

prisonment without trial, drastic restrictions of liberty of other kinds, and Star Chamber tribunals. And deeper still, perhaps, in its effect upon the public temper, was the moral hurt to the self-respect and the awakened sentiments of freedom of a people who had just made ungrudging sacrifices to win victory for the freedom of the world ; while the brutal indifference to the popular sentiment and will with which every protest and every appeal was ignored, and the measure forced through the Legislature by the *bloc* of bureaucrats appointed to the Council for the express purpose of carrying Government legislation against the elected representatives, was in itself enough to rouse the fury of the most submissive population. It is impossible to conceive a more deliberate or culpable provocation of the people. Lord Chelmsford's Government was warned, by men whose loyalty and moderation is unquestioned, of the dire consequences likely to result from the step they were taking. They refused to listen. Appeals were made from the same quarter even for a postponement of the measure and time for further consideration.

They went ruthlessly on, and they had no excuse for haste, even if they believed in the ultimate necessity of the measure. The official termination of the war, as they knew, was far distant, and there were six months to spare after that. They might even have done what the Government in England has just done. They might have provided for a temporary extension of the Indian D.O.R.A. But they seemed to be set upon showing the Indian people that the war-won freedom was not for them, that Government in India was still, and would remain, an autocracy, unrepresentative of and antagonistic to the sentiments of the people, able to ride roughshod over their protests and to rob them, if it so willed, of the liberties and rights solemnly guaranteed to them in the proclamations of three successive sovereigns.

CHAPTER VII

A PEACEFUL AGITATION

THE agitation against the Rowlatt Act was treated by the Government and its agents as though it were a factitious ferment excited by a few noisy politicians eager to seize any opportunity to discredit the Government. That, at least, was their attitude in the early stages. It is doubtful whether any official authority now, however, could be found who would attempt to deny that, rightly or wrongly, the whole population was stirred to the depths by resentment against the legislation and apprehensions of its consequences. They would tell you that this state of feeling, unparalleled in the history of Crown rule in India, was brought about by "wicked misrepresentations" of the Act and the Government's motives in passing it on the part of unscrupulous agitators; but, whatever the cause, the wide extent of the popular indignation, spreading through every class and every

part of the country, would not be denied. We need not, here, go deeply into the question whether the Act was misrepresented or not. The nature of its provisions and its extensive and startling potentialities have been explained, and they are there for everybody to judge. The question is, how far it would be possible wickedly to misrepresent an Act which deprives people, unfortunate enough to come under its operation, of their natural rights and liberties and every guarantee and safeguard that the law had hitherto provided. Meticulous accuracy on the platform, when speakers are dealing with complicated measures in the heat of a great popular agitation, is not characteristic of the politics of any country in the world. One deals with the general effects likely to follow from the passing of such legislation as the Rowlatt Act. The English reader may be asked to consider his own feelings if it were proposed to place such a measure on the Statute Book in this country as a permanent law* in times of peace, and then to

* The adjective is used advisedly. Experience in India teaches that a law of this kind once accepted for three years is permanent.

remember that the possible or probable results would be infinitely more grave in a country unprotected by representative Government, an untrammelled Press, and free institutions. It would be useless to tell him that the Act was intended only for anarchists, and could only be brought into operation when "scheduled offences" connected with anarchical or revolutionary movements were, in the opinion of the Executive Government, prevalent. He would want to know who was to be considered an anarchist and what is an anarchical movement, and tell the authors of such legislation that these are questions that could only be decided by fair and open trial. But it is fantastic to suppose that such a measure could ever be brought forward in the Parliament of this country.

What was also remarkable about the agitation against the Rowlatt Act, and equally undeniable, was its absolutely peaceful character. It must not be supposed that the people of the Punjab burst into riot and disorder, or, what has been called most extravagantly by the Government, "open rebellion" against the Act itself. We

shall see, presently, how disorder followed upon aggression and gratuitous provocation of demonstrators pursuing very peaceful methods. What has been called the "Passive Resistance" movement—and the term may be used here for convenience, though Mr. Gandhi, its leader, will not accept it—was based upon *Satyagraha*, a Sanscrit word which it would be impossible to translate in all its fullness into any English terms. But it may be explained. The cardinal doctrines are strict adhesion to truth, absolute abstention from violence, and readiness to suffer. A *Satyagrahi*, indeed, must invite suffering, and must never do anything that can hurt others, even those who inflict suffering on him, and he must not speak, or even think, evilly of them. It is a sublimation of the Christian doctrine. By suffering and soul-force and conversion, through these and love, one must conquer; not by destroying one's enemies or oppressors.

Satyagraha is thus a permanent and unchanging philosophy which stands by itself. Its application to a crisis or disaster falling upon a whole people has to be considered a little apart,

perhaps, from its position as a great human philosophy, as Mahatma Gandhi himself lives and teaches it. Perhaps it would be as well to quote here the Mahatma's explanation, as given by himself recently before the Hunter Committee.

The law-breaker breaks the law surreptitiously and tries to avoid the penalty; not so the civil resister. He ever obeys the laws of the State to which he belongs, not out of fear of the sanctions, but because he considers them to be good for the welfare of society. But there come occasions, generally rare, when he considers certain laws to be so unjust as to render obedience to them a dishonour. He then openly and civilly breaks them, and quietly suffers the penalty for their breach. And in order to register his protest against the action of the law-givers, it is open to him to withdraw his co-operation from the State by disobeying such other laws whose breach does not involve moral turpitude.

It is not to be supposed that a doctrine, so intensely rigorous in its rules of conduct and the demands it makes on the individual in every department of life, could be imposed on or practised at short notice by a whole people. When the *Satyagraha Sabha* (Association of *Satyagrahis*) was formed, it was not expected that more than comparatively few people could or would become members. And the conditions of membership were very strict. None was

admitted but those who satisfied the officers who were appointed by the committee, after, very often, exhaustive questioning and inquiry, that they fully understood the gravity and rigour of the rules that would be imposed upon them, that they could be humanly trusted to conduct themselves as true *Satyagrahis*, refraining rigidly from all violence, and prepared to suffer to the utmost and to invite suffering. From the wider public all that was looked for was moral sympathy and support. The small band of *Satyagrahis* was to exist as an example to the Government and people of spiritual resistance to wrong and oppression, and their numbers would grow as time went on. The spirit of *Satyagraha* would gradually spread, and tyranny would be conquered at length by "soul-force," to use Mr. Gandhi's expression, as it had been conquered before in South Africa, Behar, and Kaira, where Mr. Gandhi had led similar movements. But while few, and those only who were fully prepared and fitted, were to suffer, many were asked to exhibit sympathy for and moral adhesion to the movement.

