

HARIJAN

Editor : PYARELAL

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[TWO ANNAS

CURIOUS

(By M. K. Gandhi)

On my return journey from Palni someone gave me at one of the halts a letter reviling Shri Rajaji and Shri Gopalswami and informing me that they would not allow any one against them to come near me. Now I know to the contrary. No one who wanted to say anything worthwhile could be prevented from seeing me or writing to me. The delivery of the very letter disproves the allegation. Shri Kamaraj Nadar was with me on the same special. He was with me in the temple on the Palni Hill. But there is no doubt that both Rajaji and Gopalswami were closest to me during the journey. They had arranged it. Rajaji is one of my oldest friends and was known to be the best exponent in word and deed of all I stand for. That in 1942 he differed from me I know. All honour for the boldness with which he publicly avowed the difference. He is a great social reformer, never afraid to act according to his belief. His political wisdom and integrity are beyond question. I was therefore pained to find a clique against him. It is a clique that evidently counts in the official Congress in Madras. But the masses are devoted to Rajaji. I am neither vain nor foolish enough to feel that I could have had the huge public demonstrations all along the route of the pilgrimage if he had no influence with the masses in Tamil Nad. Congressmen in the South will act as they think best. But I would be less than loyal to the organization if I did not warn them against losing the valuable services which no one can shoulder as Rajaji can at the present moment.

En route to Wardha, 5-2-'46

The foregoing was written before Bezwada was reached at 5-30 in the morning. At Bezwada a note in Hindustani from Shri A. Subrahmanyam was delivered, the gist of which is given below:

"There is a belief spread in Andhradesh that you have come to Madras with a view to make Rajaji premier. Several Congressmen have been carrying on such propaganda. Taking up the theme, some Telugu newspapers have been writing even against Hindustani. Please give your opinion on this."

I felt bound, therefore, to give my reply. I said that my journey was purely for the purpose of celebrating the Silver Jubilee of the Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha — now Hindustani Prachar Sabha — and incidentally for Madura and Palni temples. The visit was conceived soon after my premature discharge and before the Congress resumption of Parliamentary

work was even conceived. My visit has nothing to do with Rajaji being the Premier. My life had no secrecy about it. If I wanted to give an opinion, I was in the habit of giving it openly. But I had rejected the advances of friends to guide them for I was not interested in elections and offices. But since I was challenged I had no hesitation in saying that Rajaji was by far the best man for the purpose in the Southern Presidency and if I had the disposal in my hands I would call Rajaji to office, if I did not give it to myself. But the disposal was with the Provincial Congress Committee and finally with the Working Committee. My opinion was only that of an individual, to be taken for what it was worth.

After Bezwada, En route to Wardha,
5-2-'46

A POINTER FOR THE FUTURE

"How is the cutting of telegraphic wires contrary to the principle of Ahimsa," a friend asked Gandhiji some time back.

The question is typical of many that have been put to Gandhiji since his release. Another friend who saw him some time after he left the Aga Khan Palace posed to him the problem thus: "There are two schools of thought amongst our youth today. One school holds and openly says that as a programme of action Ahimsa is played out. It has done its work which was to awaken the masses and has set the stage for the final struggle for independence. In this struggle force of arms cannot be excluded. The other school while professing belief in Ahimsa says that there is room for modification and further elaboration in its technique. They aver that the next phase of our struggle would be characterized by organized sabotage on an extensive scale." Gandhiji questioned the statement that sabotage could be part of the non-violent programme or that it was derivable from the principle of Ahimsa as he understood it. The friend however persisted that sabotage had come to stay whether one liked it or not. "Irresponsible prophesying leads to nowhere," cut short Gandhiji. "The real question is where we stand, what our attitude towards it is going to be."

The friend put before Gandhiji some of his doubts. Was destruction of Government property violence? "You say that nobody has a right to destroy any property not his own. If so, is not Government property mine? I hold it is mine and I may destroy it."

"There is a double fallacy involved in your argument," replied Gandhiji. In the first place,

conceding that Government property is national property—which today it is not—I may not destroy it because I am dissatisfied with the Government. But even a national Government will be unable to carry on for a day if everybody claimed the right to destroy bridges, communications, roads, etc., because he disapproved of some of its activities. Moreover, the evil resides not in bridges, roads, etc., which are inanimate objects but in men. It is the latter who need to be tackled. The destruction of bridges, etc., by means of explosives does not touch this evil but only provokes a worse evil in the place of the one it seeks to end. "I agree," rejoined the friend, "that the evil is within ourselves, not in the bridge which can be used for a good purpose as well as an evil one. I also agree that its blowing up provokes counter violence of a worse type. But it may be necessary from a strategic point of view for the success of the movement and in order to prevent demoralization."

