani. At that time this was regarded by the Press as a strange innovation. But the innovation was soon to become the common thing in the country and today we see that Hindustani has taken the place that English held twentyfive years ago.

(From *Harijansevak*) ABUL KALAM AZAD

[The foregoing is a translation of the article of Maulana Saheb written for the Hindustani edition of 'Harijan'. He is a Hindustani scholar and

believes in a simple combination of Hindi and Urdu to be the standard national speech of all India which millions can easily understand. He believes that such a combination is natural. By way of illustration of what he says, he will contribute a short weekly article to the Hindustani edition of 'Harijan' called 'Harijansevak'.

New Delhi, 21-5-'46

M. K. G.]

HYPNOTISM OF ENGLISH

(By M. K. Gandhi)

"You are making a tireless effort for the propagation of Hindustani. You do not like that Indians should speak or write in any foreign tongue in preference to Hindustani. May I draw your attention to the attitude of the owners of the so-called nationalist English newspapers towards their Indian languages editions? May I ask how this kind of invidious discrimination on their part helps the spread of the national tongue? You have only to compare the scale of salaries paid to the staff working on the English dailies with that of their Indian languages editions respectively to see the glaring disparity between the two. The former get nearly ten times as much as the latter. The editor of an English, daily some times gets as much as Rs. 2000/- per month but that of a Hindi daily does not get even Rs. 200/-. An English newspaper is provided all the facilities. It gets the news straight from the teleprinter and has only to set it to type, whereas its Hindi counterpart must get the news translated before it can be printed. Thus it has to put in double the labour and yet receives neither encouragement nor appreciation. Why should they, who work on these newspapers then, care for the Indian languages, when they find that English is everywhere in demand and they have to starve in spite of their pains? Another thing to be noted is that the circulation of Indian languages newspapers is by no means less than that of the English ones. But just as on the Indian railways, in spite of the fact that they derive the bulk of their revenue from the third class passenger traffic, all the amenities are reserved for the first and second class passengers, even so the owners of English newspapers mete out a step-motherly treatment to the readers of their Indian languages editions."

The foregoing letter is from a fellow worker in the cause. He knows what he is writing about. Nor are the facts referred to by him unknown to the Indian public. The question is how to break the spell that the English language exercises over us.

It is an essential part of our struggle for Swaraj or else we shall have to revise our definition of Swaraj. In slavery, the slave has to ape the manners and ways of the master, e. g. dress, language, etc. Gradually he develops a liking for it to the exclusion of everything else. When the British yoke is lifted and we are independent, this infatuation, with the English language, will automatically go. In the meantime, let those who have realized the harm that this infatuation has done to the country make it a point to use Hindustani or their mother-tongue only.

It is a fact that the editors of English newspapers earn ten times as much as the editors of newspapers in the Indian languages. The remedy for it also lies in our hands. The market value of English will find its natural level, once the British empire over India goes, for the simple reason that India cannot afford to pay on a lavish scale. India is a poor country, and so long as the lot of the poorest of the poor remains unameliorated, we have no right to draw fat salaries. The fact, however, is that it rests with the newspaper reading public to raise or reduce the prestige and price of the Indian languages newspapers. If they will cease to regard English papers as their gospel and transfer their patronage to Indian languages newspapers instead, the proprietors will be compelled soon to take note of the change and adjust their policies accordingly. Something like that is happening already. There was a time when Indian languages newspapers had a poor circulation compared to English. Now the scales are reversed. Indian languages newspapers are increasing both in number and circulation.

But those who are running Indian newspapers in Indian languages also owe a duty in the matter even like the newspaper reading public. The language of the newspapers in the Indian languages is often poor and the writings appearing in them lack originality. Newspapermen alone can remove these defects.