The vow which the members of the *Satyagraha Sabha* were asked to take was as follows :

“ Being conscientiously of opinion that the Bills known as the Indian Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill No. 1 of 1919, and No. 2 of 1919 are unjust, subversive of the principle of liberty and justice and destructive of the elementary rights of individuals on which the safety of the community as a whole and the State itself is based, we solemnly affirm that, in the event of these Bills becoming law, we shall refuse civilly to obey these laws and such other laws as a committee, to be hereafter appointed, may think fit, and we further affirm that in the struggle we will faithfully follow truth, and refrain from violence of life, person, or property.”

The vow was originally drawn up in Gujarati. It was elaborated after much anxious discussion, and finally drafted in English by the present writer. Before the movement was definitely launched, notice of the intention was given in a private letter to the Viceroy by Mr. Gandhi, and a final appeal made to Lord Chelmsford to withdraw the Bills. There were many stages at which the Government, without hurt to itself, might have withdrawn from the contest that was daily lowering it further in the public estimation. But Lord Chelmsford would not wait, and lost no time in giving his formal assent to the Act as soon as it had passed through the

Council. And the hope that Mr. Montagu would interfere at the eleventh hour, and advise the King to disallow it, knowing as he did the turmoil it was creating, proved vain.

Something may be said regarding the laws which, on the decision of a committee, were to be civilly disobeyed. It was felt that passive resistance to the Rowlatt Act itself would be inadequate, since opportunity would only occur to those on whom the operation of the Act fell.

It was decided, therefore, to select from time to time other laws against liberty and individual rights, of which there are not a few in India, for civil disobedience. The initial laws that were selected for this purpose were those affecting the sale of proscribed literature and the Press Act. It would surprise many people, no doubt, to learn that there are a large number of works, of historical and classical reputation in common circulation all over the world, which are proscribed in India, lest the mind of the Indian youth should be unduly stirred by the doctrines of liberty and freedom. Works of this character were printed and taken into the streets for sale

in defiance of the law by *Satyagrahis*. They included a mild dissertation on Home Rule by Mr. Gandhi, which was proscribed some years ago and the Apologia of Socrates, also on the *Index Expurgatorius*. In addition, Mr. Gandhi published and circulated a small cyclostyle newspaper, without conforming with the regulations for publishing and printing under the Press Act, which imposes a system of licensing on all books, periodicals, and printing presses.

That was the *Satyagraha* movement so far as the activities of actual sworn *Satyagrahis* went.

But there was participation in the *Satyagraha* demonstrations of April 6 all over the country by practically the whole population of all the great cities and smaller towns and to a considerable extent in the villages and country districts. Mr. Gandhi decided that the movement should be inaugurated by demonstrations, in which the general public were invited to join. These demonstrations consisted of what is called a *hartal*, that is, general closing of shops and suspension of all work, fasting, public mourning and prayers, and other religious observances and

public meetings. The response to the call was extraordinary and provided a widespread popular manifestation of feeling unparalleled in India. Far from being confined to agitators and so-called "extremists," those participating in these demonstrations included every class, race, and sect, politicians of "moderate" views and every other shade of opinion, and millions of persons, high and low, who had never taken part or interested themselves in politics at all. In the city of Bombay, to take an example of what occurred in all the great cities, about a hundred thousand people opened the day by going to the seashore and taking part in a purifying immersion in the sea. They then marched in processions to various temples and mosques, gathering numbers as they went, and held public prayers. No distinctions of creed were recognised. Hindus were admitted freely to the Mohammedan mosques and not only prayed but spoke to the congregations. Moslems were as freely admitted to the precincts of Hindu temples. This breaking down of religious barriers was unheard of before and almost incredible

to those who had not seen it. It set the seal of approval of the whole population on the Hindu-Moslem entente, which the necessity for unity in the face of oppression of the whole people had brought about. Subsequent events in the Punjab served to strengthen this feeling of unity between the two great sections of Indian people, so greatly that never again will the ruling powers be able to look to the principle of *Divide et Impera* for their guide. That much good, at least, has come out of the obstinacy of an autocratic Government that hardened its heart against the people, and repaid their ungrudging services and sacrifices in the cause of liberty by striking a cruel blow at their own freedom.

It remains only to be said that all these immense popular manifestations passed with an absence of disorder that was remarkable. Here and there there were, maybe, isolated instances of shopkeepers who refrained from joining in the general *hartal* (there were very few such, for the response to the call was spontaneous and practically universal) being subjected to something a little stronger than moral suasion ; here and

there there were, maybe, minor collisions with the police, which were quickly subdued by the influence of leaders. But taken as a whole, these demonstrations of millions of people were marked only by their peaceful and inoffensive character. It could hardly have been otherwise. The people were in mourning for their freedom ; they fasted and prayed, and the speeches to which they listened in the evening at the enormous open-air meeting were those of leaders who exhorted them to be peaceful, to refrain from violence, and to conquer tyranny and oppression by spiritual force. Tribute to the peaceful and orderly character of the *Satyagraha* demonstrations on April 6 has been paid in the official reports.

It was only in Delhi, on March 30, that a *Satyagraha* demonstration was disturbed by an outbreak of disorder. Owing to a misunderstanding, the Delhi demonstration took place a week earlier than those elsewhere. The mistake was discovered when it was considered by the local leaders too late to alter the arrangements already made. What happened at Delhi may be described

very briefly. The response to the call for *hartal* was almost unanimous in the city, but it was reported that a refreshment vendor at the railway station had refused to close his shop. Two or three demonstrators proceeded to the station, and endeavoured to persuade him to join the *hartal*. He refused, and it is alleged, though this is denied, that he was threatened. However that may be, the station-master took unnecessarily drastic measures. The demonstrators were treated with violence, and arrested; two of them were arrested by the station-master, who called to his assistance some British soldiers who were in the station. When the news of the arrest was carried to the city, a small crowd marched to the station and demanded the release of the two men. They were told that the men had been or would be released, but they demanded to see them, and as they were not forthcoming they continued their demonstration. According to the authorities stones were thrown, and thereupon the military were requisitioned, and the crowd was fired upon, some being killed and wounded. Some of the crowd took refuge in

the Queen's Garden, and firing again took place, with further casualties.