"It is an old argument," replied Gandhiji. "One used to hear it in old days in defence of terrorism. Sabotage is a form of violence. People have realized the futility of physical violence but some people apparently think that it may be successfully practised in its modified form as sabotage. It is my conviction that the whole mass of people would not have risen to the height of courage and fearlessness that they have but for the working of full non-violence. How it works we do not yet fully know. But the fact remains that under non-violence we have progressed from strength to strength even through our apparent failures and setbacks. On the other hand terrorism resulted in demoralization. Haste leads to waste."

"We have found," rejoined the friend, "that a person who has had a schooling in violent activity comes nearer to true non-violence than one who has had no such experience."

"That can be true only in the sense that having tried violence again and again he has realized its futility. That is all. Would you maintain also that a person who has had a taste of vice is nearer to virtue than the one who had none? For, that is what your argument amounts to."

The discussion then turned upon secrecy. The friend in question argued that whilst individual secrecy created a fear complex and was therefore an evil, organized secrecy might be useful. "It is no secrecy if the person concerned is boldly prepared to face the consequences of his action. He resorts to secrecy in order to achieve his object. He can refuse to take any part in subsequent interrogations during his trial. He need not make a false statement."

But Gandhiji was adamant. "No secret organization, however big, could do any good. "Secrecy aims at building a wall of protection round you. Ahimsa disdains all such protection. It functions in the open and in the face of odds, the heaviest conceivable. We have to organize for action a vast people that have been crushed under the heel of unspeakable tyranny for centuries. They cannot be organized by any other than open truthful means. I have grown up from youth to 76 years in abhorrence

of secrecy. There must be no watering down of the ideal. Unless we cling to the formula in its fulness, we shall not make any headway."

"I know we have not always lived up to our ideal. There have been grave lapses. Had our instruments been less imperfect, we would have been nearer our goal. But in spite of our temporizing with our ideal, non-violence has worked like a silent leaven among the dumb millions. That does not mean that we can afford to go on like this for ever. We cannot remain static. We must move forward or we shall slide back."

"Are you of opinion then," asked the friend, "that the August revolution caused a setback in the struggle for independence; that all the heroism and courage which our people showed in the course of it was useless?"

"No," replied Gandhiji. "I do not say that. In the historical process, the country will be found to have advanced towards freedom through every form of struggle, even through the August upheaval. All that I have said is that the progress would have been much greater if we had shown the non-violent bravery of my conception. In this sense the sabotage activity has retarded the country's freedom. I have the highest admiration for the courage, patriotism and spirit of self-sacrifice of people, say, like Jaiprakash Narain. But Jaiprakash cannot be my ideal. If I had to give a medal for heroism, it would go not to him but to his wife who, though simple and unlearned in politics, typifies in her person the power of Satyagraha in its purest form before which even Jaiprakash has to bow. What I have said about the August upheaval is not by way of judgment upon the past—I have consistently refused to condemn it—but as a guidance for the future."

"Our people," said the friend finally, "have faith in non-violence but they do not know how to make it dynamic. What is the reason for this failure?"

"By hammering away at it through painful years," replied Gandhiji, "people have begun to see that there is a potency in non-violence, but they have not seen it in all its fulness and beauty. If they had responded to all the steps that had to be taken for the effective organization of non-violence and carried out in their fulness the various items of the eighteen-fold constructive programme, our movement would have taken us to our goal. But today our minds are confused because our faith in constructive work is so weak. I know, one must push forth undaunted by difficulties."

On the train to Madura,
Saturday, 2-2-46

PYARELAL

Constructive Programme

Its Meaning and Place

By Gandhiji

Price 0-6-0 Postage 0-4-0

Christianity-Its Economy & Way of Life

By J. C. Kumarappa

Price 1-8-0 Postage 0-6-0

HARIJAN TITBITS

(By A. V. Thakkar)

1. True to tradition and policy the Harijan Sevak Sangh has, in spite of requests from friends, steadily refused to have any hand in recommending candidates to the Congress Parliamentary Board for seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes. The Sangh feels that by dabbling in politics it would only add to the existing caste rivalry. Constructive work including educational progress and the removal of all social disabilities is the Sangh's sole concern.