New Delhi, 21-5-'46

(From *Harijansevak*)

By M. K. Gandhi

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KHADI SCIENCE SCHOOL IN BOMBAY

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Shri Vitthaldas Jerajani is one of those who will do his utmost to put into practice what he is once convinced is the right thing to do. When I returned home in 1915 from South Africa after 20 years' exile, he was at that time running a large Swadeshi Stores in Bombay. I explained to him that he was dealing in what was 'swadeshi' only in name. It was not difficult for him to understand that he had been labouring under a delusion but it was not clear to him what he should do. Beyond pointing out the flaw I too was unable to give him practical guidance straightaway. But I could not remain content without making efforts to put into practice what I believed. As soon as possible I threw myself heart and soul into producing Khadi and Shri Vitthaldas started business in Khadi sales. At that time all the Khadi that was produced was sold in Bombay. Khadi weavers in the production areas could be counted on the fingers of one hand. The history of the gradual growth of Khadi is very interesting but I may not dwell on it here.

Now that it has been realized that Khadi merely as a commercial commodity has been a mistake, Shri Vitthaldas has taken another step forward. I give below the gist of his account of his doings which he has described in a Gujarati letter to me :

"I have already informed you that two out of the original four Khadi Bhandars in Bombay have been converted into teaching centres. Instead of windows dressed with attractive Khadi for purposes of sales, people are treated to look at all the implements of Khadi production beginning from cotton right up to yarn. Those who are tempted to gain practical knowledge enter the showrooms and are given instruction should they so desire. Up till now there are 209 pupils and the attendance is fairly good for learning all the processes. Shri Kakubhai has taken up the work with zest and is devoting all his time to it.

"For weaving we could only get one place in Andheri where we have put up looms. Owing to the difficulty of procuring accommodation in Bombay, half the shop in Kalbadevi Road has been turned into a weaving centre also. The services of an expert have been obtained. It remains to be seen how far we can progress in this line.

"During the war Khadi sales mounted high owing to cloth shortage. Today also cloth for everyday needs is hard to get and other cloth has gone into the black market and fetches fantastic prices. Khadi is, therefore, still considered cheap and if it weren't for the fact that yarn currency even to a limited extent is in vogue we simply could not meet the demand nor cope with the rush on our stores. The danger of Khadi going to the black market might even have been there.

"Political awakening has always connoted a *pari passu* increase in the demand for Khadi and it is good that those who really believe in it and yet have been lazy about spinning will now have to take to the wheel. Conditions for teaching spinning are therefore favourable."

There is nothing striking about the figures given by Shri Jerajani. Those who think that the world

is full of crazy people have every right to say that Bombay has its full quota of such folk. Men of faith believe that the world is the better for them. The man who strives for the impossible may be looked upon as a burden. But the crazy man who is possessed by some special idea is the crazy man who is prized by society. I place Shri Vitthaldas in this category. To find even a few people in a pleasure-loving city like Bombay who realize the power of Khadi is no small matter for satisfaction. Khadi will grow to its full height of course only when it is manufactured in every village and in every home and used there.

Just as Bombay is the foremost city where giving money in charity is concerned, so it can play a leading part in the difficult task of producing Khadi. Who would not like Bombay to hold this coveted position? Shri Vitthaldas and his colleagues are working hard for this goal. If they die in the attempt to bring their dreams to fruition their death will be worth while. They must, however, hasten slowly in order to avoid mistakes. If they are watchful and mend their errors at once all will surely be well with their work.

Simla, 9-5-'46

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

AN EXPERIMENT IN NATIONAL DIET

A striking experiment was carried out in Denmark in the last year of the Great War which has a moral for us in the present food crisis. The Danes as a people were, in the first instance, largely lacto-vegetarian in their diet. Then about 1870-1880 American wheat and barley from the virgin soil of the prairies began to pour in and forced the Danes to change their agricultural methods quickly. They began to raise pigs and poultry and became exporters of eggs and bacon and butter to England. They also became big eaters of meat and eggs themselves.

The blockade following the entry of the United States into the war created a serious situation for the Danes. Denmark had a population of 35,00,000 human beings and 50,00,000 domestic animals. Grain and fodder used to come from America. The sudden stoppage of the American imports created an acute shortage of these articles. Professor Mikkel Hindhede, Superintendent of the State Institute of Food Research, was appointed Food Adviser to the Danish Government to deal with the crisis. The question which he was called upon to decide was this. So far the pigs had provided ham and bacon for the English as well as the Danes. Would it be wise in this crisis to get rid of the pigs and let men eat the grain which otherwise the pigs would eat? Hindhede decided it would be wise and so some four-fifths of the pigs and about one sixth of the cattle were killed. The pigs gone, the bran which was fed to them was set free and was utilized for making whole meal bread with the entire coarse bran incorporated. This was the celebrated Kliebrot which was made official for the whole country. In addition to it the Danes ate porridge, green vegetables, milk, butter and fruit. "No grain or potatoes were allowed for distillation of spirits, so there were no spirits." Half the previous quantity of beer was permitted. Only people on the farms got meat. The people in the cities, about

40 per cent of the population got very little meat. Only the rich could afford beef.