There need be no hesitation in saying that the firing was quite unnecessary. Such a demonstration would have been dealt with very differently in this country, and an Indian crowd on such an occasion is far less dangerous than an English crowd. The result was a state of public indignation, which led not to disorder, but to the prolongation of the *hartal* in Delhi for some days. The local authorities would have declared Martial Law, but were restrained, and subsequent events showed that those who called upon them to reconsider the ~~matter~~ adopted a wise course. There were no further disturbances, and the public were quieted, largely by the efforts of popular leaders. If similar wisdom had prevailed in the Punjab, there would have been no story to tell of the killing of Europeans, and the infliction of six weeks' agony on that unhappy province. The affair at Delhi, however, is important as showing the reckless and culpable haste which the authorities in India displayed in opening fire on crowds at the

least prospect of a disturbance, and because it played its part in bringing about the causes of disturbances which occurred elsewhere, as we shall now see.

PART III

*THE DISTURBANCES AND THEIR
CAUSE*

CHAPTER VIII

AMRITSAR

HAVING seen how eminently peaceful was the nature of the *Satyagraha* demonstrations and how, with the exception of the incident at Delhi, they passed without any ebullition of public disorder or any kind of public disturbance, it requires to be explained how they were so quickly followed in a few places in the Punjab by the outbreak of violent disturbances. The fact, however, that such was the case is an illustration of the danger of arming Executive authority with powers which, though intended to deal with definite and genuine danger to the State, are invariably liable to be used by those in whose hands they are placed for the purpose of vindicating what they conceive to be the offended prestige of their own authority. The India Office has recently published a series of Reports, prepared by the district officials in the Punjab and presented to the public in this country, in the obvious hope that

they will be accepted as a justification of the drastic and brutal methods that were adopted to suppress a "rebellion," the evidence of which is entirely lacking. Far from doing that, however, they show at every stage almost the real truth: that popular disturbances were aggressively and gratuitously provoked by authority, which either had fallen into a totally inexcusable state of panic, or had deliberately set itself to crush, by methods of repression, the awakened spirit of the people, which was manifesting itself in dramatic but wholly peaceful and legitimate demonstrations.

In dealing chronologically with the events which occurred, we may follow the sequence given in the official Reports mentioned above, which, if conveniently reticent about many things and misleading about others, are at least fairly correct in this respect; and we find that no violence and no disturbance of the public peace occurred at all until the sudden arrest and deportation of leaders, who had continually impressed upon the people the necessity for abstention from violence and had been, in fact, responsible for the peaceful

character of the demonstrations. Even then there was no violence on the part of the crowd at Amritsar, where the first outbreak occurred, until they had been fired upon, with fatal casualties, in circumstances which show the action of those responsible for this to be unreasonable.

The official Report, in defending the action of the Government of the Punjab—action which was taken over the heads of the local officials immediately responsible for order in Amritsar—in arresting and deporting Dr. Satyapal and Dr. Kitchlew, two local leaders intensely loved by the people, actually says :

In the great majority of towns in the Punjab there had been a *hartal* on the 6th and no disorder had followed. The Lahore papers, while interested in maintaining the general excitement, had quoted the general course of the demonstration on the 6th as reflecting credit both on the character of the crowds and Government.

It is difficult to find in this any justification for the apprehension that the continuance of the

attitude on the part of authority thus indicated would have led to undesirable results. But the Report goes on to say that there was a state of tension, that such tension would lead to further agitation, and that further agitation was likely to have undesirable results was "the danger with which the local Government had to deal." So without, apparently, on this occasion consulting the "man on the spot"—whose untouchable authority is so often advanced to justify non-interference when he is doing something dangerous—the local Government ordered the arrest of the two leaders and their removal to a place of internment. That was the initial step, unjustifiable on the showing of the Government's own official Report, which has to be recorded as the prime cause of the terrible events which followed.

The next step followed when a wholly peaceful and not very large crowd of demonstrators, on hearing of the arrests, proceeded to the bungalow of the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar to plead for the release of the prisoners. There is no reason to suppose that anything dreadful would have occurred had they been allowed to

proceed. The reports of people on the spot show that they were not, up to that time, a threatening crowd; and the official Report tells us that "the crowd passed several Europeans on the way but did not molest them." But they were stopped at a place called the Hall Gate Bridge, and their further passage was barred by a military picket, or, as the official Report rather curiously puts it, the crowd "was angrily opposing" the picket. Mounted troops were then requisitioned, but were, so the Report says—a very different version is given from the popular side—pressed back, which seems to have been a remarkable achievement on the part of an unarmed crowd. The mounted troops, it is also alleged, were heavily stoned, and "the first-class magistrate, who had written instructions to deal with any crowd attempting to pass this point as an unlawful assembly"—why and by right of what law?—"called on the troops to fire." Several people were killed and wounded. The crowd then rushed back to the city, infuriated by the sight of their dead and wounded comrades on the ground and the action of the

authorities, who had dealt in this manner with a demonstration which set out with peaceful intentions.

Thereafter followed a series of brutal acts of violence on the part of the coarser elements in the mob, which had got entirely out of hand. No one would attempt to defend the violence that occurred, which was considerable and involved the loss of human life and great destruction of property. Five Europeans were murdered and several buildings, including the telephone exchange, two banks, the Town Hall, and the Indian Christian Church, were attacked and fired and, in some instances, destroyed. Three of those killed were officials of the National Bank and the Chartered Bank. A lady missionary doctor, Miss Sherwood, was set upon by the mob, struck with sticks and fists, and left unconscious in the street. She was subsequently rescued by some Indians, who took her into a house and cared for her until she was restored to her friends. Later the crowd again attempted to pass the Hall Gate Bridge, and were fired upon, with twenty to thirty casualties. The

telegraph wires were cut and two railway stations outside the city were attacked. During the afternoon the Commissioner of the Division, who had arrived, handed over charge to General Dyer, the Officer Commanding the Troops, with instructions to "take whatever steps he considered necessary to re-establish civil control." Reinforcements arrived and by night order was restored.