2. The wholly unjustifiable prejudice against allowing Harijans of Garhwal to carry their brides and bridegrooms on public roads in "Dola-Palki" still exists. It is gratifying, however, to note that recently magistrates have punished Caste Hindus for looting a Harijan marriage party by sentencing them in one case to six to eight months' R. I. and fine and in another to a fine of Rs. 61/- each.

When cholera breaks out in Kathiawad villages, sweepers are often accused of causing it by using evil 'mantras' and roughly handled. Sometimes they have even to migrate to other villages until the epidemic subsides.

In contrast to the above cruelty came the heartening news from there of interdining between Harijans and non-Harijans on the last Gandhi Jayanti.

4. It is a pity that sweepers even in large towns are unorganized as a class and, therefore, exploited by the corporations. Going on strike is the only way by which they can get improvement in wages. It was only recently after a good deal of trouble in Calcutta that the pay of the sweepers was raised to Rs. 15/- p. m. In small towns and municipalities the wages are miserable: only Rs. 7/- in some places with a dearness allowance of from Rs. 2/- to Rs. 5/- p. m. As for housing conditions, even in towns like Calcutta and Madras, 'disgraceful' is not a strong enough word. Inasmuch as a city deserves a contented army of sanitary workers, the proper and rent-free housing of its servants should be the first charge on municipal finances, just as drainage.

5. The Baghelkhand States are a part of India that is very little known. They are far from any railway line and inhabited by very backward sections of the people. It was not until a year ago that any work of Harijan uplift was begun there by Professor R. K. Yarday of Indore with the help of Sjt. Avadh Bihari of Rewa. The Rulers of Nagand Mihari and Ajai Ghad have thrown open State temples to the Harijans and earmarked funds for uplift work among them. This is a welcome move in these backward areas.

6. The education of Harijan girls being of primary importance, the starting of girls' hostels everywhere is very necessary. Such exist in Dhulia (Maharashtra), Sibarmati (Gujarat), Madura and two other places in Tamil Nad, Devakottai and Trichy, Allahabad, Delhi, Bezwada, Ellore and Guntur (Andhra), Calicut (Malabar) and in a few other places. All these get grants-in-aid from the centre. One such is being run by a Harijan girl herself in Guntur

against heavy odds. In order to make both ends meet this brave girl even sold a part of her own land. She needs the help of friends in Guntur in her endeavour.

On the train to Madura, 2-2-'46

ARE WE GOING DOWN?

(By M. K. Gandhi)

"Personal likes and dislikes, ambitions and jealousies should have no place in our organization. What therefore distresses me greatly is that dislike, hatred and vindictiveness in private life and even public speeches are becoming common among Congressmen and consequently indiscipline and hooliganism are increasing." This extract is taken from a long letter from a friend. She even quotes instances and elaborates her thesis. But I have reproduced sufficient for my purpose. I wholeheartedly endorse every word of what she says. Though I do not read newspapers diligently, I feel that there is truth in her experience. Now that it seems that we are coming into our own, the evils complained of ought to go and calmness, rigid discipline, co-operation and goodwill must take the place of passion, indiscipline and jealousies, public and private. Or else Swaraj machinery will crack and go to pieces and our future state may very well become worse than the present, bad and insufferable as it is. As I said in Mahishadal, the glow of Swaraj in action must be felt by the illiterate millions of India. They must feel the vital difference between the present autocratic and ordinance regime and the orderly democratic non-violent regime under Swaraj. I hug the hope that when real responsibility comes to the people and the dead weight of a foreign army of occupation is removed, we shall be natural, dignified and restrained. We are living just now in a state that is highly artificial and unnatural. The sooner we get out of it the better for us, the ruling power and the world. I can therefore only suggest to my friends and those who think like her, that they should rigidly carry out in practice what they think even though they be a handful.

On the train to Madras,
4-2-'46

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A specimen copy will be supplied on receipt of postal stamps worth three annas. MANAGER

HARIJAN

Feb. 10

1946

ITS IMPLICATIONS

(By M. K. Gandhi)

The vast meeting at Palni under the shadow of the Temple was perfectly silent; there were no noises. I seized the occasion to give the audience the implications of removal of untouchability. It began with touch but it would be a wooden thing, if it merely ended there. A Brahmin may be a depraved man in spite of his learning. It would be preposterous to call him one. A Brahmin is he who knows *Brahma*. It is character, not occupation, that determines the man. The Bhangi is or should be on a par with the Brahmin in all social relations. There is no reason why he should not, other things being equal, occupy the chair which Maulana Abul Kalam Azad occupies with distinction. I would be happy to see the day when a Bhangi, working as such, is in the Presidential chair.