The food regulations were begun in March 1917, and were made stringent from October 1917 to October 1918.

An amazing result followed from the enforcement of this national diet. Death rate which had been 12.5 in 1913-14 now fell to 10.4 per thousand "which is the lowest mortality figure that has been registered in any European country at any time" (Hindhede). To express the results in another way, taking the average from 1906 to 1916 as 160, in the October to October year it was 66. "Even in men over 65 the figure fell to 76."

Before the fiat the Danes ate fine meal bread and whole meal bread. Hindhede made them eat only whole meal bread with extra bran. Its proportions were given out as 67% rye, 21% oats and 12% bran.

"Except for the bran which added vegetable meat for those who were animally meatless or meat short," observes Hindhede, "this bread was the bread which the Danes used to eat before the invasion of American wheat," and which had been the "national bread of Denmark for centuries."

Hindhede attributed the remarkable improvement in the national health of the Danes to (1) less meat, (2) less alcohol. "The bran largely filled the gap of the scanty or absent meat, bran having a good proportion of vegetable meat protein." He regarded his experiment as a "triumph of his previous teaching." "The reader knows," he wrote in *Deutsche Medizinische Wochenschrift* of March 1920, "how sharply I have emphasized the advantages of a lacto-vegetarian diet. I am not in principle a vegetarian but I believe I have shown that a diet containing a large amount of meat and eggs is dangerous to health."

Delhi, 9-5-'46

PYARELAL

Still Worse

Last week I appealed to women to pull their full weight in trying to alleviate the sufferings of our Harijan brothers and sisters everywhere and asked a band of sisters to go to the Harijan quarters in Reading Road, New Delhi and minister to the needs of the inhabitants, in particular of the women and children there.

Since then Gandhiji has visited the Harijan quarters in Ajmeri Gate and I was one of the party who accompanied him. I had visited this place ten years ago with Mahadevbhai and his facile pen had then tragically described this *basti* in 'Harijan'. It was sad to find these unfortunate human beings still wallowing in the mire with the pigs who share their lot. Their woeful state needs to be seen to be believed. The committee in charge of this particular area and the M. O. H. ought to be relieved of their duties if they are incapable of fulfilling them. The residents of Delhi ought also to be ashamed of themselves for being callous in regard to these plague spots. Concerted public agitation can never fail if it is arrayed against manifest evil. This is surely a matter on which both Indian and European, official and non-official can join hands. These plague spots, truth to tell, exist all over our country and the blame for them must be shared by us all. Women will acquit themselves to some extent if they get Harijan *bastis* everywhere reformed and made as habitable as their own homes.

Simla, 3-5-'46

A. K.

HARIJAN

May 26

1946

AN ANALYSIS

(By M. K. Gandhi)

After four days of searching examination of the State Paper issued by the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy on behalf of the British Government, my conviction abides that it is the best document the British Government could have produced in the circumstances. It reflects our weakness, if we would be good enough to see it. The Congress and the Muslim League did not, could not agree. We would grievously err if at this time we foolishly satisfy ourselves that the differences are a British creation. The Mission have not come all the way from England to exploit them. They have come to devise the easiest and quickest method of ending British rule. We must be brave enough to believe their declaration until the contrary is proved. Bravery thrives upon the deceit of the deceiver.

My compliment, however, does not mean that what is best from the British standpoint is also best or even good from the Indian. Their best may possibly be harmful. My meaning will, I hope, be clear from what follows.