The sequence of events is important because it shows, as admitted in the official Report, that all the acts of mob violence followed on the occurrence at the Hall Gate Bridge. The whole case of the Government for a "rebellion" rests on the assertion—for there has been no proof—that all these acts of violence emanated from a premeditated intention to rebel, and were the designed outcome of a conspiracy to subvert the Government. And it was at first held that the acts of violence occurred simultaneously and independently of the Hall Gate Bridge incident. The admission in the Report that they all followed the unnecessary and unreasonable firing on the crowd at the Hall Gate Bridge, and the

killing and wounding of peaceful demonstrators, coincides with the popular assertion that the violence was provoked by the Hall Gate Bridge incident, and was a spontaneous outburst on the part of a mob infuriated by an unnecessary attack on the people. The popular version alleges, too, that the manager of the Alliance Bank provoked the attack on himself by firing his revolver into the crowd. But there is no need to enter into the discussion of minor details. The fact is established that, however indefensible the conduct of the mob, the disturbances were initially provoked by the stupidity and wanton violence of the authorities, and that on those who were responsible for the firing at the Hall Gate Bridge rests the responsibility for the flame of disorder which destroyed the peace which had been, up till then, the marked characteristic of the popular demonstrations.

CHAPTER IX

THE AMRITSAR MASSACRE

THERE were no further incidents of mob violence in Amritsar. For two days after the outbreak on April 10, the city was at peace. The people were in a sullen mood and among the better elements there was a shocked feeling at what had occurred. In the city itself, while much is in dispute between the people and the authorities, it is undoubted that no violence occurred, though it is alleged in the official report that a "threatened disturbance" was averted by a display of military force. In the districts outside the city the Report alleges that mission buildings were threatened, some telegraph wires cut, and a band of would-be looters was dispersed by the police. Much of all this is open to controversy. But as far as Amritsar city itself is concerned, the Report shows that the people, or any section of them, were not in a violent mood. The authorities forbade any demonstra-

tion in connection with the burial on the 11th of the victims of the firing by the military on the previous day. And, the Report says, these orders were carried out. All that is alleged by the authorities, on the two days following the deplorable occurrences of the 10th, is that the "attitude of the people," when a military force was sent round the city, was one of hostility, "many spitting on the ground and raising insulting cries." It is not necessary to attach importance to that. It is an obsession with a certain type of Britisher in India that when an Indian spits he is doing it to insult somebody's august presence, and the Report shows, in more than one place, that mere ebullitions of patriotism seem to be regarded as "insulting cries." The Report, in continuing to prepare the ground for the terrible incident of April 13, proceeds to say that "villagers were now pouring into the city," and "there is little doubt that the peasants of the district, who are not of a type which will keep the law unless its guardians show themselves able to enforce it, were not so far persuaded that order had been re-established

in Amritsar." "And this fact," adds the Report, "gives particular importance to the incident which occurred on the afternoon of the 13th." General Dyer was going to persuade them !

The Report is, to say the least, disingenuous. The significance of the "fact" alluded to, "that the villagers were pouring into the city"—for there is no fact in speculation as to what was in their minds—is that a religious fair was taking place in the city of Amritsar, to which the peasants of the surrounding districts were in the habit of flocking every year. The most important fact that remains, in spite of all attempts to give colour to the suggestion that there was a state of things which could possibly justify or extenuate General Dyer's action, is that two days passed after the events of the 10th and the third day had arrived, and there had been no outbreak of violence. The people had obeyed the injunction not to demonstrate at the burials. The city was at peace and was, in fact, as the Report admits, under military control.

It was at this juncture that General Dyer proceeded with an armed force to the Jallewal-

lian Bagh and opened fire without warning on a large mass meeting of a wholly peaceful character, shooting down in cold blood without a word of warning two thousand of them, and leaving the dead and wounded lying on the ground.

Martial Law had not been declared. But General Dyer held, as he said in his evidence before the Hunter Committee, that it existed *ipso facto*. There were times, he said, when one had to act without rules and regulations. He had previously made a proclamation that no meetings were to be held, and had marched round the city in the forenoon of the 13th to give a warning that no meetings were to be held. In the Report it says that "at every important point the column stopped while this was announced by beat of drum." In his evidence before the Hunter Committee, General Dyer had to admit, with a map of the city in front of him, that this statement was not true; that the proclamation was not made at every important point; important localities were omitted and large numbers of people, even if his proclama-

tion could be taken as a preliminary justification of what he did, could not have known of it. Nor did he, on his own admission, take any steps to communicate with the organisers of the meeting and warn them, though he knew for several hours beforehand that it was going to take place.

He just let things go on. And when the thousands of people who assembled, including many who came as pilgrims to the fair, were standing or sitting on the ground listening to an address, he marched up his force of infantry, opened fire, and himself directed the fire so that the soldiers should shoot where the crowd was the thickest. *He had no evidence at all to justify his assumption that this was a seditious assembly.* The people themselves say it was a meeting called to consider what should be done to ensure the preservation of peace, and to mourn for the victims of the Hall Gate Bridge incident.

Here is the summarised description of this massacre, as given in the "Chronological Statement," published with the "Reports on the Punjab Disturbances"

In the forenoon the Officer Commanding Troops, accompanied by the Deputy Commissioner, marched through city at head of some troops, announcing by beat of drum, at every important street, that no meetings would be allowed. Notwithstanding this warning, just after the troops had returned (about 4 p.m.), a meeting began assembling at the Jail-wallian Bagh, and this large crowd *only dispersed on being fired on by troops*, the casualties being considerable.

It would be hard to conceive a more misleading and dishonest summary of what actually occurred.

CHAPTER X

LAHORE—GUJRANWALA—KASUR

THE fullness of the iniquity of the Amritsar massacre and the spirit that inspired it will be dealt with in its proper place in another chapter. We are now following the sequence of the disturbances. General Dyer said he fired, and fired well, because he did not want anyone to have to shoot again in the Punjab. What followed on the Amritsar *battue*—and it is not unreasonable to argue that it was a result—was wholesale shooting and bombing of unarmed people in other parts of the Punjab, and six weeks' agony under Martial Law.

In the first paragraph of the first of the official Reports we are told that "it is clear that the outbreaks at Lahore, Gujranwala, and Kasur were directly due to the previous occurrence of such outbreaks at Amritsar."

So far as Lahore is concerned, this statement is grossly misleading. There was never anything

that could be described as an "outbreak" at Lahore. It is alleged that stones were thrown, that people spat on the ground in the presence of military officials, and laughed at them. Martial Law Commissions have recklessly attributed every kind of violent motives to crowds that did nothing violent, and dignified street demonstrations, in which nothing violent occurred but the shootings by the police and military, using such terms as "insurrection" and "rebellion." But the fact remains that nothing occurred in Lahore in the nature of mob violence.