The ulcer of untouchability has gone so deep down that it seems to pervade our life. Hence the unreal differences: Brahmin and Non-Brahmin, provinces and provinces, religion and religion. Why should there be all this poison smelling of untouchability? Why should we not all be children of one Indian family and, further, of one human family? Are we not like branches of the same tree?

When untouchability is rooted out, these distinctions will vanish and no one will consider himself superior to any other. Naturally, exploitation too will cease and co-operation will be the order of the day.

Having dealt with untouchability, I turned to the pilgrimage. There was fear of my being unable to negotiate the flight of over six hundred steps on a chair, if crowds of people insisted on accompanying me up the hill which was too small to accommodate them. I would be satisfied with doing *darshan* at the foot of the hill. Let not the people, however, think that I was guided by any belief in the potency of images of clay or precious metal. Idols became what the devotees made of or imputed to them. For me they had no potency whilst Harijans were prohibited from entering temples. I had passed by the famous Minakshi Temple in Madura more than once before and never cared to go inside it whilst the prohibition against the Harijans lasted. How could I, who claim to be a Bhangi, care to enter such temples? Then, I was sure that the God of India was God living in the plains where the millions lived. How many could reach the Himalayas? Many have gone and more could certainly go to Palni, but the crores could not. I would be, as I am, one of them.

I was sure too that my prayer at the foot of the hill would be heard more than that of some devotees in the temple itself. God knew and cared for the hearts of men. Outward appearance

was nothing to Him if it was not an expression of the inner. It was enough for me that the Harijans were as free as any other Hindu to enter the Palni temple for the purpose of worship.

Nevertheless the millions who were assured that I would have *darshan* of the image itself would not understand this message and might feel that some calamity would descend upon the country, if I could not go up the hill. Their silence at the meeting encouraged the hope that I might be able to go through the advertised programme.

The speech was delivered at nearly 6 p. m.. But at 8 p. m. I found that I was able to negotiate the hill, and though there was a large crowd at the entrance none insisted on joining while Rajaji and I were being taken up the hill in chairs. Thus happily did the pilgrimage come to a successful end.

One swallow does not make summer. No legitimate inference can be drawn from this incident. However, I cannot help cherishing the fond hope that it augurs well for India under Swaraj, Home Rule or Independence, by whatever name one may choose to call the thing.

Perhaps this article is the proper place for recording my thanks to the South Indian Railway and the staff for their considering no trouble too great for making the journey as little tiresome as it was possible for it to be under the circumstances.

On the train to Madras from Palni,
4-2-'46

HOMAGE

"Oh! for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still."

I can well understand how hard it will be for readers of "Harijan" to reconcile themselves to the absence of columns penned weekly by its late beloved Editor. But to those of us who had seen at close quarters with what single-eyed devotion he served his master's cause, the absence of M. D., always keenly felt, is today a most poignant grief.

My close contact with him began when circumstances at long last permitted me to throw in my lot with Bapu. The memory of work with him, of lessons learnt from him and the firm friendship formed will ever be a priceless treasure. Noble of mien, noble in bearing and nobler still in character is the bare truth about Mahadev. A man of irresistible charm, with a highly sensitive nature he was quick to respond to affection, full of sympathy and understanding and of superb generosity. But what drew one to him and elicited one's admiration even more than his lovable nature and outstanding ability was his utter humility. No wonder that early in life a man of his calibre was drawn to lay his all at the feet of one whom he served with unflinching loyalty to the end.

May we, who try to help Bapu, be granted, in however small measure, the deep understanding and unerring interpretation of his way of life that was Mahadev's priceless possession and which added so much to the world-wide appreciation of and love for 'Harijan'.

On the train to Madura,
2nd February, '46

A. K.

HINDUSTANI

(By M. K. Gandhi)

How can any Indian really be averse to Hindustani? Lovers of Sanskritised Hindi are, however, afraid that Hindustani will hurt Hindi and likewise lovers of Persianised Urdu fear hurt to Urdu. These fears are futile. No language can spread through mere propaganda. If it had been so "Esperanto" would have found a place amongst the populace in the West. They failed because in such a matter the enthusiasm of only a few cannot succeed. The language of a people who produce hard workers, literary experts, businessmen and enterprising persons spreads and is enriched. It is ours to make the effort in that direction.