The authors of the document have endeavoured to say fully what they mean. They have gathered from their talks the minimum they thought would bring the parties together for framing India's charter of freedom. Their one purpose is to end British rule as early as may be. They would do so, if they could, by their effort, leave a united India not torn asunder by internecine quarrel bordering on civil war. They would leave in any case. Since in Simla the two parties, though the Mission succeeded in bringing them together at the Conference table (with what patience and skill they could do so, they alone could tell), could not come to an agreement, nothing daunted, they descended to the plains of India, and devised a worthy document for the purpose of setting up the Constituent Assembly which should frame India's charter of independence, free of any British control or influence. It is an appeal and an advice. It has no compulsion in it. Thus the Provincial Assemblies may or may not elect the delegates. The delegates, having been elected, may or may not join the Constituent Assembly. The Assembly having met, may lay down a procedure different from the one laid down in the Statement. Whatever is binding on any person or party arises out of the necessity of the situation. The separate voting is binding on both the major parties, only because it is necessary for the existence of the Assembly and in no otherwise. At the time of writing, I took up the Statement, re-read it clause by clause, and came to the conclusion that there was nothing in it binding in law. Honour and necessity alone are the two binding forces.

What is binding is that part of it which commits the British Government. Hence, I suppose, the

four members of the British mission took the precaution of receiving full approval of the British Government and the two Houses of Parliament. The Mission are entitled to warm congratulations for the first step in the act of renunciation which the Statement is. Since other steps are necessary for full renunciation, I have called this one a promissory note.

Though the response to be made by India is to be voluntary, the authors have naturally assumed that the Indian parties are well organized and responsible bodies capable of doing voluntary acts as fully as, if not more fully than, compulsory acts. Therefore, when Lord Pethick-Lawrence said to a press correspondent, "If they do come together on that basis, it will mean that they will have accepted that basis, but they can still change it, if by a majority of each party they desire to do so," he was right in the sense that those who became delegates, well knowing the contents of the Statement, were expected by the authors to abide by the basis, unless it was duly altered by the major parties. When two or more rival parties meet together, they do so under some understanding. A self-chosen umpire (in the absence of one chosen by the parties, the authors constitute themselves one) fancies that the parties will come together only if he presents them with a proposal containing a certain minimum, and he makes his proposal, leaving them free to add to, subtract from or altogether change it by joint agreement.

This is perfect so far. But what about the units? Are the Sikhs, for whom the Punjab is the only home in India, to consider themselves against their will, as part of the section which takes in Sindh, Baluchistan and the Frontier Province? Or is the Frontier Province also against its will to belong to the Punjab, called "B" in the Statement, or Assam to "C" although it is a predominantly non-Muslim province? In my opinion, the voluntary character of the Statement demands that the liberty of the individual unit should be unimpaired. Any member of the sections is free to join it. The freedom to opt out is an additional safeguard. It can never be a substitute for the freedom retained in paragraph 15(5) which reads:

"Provinces should be free to form groups with executives and legislatures and each group could determine the Provincial subjects to be taken in common."

It is clear that this freedom was not taken away by the authors by section 19 which 'proposes' (does not order) what should be done. It presupposes that the Chairman of the Constituent Assembly at its first meeting will ask the delegates of the Provinces whether they would accept the group principle and if they do, whether they will accept the assignment given to their Province. This freedom inherent in every Province and that given by 15 (5) will remain intact. There appears to me to be no other way of avoiding the apparent conflict between the two paragraphs as also the charge of compulsion which would immediately alter the noble character of the document. I would, therefore, ask all those who are perturbed by the

group proposal and the arbitrary assignment, that, if my interpretation is valid, there is not the slightest cause for perturbation.

There are other things in the document which would puzzle any hasty reader who forgets that it is simply an appeal and an advice to the nation showing how to achieve independence in the shortest time possible. The reason is clear. In the new world that is to emerge out of the present chaos, India in bondage will cease to be 'the brightest jewel' in the British crown, it will become the blackest spot in that crown, so black that it will be fit only for the dustbin. Let me ask the reader to hope and pray with me that the British crown has a better use for Britain and the world. The 'brightest jewel' is an arrogation. When the promissory note is fully honoured, the British crown will have a unique jewel as of right flowing from due performance of duty.

There are other matters outside the Statement which are required to back the promissory note. But I must defer that examination to the next issue of 'Harijan'.