At Gujranwala and Kasur there was serious violence. At the latter place on April 12 crowds did considerable damage to the railway station, burned a small oil shed, damaged signal and telegraph wires, attacked a train in which were some Europeans and beat two soldiers to death; a branch post-office was looted, the main post-office burned, the Munsiff's Court set on fire, and other damage done. That is the official version summarised. The popular version alleges previous provocation of the crowd.

At Gujranwala on April 14 crowds surrounded

and stoned a train, burnt a small railway bridge and fired another railway bridge where a calf had been killed—by the police, as alleged—and hung up on the bridge as an insult to Hindus, to whom the cow is sacred. The telegraph-office, post-office and railway station were subsequently set on fire, as well as the *Dāk Bungalow*, *Kutcheri* (Collector's office), a church, a school, and a railway shed.

These were the chief incidents. There were minor outbreaks elsewhere in smaller places, such as stoning of trains, cutting of wires, and setting fire to railway stations. We have not attempted to deal with any but the official version of these occurrences. But it should be mentioned that the official accounts are in many respects in dispute, and that only official evidence was heard by the Hunter Committee. An independent committee was appointed by the Indian National Congress and collected a mass of evidence, but it was not heard by the Hunter Committee. Its report, however, it is understood, will be published in due course.

There is no desire, in these pages, in any way

to minimise the gravity of the excesses committed by mobs in the Punjab. If the worst in this respect is admitted, there is nothing to excuse or justify the horrors perpetrated under Martial Law, in punishment of the innocent and guilty alike, which have yet to be detailed. And the significant fact remains and is unassailable, that in the places where disturbances occurred and these regrettable things took place, peaceful demonstrations were not turned into violent outbreaks, until the spirit of a section of the people was maddened into violence by the initial violence of the authorities. The disturbances at Amritsar followed on the arrest of the two popular leaders, and the inexcusable firing on the crowd on April 10, when nothing had occurred to justify this resort to the extreme resources of the law. The disturbances elsewhere and the so-called outbreak at Lahore followed on the arrival of the news of the arrest of Mr. Gandhi, and the arrests at Amritsar, and of the firing on the people at Lahore and Amritsar.

The arrest of Mr. Gandhi was even more reprehensible and gratuitous in its provocation

of the popular temper than those of the Amritsar leaders. Mr. Gandhi was the chief leader of a great movement, in which abstention from violence was preached without cessation. He was actually proceeding to Delhi, and thence to Amritsar, to persuade the people there to end the *hartal*, which was being prolonged without his authority, and to urge upon them by personal exhortation the necessity for strict adhesion to peaceful methods, even in the face of official provocation and violence, when two Governments, those of Delhi and the Punjab, were guilty of the extraordinary folly of issuing orders prohibiting his entry into the areas over which they had jurisdiction. When in spite of this he proceeded on his way, he was arrested and sent back under escort to Bombay. The news of his arrest created the wildest excitement throughout the country, and was responsible for much that followed. It is impossible to doubt that had he been allowed to proceed, and had the Government of the Punjab not been guilty, also, of the folly of the arrest and deportation of Dr. Satyapal and Dr. Kitchlew, and the aggressive attitude adopted

towards the demonstrators in Amritsar, there would have been no tale of horror to tell.

We are not immediately concerned with what actually occurred outside the Punjab and Delhi, but it is significant to contrast what occurred elsewhere with the events in Amritsar, Lahore, and other places in the Punjab. In Bombay the news of Gandhi's arrest brought large crowds into the streets, undoubtedly in an ugly temper. The police, however, behaved with restraint, and popular leaders were allowed to go among the people and exercise their pacifying influence. Finally, when Gandhi himself arrived, he went among them and addressed them, and the danger of any trouble ended. At Ahmedabad, where Gandhi lives, the excitement was intense and there were serious acts of mob violence. But Gandhi was allowed by the Government of Bombay to proceed to Ahmedabad, and his presence exercised an immediately pacifying effect.

Such was the difference in result between a reckless, overbearing, and brutal treatment of people greatly tried and provoked, and the adoption of a wise and statesmanlike policy,

which recognised that the pacification of the people was of greater importance than the bolstering up of official prestige at the cost of bloodshed.

PART IV

THE SIX WEEKS' TERROR

CHAPTER XI

WAS MARTIAL LAW JUSTIFIED?

THE whole case for the infliction of Martial Law in the Punjab in April last rests on very doubtful ground. The action of the Punjab Government, in this respect, is upheld to a certain extent by the judgments of the Martial Law Commissions, which they set up to try the various cases of conspiracy that were instituted. These judgments have proved a very convenient refuge for the authorities, as the Reports on the disturbances fully reveal. We have seen the weakness of the argument in justification of the arrests of the Amritsar leaders, so far as any events had till then occurred to excuse such drastic action; but the Report triumphantly records, before it proceeds on its own explanation, that "the justification for their action" (the arrests) "is the subsequent judgment of the Martial Law Commission, that they were among the prime movers in a 'conspiracy having as its

object the dissemination of sedition.'” Now we may as well dispose of these Martial Law Commission judgments at once, so far as they affect the political leaders, who have not been found guilty of any overt acts, were not “taken in arms,” and were not guilty of any violence. They are a judicial curiosity, and would provoke laughter were it not for the tragedy of their sentences of hanging, transportation for life, and confiscation of property, passed wholesale on men who had been guilty of no more than leading the people in a popular movement against the Rowlatt Act. What these people did was “conspire to hold meetings” against the Rowlatt Act—that is how the *précis* of charges sets out—and they were convicted, as quoted above, of conspiring to disseminate sedition. In order to bring in the speeches they had made prior to the outbreak of disturbances, the application of Martial Law was made retrospective, a remarkable proceeding, which, unfortunately, has been held by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council to be within the Ordinance-making power of the Government of India. But what

had they done? They had made speeches, very strong speeches, no doubt—but no stronger, as was pointed out in one of the trials, than members of the Legislative Council had made in the presence of the Viceroy without protest—against an iniquitous measure which had terrified the whole population. The law of sedition in India is as comprehensive and wide as such a law can be made. It embraces practically anything that can bring the Government into discredit—“hatred and contempt” are the words—and if applied as these Martial Law Commissions applied it, anything in the nature of a protest proportionate to the occasion, such as could be freely made in a civilised country, would be impossible. If a Government pursues a course which brings it into discredit with the people, public speakers, on behalf of the people, cannot perform an obvious public duty without being guilty of discrediting it, or even perhaps bringing it into hatred and contempt. But there is a wide distinction between that and a definite and deliberate attempt to subvert the Government by law established, or to incite others to do so.