Only that language which the people of a country will themselves adopt can become national. However virile the English language may be, it can never become the language of the masses of India. If the British regime were to be permanent it would continue to be the official language of their Indian officials and because education would be in their hands provincial languages would suffer. The late Lokamanya once said that the British had done a service to the provincial languages. This is true to some extent. But it was not their business to encourage them nor could they in reality do so. That work belongs to the people and their leaders. If the English-educated neglect as they have done and even now continue, as some do, to be ignorant of their mother tongue, linguistic starvation will abide.

We are today certain that the British Raj cannot remain for ever. They say and we believe that it will go even this year. Then there can be no national language for us other than Hindustani. Today there are two forms of this language, Hindi and Urdu, the former written in Nagari and the latter in Urdu script. One is fed by Sanskrit, the other by Persian and Arabic. Today, therefore, both must remain. But Hindustani will be a mixture of these. What shape it will take in the future none can say nor need we know. Twenty three crores out of thirty speak Hindustani. This number must have increased *pari passu* with the population. Obviously in this lies the national language.

There ought to be no quarrel between the two sisters Hindi and Urdu. The rivalry is with English. This struggle itself means much labour. The rise of Hindustani will also give an impetus to the provincial languages because it is the language of the masses, not of a handful of officials.

It was for the propaganda of the national language that I went recently to the South. The name Hindi used there up-till-now has been changed to Hindustani. During the last few months several persons have been learning both the scripts and have obtained certificates. In the South too the difficulty is not about the two scripts but in regard to English. We may not blame the official world for this. The fault lies in us. It is we who are infatuated with English. I found this disease even in Hindustani Nagar. But I hope that the illusion will now disappear. A good deal has been done in

the South but much still remains if we have to reach the desired goal.

5-2-'46

THE LESSON OF MADURA

(By M. K. Gandhi)

The crowd in Madura could not have been less than five lacs and may have been even six. Human faces were to be seen as far as the horizon. It was a veritable sea of human faces. The long route to the race course was lined by people who were all to swell the crowd in the prayer ground. They must push on as much as they could. I doubt if the people on the fringe could even see me, much less hear me or any one else, even though loud speaker arrangements were good and the rostrum high enough. The volunteers were not used to manage such vast crowds. People had come from distant villages where the Congressmen had not worked habitually, if at all. Such being the case the din and noise and jostle were unavoidable. And then the crowd had to deal with a Satyagrahi in me. But my Satyagraha for the first time failed. The people's was bound to fail. They showed the greatest forbearance whilst I was passive. The vast multitude in front of me and on either side sat noiseless and motionless, in spite of the pressure from behind. But the jostling and noise from behind the rostrum continued unabated. I therefore cleared the dais and asked the women members of my party to go. Only Rajaji, Kanu Gandhi and Ramkrishna Bajaj remained. The latter said the way was clear, but as I appeared the people became restive. I addressed the people in front and at the sides and pleaded with them to go away as I did not propose to speak. They remained silent but would not leave. So I thought I would rest where I was for the night till the crowd had either dispersed or made a way for me. Kanu Gandhi the tempter came again and said the people would make a passage and let me go. The car would wait for me at a distance from the crowd. In a weak moment I yielded. I went down the few steps of the improvised strong ladder only to meet the same pressing and noisy crowd as before, though considerably thinned. It was not a safe passage through a noiseless, disciplined crowd for which I was pleading and waiting. It was neither a mischievous crowd. Making noise and pressing forward towards the idol was the only way of expressing their love towards it. Here was a living idol made of the same clay as they. And this idol could not and would not appreciate their loud demonstration. But I proved an impatient and inefficient teacher. Had I waited, I believe this particular crowd would have learnt the value of silent and knowing love, probably of discipline requisite for Swaraj. I shall know much better next time if such ever comes. Any way it is legitimate to ask whether the exemplary behaviour at Palni was a result of the imperfect lesson of the previous night at Madura. In any case, no blame attaches to anybody in the drama and nobody has any cause for shame.