New Delhi, 20-5-'46

MANGO SEED KERNEL

(By M. K. Gandhi)

A friend has sent me an extract from "Current Science" showing how mango seed kernel is a fair substitute for cereals and fodder.

"According to a recent estimate, the concentrates available in India are sufficient only for 29.1% and fodder for 78.5% of adult bovine population. This does not take into account the requirements of goats, sheep and equines. The shortage is further accentuated during periods of famine. In order to meet the shortages, the Nutritional Research Laboratory at Izat-Nagar have been exploring new sources of foodstuffs. This investigation relates to the use of mango seed kernel as a cattle and human food. At present the material is thrown away as a waste. From chemical analysis of kernels it has been found to be rich in carbohydrates and fats (crude protein 8.5%, ether extract 8.85% and soluble carbohydrates 74.49% on dry basis.)

"The observations credit mango seed kernel with a place in the category of food grains and make available every year about 70 million lbs. digestible protein and 780 million lbs. of starch equivalent from a hitherto unutilized source. It has been also calculated that the digestible protein obtained from 80 lbs. of oats is equal to that of 100 lbs. of the kernel and the starch equivalent for 86 lbs."

I have known this use from my early youth. But no one seems to have thought of conserving this seed for food. The mango season is upon us and though much time has been lost, it will be a good thing if every mango seed was saved and the kernel baked and eaten in the place of cereals or given to those who need it. Every ounce of food saved is so much gained.

Delhi, 21-5-'46

NATURE CURE IN KANCHANGAON

(By M. K. Gandhi)

I settled down and started work in Uruli Kanchan in response to the invitation of the inhabitants there in the hope of making it a model nature cure centre for the villages of India. The people of the village had promised their co-operation. They were to have provided the land and erect buildings on it. But that has not yet materialized. They have given the money. But that is not enough for buying land and buildings. They have to find the land and to erect the buildings on it. Their active interest in it is more important than mere monetary aid.

According to the reports received from co-workers there, the inhabitants of Kanchangaon have begun to understand and appreciate nature cure. And the workers have developed such self-confidence that they won't mind, if I do not return there before June. They say that the people are co-operating with them so wholeheartedly that they can well afford to wait till I descend from Mahabaleshwar and Panchgani at the end of the warm season. All this has filled me with hope.

Nature cure consists of two parts. Firstly, to cure diseases by taking the name of God or *Ramanama* and secondly, to prevent illness by the inculcation of right and hygienic living. The report from the village says that the inhabitants are co-operating with them in keeping the village clean. I hold that where the rules of personal, domestic and public sanitation are strictly observed and due care is taken in the matter of diet and exercise, there should be no occasion for illness or disease. Where there is absolute purity, inner and outer, illness becomes impossible. If the village people could but understand this, they would not need doctors, *hakims* or *vaidyas*.

In Kanchangaon there are hardly any cows. That is unfortunate. There are some she buffaloes. But all the evidence that has come to me so far shows that buffalo's milk is no match for cow's in the health-giving quality. The *vaidyas* specially recommend cow's milk for patients. I, therefore, hope that the people of Uruli Kanchan will keep a herd of cows to insure a supply of fresh clean cow's milk to all. Milk is an absolute necessity for health.

Then, the sooner the buildings are erected the better. In the first place, it is a question as to how long we ought to go on using Shri Datar's bungalow. Secondly, and that is more important, so long as there is not adequate housing accommodation, proper treatment of patients is not possible. Accommodation for indoor patients is a necessity, I shall always hope that Kanchangaon will become an ideal village. Nature cure implies an ideal mode of life and that in its turn presupposes ideal living conditions in towns and villages. The name of God is, of course, the hub round which the nature cure system revolves.

Delhi, 21-5-'46

(From *Harijansevak*)

WEEKLY LETTER

BACK IN SWEEPERS' COLONY

Gandhiji was glad to be back once more in the Sweepers' Colony at Reading Road where he feels far more at home than on the Simla heights. Public prayer was resumed from the very first day of his arrival. But the prayer gatherings are now held not on the *Ramalila* grounds near the Ajmeri Gate but in the *Mehtar* compound itself. The Quranic prayer was led by the Fakir Badshah Khan. (He is now gone to his province.) Twice during the week he addressed the prayer gathering. On the first day he explained that all prayer, in whatever language or from whatever religion it was, was prayer addressed to one and the same God and taught mankind that all belonged to one family and should bear love to one another.