The Martial Law tribunals in the Punjab, in the evidence and facts on which they proceeded, and their findings were a travesty of justice. The plea that their findings have in any way justified the resort of the authorities to extra-legal methods, much less to the infliction of appalling atrocities, cannot be accepted.

But if there is a case for the application of Martial Law at the height of the disturbances, which is open to grave question, there is none for its continuance over a period of about six weeks, accompanied by the most fearful methods of frightfulness which a horrible ingenuity of mind could devise. The official witnesses before the Hunter Committee have been unable to produce any evidence of rebellion or conspiracy against the State at all. The question has been put to witness after witness; and in no case has it been met with anything but a frank admission that there is no evidence in existence, or, in the case of certain military witnesses who see rebellion or conspiracy in any combination of circumstances which assails their prestige or anything inimical to the perfection of authority, vague assertions that

there was rebellion and there must have been conspiracy.

Wild and reckless assertions of Bolshevik intrigue and instigation and seditious conspiracy being behind the disturbances in the Punjab have been made both in India and in this country. There is no evidence to support them. None has ever been produced.

Mr. Barron, Chief Commissioner of Delhi, in his evidence before the Hunter Committee, said there was no evidence of any organised conspiracy. He did not suggest that anybody from Delhi stirred up the disturbances in the Punjab, or *vice versa*. Mr. Orde, the Superintendent of Police, said he found no trace of Bolshevik influence behind the disturbances. Mr. Cocks, a high official in the Criminal Investigation Department in the Punjab, admitted that he had no evidence of a rebellion or conspiracy. Similar evidence was given by others.

The Times, in a leading article recently, commenting on the letter addressed to it by Sir Michael O'Dwyer in defence of his action in approving of General Dyer's massacre, said there

had not been for many years in India, including last year, a riotous assembly that could not have been dispersed by a dozen armed policemen, armed with smooth-bore rifles. And those who know the facts, and have no motive for misrepresentation, know this to be true. Every one of the riotous assemblies in the Punjab could have been so dispersed. There have been equally dangerous disturbances in England, without a shot being fired. One of the features of the evidence regarding the Amritsar disturbances, however, which is highly significant was that the police were singularly apathetic. And now ~~the report~~ comes from India that searches carried out in connection with the arrest of a number of policemen at Amritsar, implicated in thefts, have led to the discovery of property belonging to the National Bank, which was looted during the disturbances in April last !

Whatever may be the findings of the Hunter Committee, which has heard only official evidence, and is appointed by the Government of India whose responsibility is in question, the whole case for the infliction of Martial Law is open to

the gravest doubt. Yet for six weeks it was perpetuated and the horrors now to be related inflicted on the people of whose loyalty and good behaviour Sir Michael O'Dwyer, who was responsible as Lieutenant-Governor for its horrors, had made a constant boast.

CHAPTER XII

DYERARCHY IN AMRITSAR

THE incident that is chiefly impressed on the minds of the public in this country, in a whole series of frightful events, is, of course, the Amritsar massacre, to which reference has already been made. Much of the other incidents of a long narrative is, as yet, little known. But General Dyer's own relation of the performance of what he described as his "horrible duty" impresses the imagination and is ineffaceable. He did not pretend that what he did was necessary, even for the dispersal of a meeting, the improper character of which was a pure assumption on his part. He had no authority for what he did. He had no authority to make his proclamation prohibiting meetings. Martial Law had not been proclaimed. Authority to re-establish civil control had been confided to him by a civil official who had no legal authority to delegate this duty to anyone, or to do anything

but call for military assistance in the maintenance of order, according to clearly defined statutory rules. But he conceived in the wisdom of his own Prussian mind that the time had come to act without rules or regulations. "He understood roughly that civil law was at an end and military law would have to take its place."

At 12.40 he heard that the meeting at the Jallewallian Bagh was to be held that evening. But he took no steps to prevent it. He waited for it to assemble and then he marched down on it with his force of rifles and machine-guns. He would have used his machine-guns, he declared, if he could have got them into the enclosure. But they were attached to armoured cars, which could not be got through the entrances. The thousands of helpless, unarmed people, some of them boys and children, were at his mercy, practically penned up in an enclosure from which they could only escape over walls, or through the entrances commanded by his soldiers. And deliberately, in cold blood, calmly directing the fire where the crowd was thickest, he fired upon

them for ten minutes until his ammunition was exhausted.

He "felt his orders had not been obeyed. Martial Law"—which did not then exist—"had been flouted, and he considered it his duty to disperse the crowd by rapid fire."

He was asked why he did not stop firing when the crowd began to disperse. His reply was that he thought it was his duty to go on firing until the crowd dispersed, and that a little firing would not be sufficient.

He was asked if his idea was to strike terror in the people. He said, if he found they had disobeyed his order he meant to punish them and teach them a lesson. His idea was that, from a military point of view, it would make a wide impression throughout the Punjab!

"It was a merciful act. It was a horrible act, and it required a lot of doing. It was his opinion it did a lot of good."

"He did not think it was a disservice to the British Raj. What he did was right, and they ought to be thankful for it."

After the firing he did not take any steps

to attend to the wounded. "Certainly not. It was not his job. Hospitals were open and they could have gone to them."

Mr. Justice Rankin, a member of the Hunter Committee, said with somewhat uncalled-for politeness: "Excuse me putting it in this way, General, but was it not a form of frightfulness?" And the General replied:

"No, it was not. It was a horrible duty I had to perform. I think it was a merciful thing. I thought that I should shoot well and shoot strong, so that I, or anybody else, should not have to shoot again."