En route to Wardha, 5-2-'46

GANDHIJI'S IDEAL OF A PRIVATE SECRETARY

I

The term 'Private Secretary' in connection with Gandhiji is somewhat of a misnomer as he has nothing private nor secret from which indeed the word 'Secretary' is derived. Private Secretaryship under him is, in a sense, *sui generis*. In the popular imagination 'Private Secretary', especially in its political association, carries with it a glamour, a suggestion of prestige and influence. Permanent under-secretaries of departments, for instance, are known to wield power which makes them a force to be reckoned with, while secretaryship to powerful political chiefs is often coveted as a stepping stone to a public career and office, maybe in succession to the Chief himself. In the case of Gandhiji, however, all this is reversed. His ideal secretary must have no interest save how best to serve his master's ideals. He must turn his back on name and fame and all those glittering prizes of life which the average man covets. He must efface himself completely, merge himself in the master without, however, losing his personality. He must become, in short, his *alter ego*—autonomous but in perfect unison with him. This is the central requirement; all others flow from it as corollaries.

During the Second Round Table Conference in London a young secretary in India Office, who had come very close to us, once assured us in a confiding mood of his good offices with the then Under Secretary of State Lord Peel whenever necessary. "You know the influence private secretaries wield," he added with a wink. We told him that we were an exception, we were only *hammals* (coolies). "I am another", he quickly parried, and we all had a hearty laugh.

Gandhiji has variously described himself as a scavenger, spinner, weaver and agriculturist. His secretary has therefore to be an understudy in all these. Gandhiji claims to be only the first servant of the nation. He expects his secretary to consider himself to be the servant of the least. Mere intellectual brilliance counts for very little in his eyes, but passion for truth, rectitude and a sincere striving for the ideals for which he stands means everything to him. Work of any kind under him is a discipline and apprenticeship in life and secretaryship is no exception. His secretary must be ready to perform the meanest task that may come his way with as much willingness, diligence, concentration and care as the biggest. The tasks may range from cooking, washing of clothes, cleaning of latrines or tending the sick to running a big daily newspaper, answering awkward questions from none too friendly and persistent correspondents, reproducing from memory notes of an important conversation or interview or negotiating an interview with the Viceroy or his officials. The late Shri Desai acquitted himself equally creditably in each and all of them. But it was in the former that his apprenticeship with Gandhiji really began and Gandhiji used often to remark in later years that his brilliant success in the latter was due to his schooling in the former.

The first thing that a secretary of Gandhiji has to learn is the importance of being punctilious and exact in little things. Nothing must be done in a slipshod or slovenly manner, be it ever so insignificant. Even in a hastily scribbled note all the t's must be crossed and i's dotted. To post even an ordinary postcard without revision he regards as inexcusable. To try to excuse yourself on the score of pressure of work or lack of time is only to accuse yourself, and heaven help the unfortunate who lands himself in that unenviable position! He insists upon thoroughness and precision in everything. Even a short reply to a casual correspondent must show a close study and grasp of the matter dealt with.

His secretary must not await instructions, he must be able to anticipate them. In other words, he must be able to think and act independently of him, and in a measure to replace him. In 1921, the late Pt. Motilal Nehru asked Gandhiji to send some one, preferably Shri Desai, to take charge of the 'Independent' after the late Shri George Joseph whose arrest was expected. It was a great wrench for Shri Desai to be away from Gandhiji. "Why can't you send P.?", he pleaded. "Don't you see, I can't deprive Lalaji (Lala Lajpatrai) of P.'s services? He is his right hand man", replied Gandhiji. "And I?", protested Shri Desai. "You, I want to cultivate as my brain", rejoined Gandhiji and worthily did Shri Desai answer that expectation.

Assisting in correspondence or other desk work, as I have already remarked, occupies a very small space in Gandhiji's conception of secretarial work. His secretary must be able to interpret him and propagate his ideals and this demands that he should have realized those ideals in his own person. Take, for instance, the multitude of activities which Gandhiji is conducting e. g. Khadi, Village Industries, Harijan service, basic education, cow service and, last but not the least, the Ashram. In order to be of real help to him, his secretary must not only have theoretical knowledge of all these but must in a measure identify himself with these in practice. Thus, the late Shri Mahadev Desai had a passion for spinning, particularly spinning on takli and the stamp of his interest could be seen in the columns of 'Young India' and 'Harijan'. Those who saw him issue forth at the head of the bucket-and-broom brigade from Maganwadi, day after day and week after week, in the midst of heavy pressure of work, could understand his passionate advocacy of the cause of Harijans and Village uplift in Gandhiji's weeklies. Not only did it enable him to present Gandhiji's ideas on these subjects with force and conviction through his writings, but his personal example fired workers with a passion for these branches of Gandhiji's activities.