Echoing Badshah Khan's words at the end of the prayer, Gandhiji said it was a travesty of true religion to consider one's own religion as superior and others, as inferior. All religions enjoined worship of the One God who was all pervasive. He was present even in a droplet of water or in a tiny speck of dust. "Even those who worship idols, worship not the stone of which it is made; they try to see God who resides in it." Similarly it was a libel to call the Parsis fire-worshippers or sun-worshippers. The Parsi hymn which Dr. Dinshah Mehta had recited corresponded to the *Gayatri* of the Hindus. It was nothing but pure worship of God. Various religions were like the leaves on a tree. No two leaves were alike, yet there was no antagonism between them or between the branches on which they grew. Even so, there is an underlying unity in the variety which we see in God's creation.

SPECULATION FEVER

Speculation as to the contents of the impending announcement of the Cabinet Mission had reached a feverish height with the return from Simla of the Mission and other members of the Tripartite Conference. Friends had been asking, remarked Gandhiji, as to what the message was likely to contain. He did not know, nor did he speculate. It was no use giving a thought as to what it would contain. A man of prayer could not do otherwise. Good or bad, they would know all in another twentysix hours. It would then be open to them to accept or reject it. Instead of looking outwards let them search inward and ask God what their duty was in either event. For him and them in the meanwhile, it should be enough to know that the Cabinet Delegation had come all the way leaving their hearth and home to find out in what manner British rule was to end and when the last British soldier was to leave India, and not whether or not to leave India. It was necessary for them to find out whether the Congress and the Muslim League could be brought together. British rule had separated them and if they (the Cabinet Mission) failed it was small wonder. They were bound to come together soon after British hold on India had demonstrably ceased. The Cabinet Dele-

gation's concern was to quit India without a moment's delay.

NO PAROCHIAL OUTLOOK

"But supposing the reverse happens," he continued, "they will be the losers, not we. We have chosen the path of self-suffering. We rise through our suffering. That is nature's law. He who clings to his sordid self or family interests loses. Man is sent into the world to perform his duty even at the cost of his life if necessary. We must therefore be braced for any suffering that may come in the performance of duty.

"All of us, Hindus and Musalmans, constitute an integral whole. If someone errs all must suffer for it. God has so ordered this world that no one can keep his goodness or badness exclusively to himself. The whole world is like the human body with its various members. Pain in one member is felt in the whole body. Rot in one part must inevitably poison the whole system. Let us, therefore, cease to think in terms of individuals and think in terms of the whole country. We must put faith in God and be careful for nothing. We hold our destiny in our own hands and no one but ourselves can make or mar it."

ON THE EVE

The after-prayer address on the following day, too, was devoted to preparing the people's mind for a just and dispassionate examination of the forthcoming announcement. He asked the gathering not to allow themselves to be led away by prejudice or hearsay, but to study the document itself carefully and then form their own opinion. He deprecated the habit of borrowing opinions from newspapers. "Newspapers should be for the study of facts. They should not be allowed to kill the habit of independent thinking." The English language, he warned them, was a difficult medium to master. Even he, after his residence for nearly twenty years among English speaking people, could not claim to have full mastery over it. They should therefore study the document in Hindustani to be able to grasp its full meaning. Whether they liked the announcement or not, it was going to be a most momentous one in the history of India and therefore deserved careful study. As men of prayer it further behoved them to put themselves entirely in the hands of God and pray to Him to illumine and purify them so as to fit them for understanding the document aright.

NOT AN AWARD

The Cabinet Delegation's announcement was published on Wednesday the 18th. The following day's discourse, therefore, naturally contained an examination of that document.