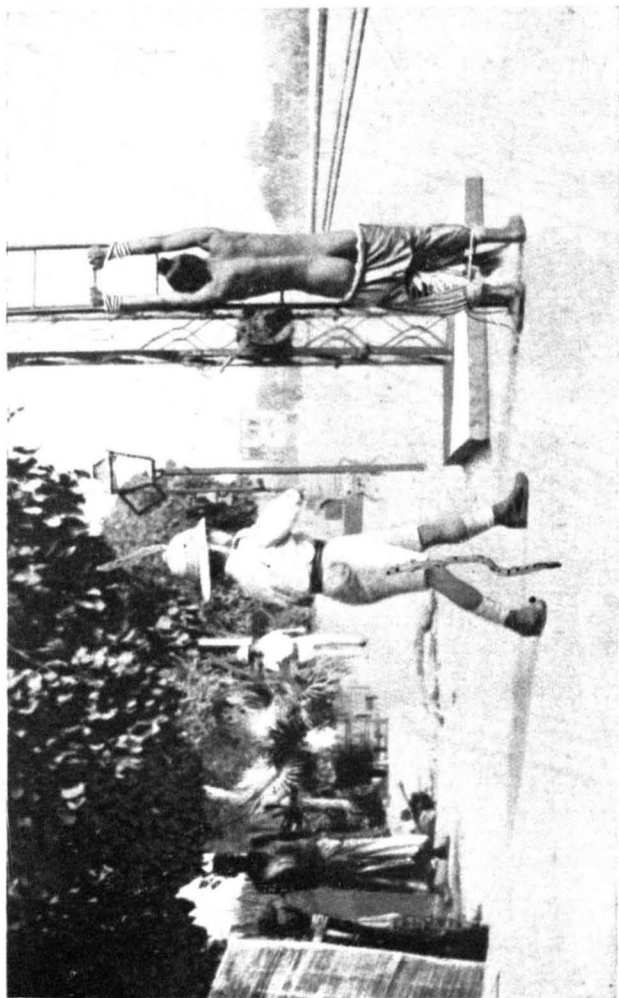
And, finally:

"I think it is quite possible I could have dispersed the crowd without firing, but they would have come back again and laughed, *and I should have made what I consider to be a fool of myself.*"

General Dyer admitted that the number of killed might have been four or five hundred, and he would estimate the number of wounded at three times the number killed. Unofficial agencies, which have very carefully investigated

the matter, claim to have established that the casualties far exceeded the numbers admitted by General Dyer. But if we accept his figures, no less than 2,000 people, including a number of mere boys, and even children in arms, who were defenceless, unarmed, committing no sort of wrong in the view of anyone but himself, were shot down by this British General without warning, and left by him where they fell. And his action was immediately approved by the Lieutenant - Governor, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, in a telegram sent to him by his military superior after he had obtained Sir Michael's assent, which ran : "Your action correct : Lieutenant-Governor approves."

The public cannot be asked to suspend judgment on such an atrocity, in the face of the brutal revelation of the perpetrator himself. It is an affront to humanity to ask us, as Mr. Montagu has recently done, to consider ourselves in the position of a British General, who has to deal with a critical situation where prompt and swift action is required ; and to indulge, as other people have done, in similar cant about the



TIED TO LADDER.

Another picture of an Indian tied to a ladder at Kasur railway-station being flogged.

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character of men who are entitled to a large measure of confidence and support being at stake. The British Press, with one or two ignoble exceptions, and of all shades of opinion, has condemned, as decent-minded people could only do, without hesitation or compromise the perpetration of a deed which has profoundly shocked, not merely the public of Great Britain, but of the whole world. It would be better to consider ourselves in the position of those on whom this atrocity was wantonly inflicted, and to endeavour to realise the impression it must have created in the mind of the whole Indian people, on whom we claim to impose a just and humane rule.

If Dyerarchy in Amritsar had begun and ended with this incident, the disgrace to Britain would have been sufficiently deep. But it was brought to still further depths by the iniquities which followed during the six weeks of administration of Martial Law under Dyer, with the continued approval, knowledge, and co-operation of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, and also the Government of India, who had given the Lieutenant-

Governor a blank cheque and provided him, by a series of proclamations and ordinances, with unlimited power to override the ordinary law and destroy liberty. While the various administrators of Martial Law in different districts proceeded on a generally similar plan, the similarity of the chief orders indicating one directing mind or council, each distinguished himself for individual originality and ingenuity in devising special atrocities and methods of frightfulness, sometimes on the plan of making the punishment fit the crime, sometimes with the object of striking at some particular class or section of the community (such as lawyers or students), and sometimes, apparently, inspired only by the desire to do something frightful.

General Dyer was as active in both respects as his brother officers in Lahore, Kasur, and Gujranwala. The Jallewallian Bagh *battue*, of course, is an achievement which has earned for him a special niche of his own in the gallery of frightfulness, and will go down in history as an indelible blot on British rule in India. This took place, as has been seen, before Martial Law

was proclaimed (the date of proclamation was April 15). But as the reader will have gathered from the summary of his evidence given on a previous page, General Dyer assumed all the functions of a properly constituted administrator of Martial Law, with full powers to do anything he liked, the moment he received from an unauthorised source the request to take over control and re-establish the civil power—which was ineffective, it may be mentioned, through the fault of its own incompetence and ineptitude and for no other reason. And on the very day that he left two thousand dead and dying on the ground at Jallewallian Bagh—to go to the hospitals if they liked—he had issued a Curfew Order, that all persons must be indoors after 8 p.m., and would go abroad in the streets at the risk of being shot at sight. Is it surprising that the wounded lay in their agony, that the dead lay putrefying in the hot atmosphere of an Amritsar April night, that the vultures and jackals came to tear the flesh from the bodies of the innocent victims of this dreadful holocaust, while the anxious relatives of innocent victims

remained terrified in their houses. There were families who knew that loved ones had gone to the Jallewallian Bagh and had not returned. They had heard of the massacre. But if they went forth to seek their missing kin, the military pickets were waiting with loaded rifles. Is it conceivable that the man who had done this thing did not know also and fully realise the effect of the Curfew Order? Is it to be supposed that the man who could come before a public inquiry months afterwards and say it was "not his job" to tend the wounded, that "the hospitals were open and they could go to them," was not anything but deliberate in this additional infliction of frightfulness?

The Curfew Order in Amritsar was maintained for weeks, and was administered with the utmost rigour. There are stories told in connection with this which, in the absence of any but official evidence, have not come before the Hunter Committee. They belong to a whole quantity of allegations, which are so grave as to make it essential, apart from all other considerations, that a fuller, more authoritative, and impartial

investigation should be held. It is not proposed to deal with these matters here, however. They will come, in due course, before the public when the Report of the Congress Committee of Investigation is available.