Gandhiji is a very exacting task-master. "Therein fail not" is his motto. Whenever he has assigned a task to you, difficulties in the way are never accepted as an excuse for failing to perform it. You have to foresee and be prepared for all emergencies.

Thus, the late Shri Desai often carried candles with him during railway journeys to enable him to work at night in case there were no lights in the compartment (as at times it happened in those early days in Bihar), or the lights failed. Once he actually had to do the writing for 'Young India' by getting into the lavatory of Gandhiji's second class compartment. Lights in Gandhiji's compartment had to be put out at bed time to enable Gandhiji to go to sleep and the balance of the matter had to be made up and posted by a particular time. When Gandhiji visited the lavatory in the middle of the night, he was surprised to find the two of us already in possession — our papers spread out on the floor. We got a scolding but the writing was finished and posted at the right station so as to reach Ahmedabad in time for the next weekly issue of 'Young India'. During the twentythree years that he was associated with Gandhiji, in conducting his various weeklies (and this included visits to Burma, Ceylon, and England), I do not remember a single occasion when the publication of any of them was held up or delayed owing to late arrival of matter.

(To be Continued)

P.

A Model

[Shri Thakkar Bapa sends the following account of Dr. Gurubatham's work in Shantipuram, Chittur District. P.]

"Dr. Gurubatham is a medical man who has specialized in eye diseases. Up till a few months ago he was practising in Coimbatore and Vellore and has a reputation for cataract operations. He has, however, given up his lucrative practice and decided to settle down in a rural area. His estate of 60 acres is on the banks of the Palar river and he is now popularly known as the "Palar Doctor". He and his family are Christians in the best sense of the term. The eldest son is a graduate in agriculture. In spite of being a landlord, he tills the soil and works in the fields with the labourers. The doctor too has taken to farming. In addition he is a carpenter and blacksmith. He has sheep and poultry as well as a good dairy. In fact there is no aspect of village life in which he does not take interest.

He has built a simple home for himself and his wife. There is a guest-house too which is, at the moment, being used for in-patients. In addition to dispensing medicines he performs urgent operations. But his main object is to serve the villagers in every way. Both his second son and daughter are studying medicine and Dr. Gurubatham hopes they will step into his shoes. He has a school where 30 children are receiving instruction. He is anxious to turn this into a basic school. He is fighting against untouchability. He will not allow his date palms to be tapped in the sure hope that when the new government comes there will be prohibition and the trees will yield 'gur' instead of toddy. Labourers and artisans are being paid a higher wage by him than the 3 or 4 annas which they usually earn.

Dr. Gurubatham has been working in villages off and on for six years. He has found it an uphill task but is certain of success. He hopes to make Shantipuram the

Sevagram of the South where workers may be trained to build up village life in his province."

NON-VIOLENCE AND MOLESTATION OF WOMEN

On the night of 29th December 1945, Gandhiji met about 200 men and women of Mahishadal and the nearabout villages. They included local workers and victims of police and military atrocities during the 1942 upheaval. Gandhiji invited questions. The first question was whether they were expected to remain non-violent even in the face of their women being dishonoured. They believed in suffering for Swaraj. They believed that any departure from non-violence would delay the coming of Swaraj. Then, what could they do in cases of molestation of their womenfolk?

Gandhiji replied that he had been asked the same question in 1920 and 1921 and he could only repeat the reply which he gave then. The question betrayed ignorance of non-violence and also of Swaraj of his conception. He did not want Swaraj at the cost of women's honour. If what passed as non-violence did not enable them to protect the honour of women or if it did not enable the women to protect their own honour, it was not non-violence. "Believe me, it is something quite different," and he described what he had written in "Hind Swaraj" in 1909. The reader should read the argument on pages 44 to 51 of the Navajivan Press edition. Gandhiji observed that experience had added force to the argument. "After all who protected Sita from Ravan? The Poet tells us that her purity was such that Ravan dared not compass his end without her consent."

He warned them in the end that if anybody came to him with the plea that they could not protect the honour of their womenfolk because they had taken the vow of non-violence, he would give them no quarter. Non-violence should never be used as a shield for cowardice. It was a weapon of the brave. He would rather they died fighting violently than became helpless witnesses to such atrocities. A truly non-violent man would never live to tell the tale of such atrocities. He would have laid down his life on the spot in non-violent resistance.