Taking as his text the song sung by Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani about "the land that was without sorrow and suffering," he proceeded to examine the Cabinet Mission's pronouncement in the light of the ideal set forth in that song. How far was the Cabinet Mission's pronouncement calculated to

enable them to realize that ideal? "The poet says we are citizens of a country in which there is neither sorrow nor suffering. Where is such a country to be found in this world? I confess, throughout my wanderings I have not come across such a country so far. The poet has later described the conditions for the attainment of that ideal state. It is easy to observe them individually. For one who really and truly is pure at heart, there is no sorrow or suffering. But it is a difficult state for the millions to attain. Nevertheless we want India to be such a country." He had asked them on the previous day to examine independently of other people's opinions the Statement of the Cabinet Delegation when they saw it. They should examine it from the point of view of a country which would be without sorrow or suffering. He would give them his own reactions. He, however, did not want to contradict himself by asking them to follow his ideas if they did not appeal to them. Everyone should think for himself and herself. They were to weigh opinions and adopt only those they had assimilated.

He had glanced at the document casually on the previous night as soon as it was received. He had read it carefully in the morning. It was not an award. The Mission and the Viceroy had tried to bring the parties together but they could not bring about an agreement. So they had recommended to the country what in their opinion was worthy of acceptance by the Constituent Assembly. It was open to that body to vary it, reject it or improve upon it. There was no 'take it or leave it' business about their recommendations. If there were restrictions, the Constituent Assembly would not be a sovereign body, free to frame a constitution of independence for India. Thus the Mission had suggested for the Centre certain subjects. It was open to the Assembly by the majority vote of Muslims and non-Muslims separately, to add to them or even reduce them. And it was open to the Assembly to abolish the distinction which the Mission had felt forced to recognize. Similarly about grouping. The provinces were free to reject the very idea of grouping. No province could be forced against its will to belong to a group, even if the idea of grouping was accepted. He instanced only two things to illustrate his point. He had not exhausted the list of things which seemed to him to be open to objection or improvement.

Subject to the above interpretation, which he held was right, he told them that the Mission had brought forth something of which they had every reason to be proud.

SPIRIT OF C. F. A.

There were some, he proceeded, who said the English were incapable of doing the right thing. He did not agree with them. The Mission and the Viceroy were as God-fearing as they themselves claimed to be. It was beneath their dignity as men to doubt a person before he was proved to be untrue to his word. "The late Charlie Andrews was every inch of him an Englishman who had

died slaving for India. It would be grievously wrong to doubt in advance every one of his countrymen." Whatever the wrong done to India by British rule, if the statement of the Mission was genuine, as he believed it was, it was in discharge of an obligation which they had declared the British owed to India, namely, to get off India's back. It contained the seed to convert this land of sorrow into one without sorrow and suffering.

THE LESSON OF THE TREES

Pursuing the theme of the previous day's song, Gandhiji asked in his next prayer discourse how they were to convert India, which was today the home of sorrow and suffering, into the ideal country about which the poet had sung. The reply he said was furnished by the song about the sermon of the trees which had just been sung. "In that song one is asked to take the lesson from the trees which themselves suffer the fierce rays of the sun and give shade to those who take shelter under them. To those who throw stones at them they respond by dropping fruit. That is true philanthropy. To learn that philanthropy we are asked in that song to go to Harijans. Today society has condemned Harijans to a life of filth and degradation. That is not their shame but our shame. Society has treated them as untouchables and condemned them to live in ghettos and yet they continue to render invaluable services to society for a mere pittance. It was open to them to take to more lucrative avocations as some of them have done. The fact that the vast majority of them have chosen not to, rebounds to their credit." If they could show that spirit of service in spite of their ignorance and backwardness, he asked, how much more spirit of selfless service and sacrifice ought the so-called *savarna* classes to show?

THE ANNOUNCEMENT X-RAYED

He had remarked in his previous day's address that he saw the germs of the realization of the ideal envisaged by the poet in the song that had been sung on that day, in the announcement of the Cabinet Mission. But it was subject to the condition that it meant what it said. He likened that announcement to a promissory note, whose worth depended entirely on its genuineness and validity. "If the promise inscribed on a promissory note is not honoured, the note is worth nothing and fit only to be torn to pieces and thrown away." Truth meant everything to him. He had said that he would not purchase even Swaraj at the cost of truth, because Swaraj so purchased would be illusory. It was his hope and prayer, in which he invited the audience to join him, that the announcement of the Cabinet Mission would be finally honoured in letter and in spirit and that God would help the members of the Mission to discharge their promissory note even as He had done for His devotees in days of old.