Among General Dyer's inspirations was the cutting off of the water supply and the electric supply of the city. By these and other general orders, he made the might of his name known, and inflicted untold moral and material suffering on the population of a loyal and historic city. But the spirit in which this man set out to impress the people with the might of the British Raj, as represented by his august authority, was most luridly illustrated in the public floggings, and what is known as the "crawling order." By his orders, for several days, everyone passing through the street in which Miss Sherwood, the lady doctor, was assaulted was ordered to crawl with belly to the ground. There were people living in this street, respectable and respected citizens of the British Empire. It was the street not only in which Miss Sherwood was assaulted, but also in which kind-hearted Indians came

from their house, took her in, and tended her with loving hands. But *all* who lived in the street had to obey Dyer's disgusting order if they wished to leave their houses or return to them, though he was good enough to say in his evidence that they could have gone over the roofs! How many underwent the humiliation we do not know. But it was made a jest by the official members in the Imperial Legislative Council, great merriment being excited by Quartermaster-General Hudson's account of a poor wretch who, for martyrdom or from imbecility, crawled up and down the street till he was stopped! Such are the men who represent the humanity and decency of a noble-hearted people in the Council of the Viceroy. Such is the representative of the King-Emperor, who sat in the Viceroy's throne in the Council Chamber while this was going on!

Floggings were a common feature of the administration of Martial Law in Amritsar as in other areas. The sentences were inflicted by summary courts for trivial offences on trumped-up evidence. The public flogging of some men

who were alleged to have been concerned in the assault on Miss Sherwood, was an exceptional incident, akin to the crawling order. These men had not been tried or convicted for the crime. They were awaiting trial. But to create an example, they were brought to the scene of the assault, and *publicly flogged in the street*. They were tried afterwards! What words can be strong enough to describe this iniquity adequately? General Dyer tried to excuse and defend this before the Committee. The men were not flogged for their alleged share in the assault on Miss Sherwood, he said, but because they had committed a breach of discipline, while under confinement in the fort.

It is impossible to regard this as anything but a contemptible subterfuge. If the object was not to impress the populace with the fate in store for those who attacked or were suspected of having attacked an Englishwoman, why were these men taken to the street where the assault on Miss Sherwood was committed, to receive this punishment in anticipation of their trial? It was clearly part of a general plan of frightful-

ness which would have done credit to a Prussian officer in Belgium.

In addition to the Martial Law orders already mentioned, others of a drastic nature among a large number may be mentioned. The issue of third-class tickets on the railways was prohibited, which involved a general suspension of travelling by the Indian public. More than two persons were prohibited from marching abreast on sidewalks or pavements. Bicycles, "other than those owned by Europeans," were commandeered. People who had closed their shops were forced to open them, under severe penalties. Prices of commodities were fixed by military officers. Carts were commandeered. A public platform for whippings was erected near the fort, and a number of triangles for floggings were erected in various parts of the city.

The comments of the official Report on some of these orders and incidents are amusing in their apparent ingenuousness. "The prohibition of the issue of third-class tickets," we are told, "naturally caused inconvenience to the general public," but "was held to be essential to prevent

communication between agitators." "It is, however," adds the Report, "a restriction of somewhat too extensive a nature for general use!"

The regulations for fixing prices, the Report admits, "cannot, *on the whole*, be regarded as *entirely* successful." Though it was harvest-time, it had the effect of sending prices up and preventing grain from coming in. "It was necessary to *raise* prices week by week, and also to publish notices that carts coming into the city would not be commandeered," and "it was finally found necessary to discontinue fixed prices altogether." One is able to gather from these naïve accounts of the effects and incidence of Martial Law generally, and the results of the efforts of military officers to regulate the economic life of the city on lines of their own, that the boasts that were made at the time that they were protecting the poor against profiteers, and the people against themselves, were ill-founded. On the contrary, people in Amritsar tell of the agony and terror that they underwent, and the economic miseries that were

added to their other sufferings while the period of Dyerarchy lasted.

Finally, here are the figures of the cases dealt with by the Courts at Amritsar. On major charges 298 people were put before the Martial Law Commissions, who tried cases unfettered by the ordinary recognised rules of procedure or laws of evidence. Of these 218 were convicted: 51 were sentenced to death, 46 to transportation for life, 2 to imprisonment for ten years, 79 for seven years, 10 for five years, 13 for three years, and 11 for lesser periods. This does not take account of the cases dealt with summarily by military officers, numbering 60 persons, of whom 50 were convicted, and 105 persons convicted under Martial Law by civil magistrates. These figures are sufficient to indicate the severity with which the law that is no law was administered by the Commissions and Summary Courts. They do not tell, however, of the travesty of justice which the proceedings of these tribunals constituted, the absurdity of the charges, and the inadequacy of the evidence.

CHAPTER XIII

"THE PHYSICIAN" FROM BECHUANALAND

ACCORDING to the Official Report contained in the White Paper recently issued to Parliament, the administration of Martial Law was "more intensive" in Lahore than elsewhere. The reason for this is not to be found in the occurrence of greater violence there on the part of the mob than elsewhere—because in Lahore there was, as we have said, no violence at all worthy of the name, even on the official showing, although crowds were fired on and people were killed and wounded—but because at Lahore the gentleman to whom the task of administering Martial Law was entrusted was a trained expert (Lieutenant-Colonel Frank Johnson, D.S.O., had lived many years in South Africa, and administered Martial Law among the unfortunate natives of Bechuanaland, no doubt with an "intensity" which has left his name an impressive memory among the population of that Protectorate), and

also because, probably, Lahore being the capital city of the Punjab and the headquarters of the Lieutenant-Governor, that august person was on the spot throughout, helping, advising, directing, and conferring with his military administrators. But Colonel Johnson, on this latter account, should not be deprived of any of the credit which rightly belongs to him. He showed not only an intensity but a malignant efficiency in devising means for the terrorisation of the population, which, if not always as full-blooded, was as ingenious and refined in the cruelty of method as any displayed by his competitors. The "physician" from Bechuanaland was the appellation given him by *The Independent*, in ironical allusion to the panegyrics of *The Pioneer*, which hailed him as the "physician" with expert experience of Martial Law in Bechuanaland. Colonel Johnson, when giving his evidence and proudly relating—for not one of these men ever showed anything but arrogant pride in his achievements—his deeds before the Committee, declared "he had been longing for an opportunity to show the people of the Punjab