In this connection I am reminded of Gandhiji's Frontier tour where the Khudai Khidmatgars had asked him the same question. "What if the miscreant does not kill you but ties you up instead and gags you so that you are forced to be a silent witness of his misdeed," they had asked after hearing his reply which was practically the same as he gave to the people at Mahishadal. "I will struggle," he had replied, "so that I will either break the bonds or break myself in the effort. In no case will I remain a helpless witness. When that intensity of feeling is there God will come to your aid and somehow or other spare you the agony of being a living witness to such a deed."

Mahishadal,

Saturday, 29-12-'45

S. N.

Notes

'Harijan' Revived

Why is "Harijan" revived? This question may have occurred to many as it has to me. I may tell the reader that no special effort was made for its revival. An application for the removal of the ban was made on 3-12-'45 and the ban was removed on 10-1-'46. Many readers, including English and American, had all along felt a void and they began to feel it more after the defeat of the Fascist Powers. The reason for the feeling was obvious. They wanted my reaction, in terms of Truth and Non-violence, to the various events happening in India, if not in the world. I wished to satisfy this desire.

There have been cataclysmic changes in the world. Do I still adhere to my faith in truth and non-violence? Has not the atom bomb exploded that faith? Not only has it not done so but it has clearly demonstrated to me that the twins constitute the mightiest force in the world. Before it the atom bomb is of no effect. The two opposing forces are wholly different in kind, the one moral and spiritual, the other physical and material. The one is infinitely superior to the other which by its very nature has an end. The force of the spirit is ever progressive and endless. Its full expression makes it unconquerable in the world. In saying this I know that I have said nothing new. I merely bear witness to the fact. What is more, that force resides in everybody, man, woman and child, irrespective of the colour of the skin. Only in many it lies dormant, but it is capable of being awakened by judicious training.

It is further to be observed that without the recognition of this truth and due effort to realize it, there is no escape from self-destruction. The remedy lies in every individual training himself for self-expression in every walk of life, irrespective of response by the neighbours. "Harijan" will attempt from week to week to stand up for this truth and illustrate it.

On way to Madura,
2-2-'46

M. K. G.

Nature Cure Clinic

Readers are aware that I have become co-trustees with Shree Jehangir Patel and with Dr. Dinshah Mehta in his clinic at Poona. A condition of the trust is that from January 1st. this year the clinic should become a clinic for the poor instead of for the rich. The conception was mine but owing to my absence on tour the condition has not been wholly fulfilled. I am hoping to go to Poona this month, however, and trust I shall be able to do some work in this connection. My fervent hope is that rich patients will, if they come, pay to their fullest capacity and yet live in the same wards as the poor. I believe that by doing so they will derive more benefit from henceforth. Those unwilling to abide by this condition need not trouble to go to the clinic. This rule is necessary.

In addition to treatment for their ailments, poor patients will also be taught how to live healthy lives. It is a common belief today that nature cure is expensive, more so than Ayurvedic or allopathic. If this is proved to be true I shall have to admit failure. But I believe that the opposite is true and my experience also bears out the belief. It is the duty of a nature cure doctor not only to look after the body but also pay attention to and prescribe for the soul of a patient. The best prescription for the soul is of course *Ramanama* (God's name). I cannot today go into the meaning of and method of applying *Ramanama*. I will only say that the poor do not stand in need of much medicine. They die uncared for as it is. Their ignorance makes them blind to what nature teaches us. If the Poona experiment succeeds, Dr. Dinshah Mehta's dream of a nature cure university will come true.

Help of India's true nature cure doctors is needed in this great work for the country. There can be no question of making money in it. The need is for those who are filled with the spirit of service to the poor and only with a sufficient number of such doctors can the work progress. The mere title of a doctor is no criterion; a real doctor is he who is a true servant. Those who have experience and knowledge and are anxious to serve may write with a list of their qualifications. No replies will be given to those whose qualifications are not upto standard.

Readers will please note that work has increased with the revival of 'Harijan'. There will, therefore, be very little scope for replying to individual letters.

On train to Wardha,
5-2-'46

M. K. G.

(Translated from Hindustani)

For Past Subscribers

Those subscribers who did not ask for a refund of the balance of their subscriptions on the suspension of 'Harijan' have a right to the delivery of 'Harijan' for the balance due to them, provided their present addresses are traceable. Those, therefore, who have changed their addresses should notify the change to the Manager.

J. DESAI

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