MEANING OF PRAYER

On Sunday the 19th Fakir Badshah Khan again addressed the prayer gathering. His theme was the

meaning and significance of prayer. The object of prayer, *prarthana*, or *namaz*, he said, was the same, viz. to purge ourselves of all dross and baseness so as to enable us to realize the bond of unity with the entire human family. Unfortunately, mankind had today lost its essential oneness and had got divided up into mutually antagonistic groups. All this was the result of a tragic delusion. "Prayer should fit one for service not of any particular section or community but of God's entire creation, for which he has sent us into this world."

Commenting on it Gandhiji said that if they had carefully followed and assimilated Badshah Khan's remarks they would know that the object of prayer was not to please God, who does not want our prayers or praise, but to purify ourselves. "God is omnipresent. There is not an atom in the universe without His presence. The process of self-purification consists in a conscious realization of His presence within us. There is no strength greater than that which such realization gives."

It had pleased him to see so many of them coming to attend the prayers, he said. But it would hurt him if he found that they had come just for fun, or, what would be worse still, to hear his political views. As a rule, politics should not be permitted to intrude upon prayer. He, however, could not avoid referring to current political topics sometimes in the course of his after-prayer discourses because life could not be divided into water-tight compartments. Presence of God had to be felt in every walk of life. If they thought that as soon as they left the prayer ground they could live and behave anyhow, their attendance of the prayer was useless. If their interest in prayer was genuine, the next day's prayer, he hoped, would be as numerously attended as on the day he spoke, although he would not be speaking on account of his Monday silence.

Monday is always the day of self-examination and prayer with Gandhiji. The silence enables him to be alone with God. Never has he felt the need to wait on the inner light for guidance more than on the present momentous occasion. And so, although he is now surrounded by his 'family', his thoughts are continually turned inward. Out of the depth of his silence and repose came his written message to the prayer gathering yesterday. "I only want to say to you that for India it is a day for deep and serious thinking. We should do nothing in haste. For, we are dealing with the destinies of dumb millions. It therefore becomes our bounden duty that, with God as witness, we should think only of the country with its 40 crores of people, not of our petty selves nor of our respective communities or groups. And whatever we decide we should act upon without fear or shame."

New Delhi,
21-5-'46

PYARELAL

A FAIR HIT

(By M. K. Gandhi)

"A report from New Delhi dated 16th April, published in the 'Times of India' of the 18th says that at a prayer meeting held on Tuesday evening you said:

"1. 'The machinery and even engineers were all foreign. He had no enmity with machinery. Mills, he said, could not remove the poverty of India, but on the other hand had deprived crores of villagers of their work and practically ruined them. Those Indians responsible for ruining the villages had become foreigners and as such they should live in foreign countries.'

"How can you reconcile this statement with the gentlemen who form the Board of Trustees of the Kasturba Memorial Fund, the primary aim of which is to improve conditions in villages. Majority of these gentlemen are industrialists and owners of mills. Can they, who are responsible for ruining the villages, and still continue to ruin them by their mills, be ever capable of sincere help in improving the condition of villagers?"

"2. You have so often talked and written against the curse of black markets. How many of the trustees of the Kasturba Memorial Fund can lay their hands on their hearts and say they have not dealt in the black market either as buyers or sellers?"

This is a fair hit. That mill-owners and such others have joined the Kasturba Trust is a compliment to my *ahimsa*. Though I express my opinions strongly, there is no sting in them, nothing personal. I have no sense of shame in befriending mill-owners whose business, I hold, should be stopped, not forcibly but by reason. Education of the public could bring about results which no force can. I must say in favour of the capitalist class trustees that they never interfered with the decision of non-capitalist trustees. Indeed, they have always helped by their knowledge. The combination is good and beneficial to the Trust. Their sincerity cannot be questioned; for, they have faith in their capacity and the modern trend.

As to black markets, I do not know that any of the Trustees have black market dealings. But should I discover any, I should think twice before inviting them to leave the Trust. They have not imposed themselves on the Trust.

Delhi, 21-5-'46

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