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SPEECHES AND WRITINGS  
OF  
**M. K. GANDHI**

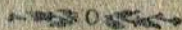


WITH

AN INTRODUCTION BY

**MR. C. F. ANDREWS**

AND A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.



**12155**

THIRD EDITION

G. A. NATESAN & CO., MADRAS

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If we would classify him with any of the supren figures of human history, it must be with such aug religious prophets as Confucius and Lao-tse, Buddha, Zoroaster and Mohammed, and, most truly of all, the Nazarene ! Out of Asia, at long intervals of time, have arisen these inspired witnesses of God. One by one they have appeared to teach men by precept and example the law of life, and therewith to save the race. To-day, in this our time, there comes another of this sacred line, the Mahatma of India. In all reverence and with due regard for historic fact, I match this man with Jesus Christ :—Rev. Dr. Holmes. —Minister of the Community Church, New York City.

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## PUBLISHERS' NOTE

THIS is an exhaustive, comprehensive and thoroughly up-to-date edition of Mr. Gandhi's Speeches and Writings revised and considerably amplified, with the addition of a large number of articles from *Young India* and *Navajivan* (rendered into English.) The inclusion of these papers have almost doubled the size of the old edition and the present collection runs to about 1,000 pages of well-arranged matter ranging over the whole period of Mr. Gandhi's public life. It opens with a succinct biographical sketch of Mr. Gandhi bringing the account of his life down to the historic trial and sentence. The Volume begins with the Indian South African Question and covers his views on indentured labour and Indians in the Colonies, his jail experiences in South Africa, his pronouncements on the Khairatpur and Champaran affairs, his discourses on Rowlatt Bills and Satyagraha, and finally his *Young India* and *Navajivan* articles on the Non-Co-operation movement, including his papers on the Khilafat and Punjab wrongs, the Congress, Swadeshi, Boycott, *Charkha*, National Education and Swaraj. The additional chapters are arranged under suitable headings and include his messages on the eve of and after the arrest, his statement before the court, the trial and judgment.





Then follows a symposium of appreciations from such diverse men as Tolstoy and Tagore, Prof. Gilbert Murray and Dr. Holmes of New York besides excerpts from the British and American press. The book which is bound in cloth and indexed contains portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Gandhi and three characteristic pictures of Mr. Gandhi taken at different periods of his life.

MAY, 1922.

G. A. NATESAN & CO.





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By Mr. C. F. Andrews

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## INTRODUCTION.

It appears to me unnecessary for any prefatory note to be written to the Life and Speeches of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi; they live and speak for themselves. Personally, I have had such a great shrinking from writing anything, during his life-time, about one whom I reverence so deeply, that I have many times refused to do so. But a promise given in an unguarded moment now claims fulfilment, and I will write very briefly.

To Mr. Gandhi, any swerving from the truth, even in casual utterance, is intolerable; his speeches must be read as stating uncompromisingly what he feels to be true. They are in no sense diplomatic, or opportunist, or merely 'political,' using the word in its narrower sense. He never pays empty compliments: he never hesitates to say, for the truth's sake, what may be unpalatable to his audience.

I shrink, as I have said, out of the very reverence that I have for him, from writing for the cold printed page about his character; but I may perhaps not offend by setting down something, however inadequate, concerning his intellectual convictions. It is of the utmost importance to understand these; because, in his case, they are held so strongly, as to bind fast his whole life and to stamp it with an originality, all its own.

The greatest of all these is his conviction of the eternal and fundamental efficacy of *ahimsa*. What this means to him, will be explained a hundred times over in the writings which follow. To Mr. Gandhi,—it would not be too much to say,—*ahimsa* is the key to all higher existence. It is the divine life itself. I have never yet been able to reconcile this with his own recruiting campaign, for war purposes, during the year 1918. But he was, himself, able to reconcile it; and some day, no doubt, he will give





on the basis of racial equality, and that the principle of racial equality would come out triumphantly vindicated after the present struggle in India was over. Indeed, he held himself to be the champion of that theory, and the upholder of the British Constitution.

Whether that belief, which he has held so persistently and patiently all these years, will be justified at last, time alone can show. I remember how impressed I was at the time by the fact that he, who had been treated so disgracefully time after time in South Africa, should still retain his faith in the British character. I said to him, "It would almost seem as if you had more faith in my own countrymen than I have myself." He said to me, "That may be true,"—and I felt deeply his implied rebuke.

I have gone through carefully the words he employed later at the time of his trial, and in spite of all that he said with such terrible severity concerning the evil effect of British Rule in India, I do not think that he has actually departed from the position which runs through all the speeches in this book from beginning to end. He still trusts that the temper and character of the British people will change for the better, and that the principle of racial equality will finally be acknowledged in actual deed, not merely in word. If that trust is realised, then he is prepared to remain within the British Empire. But if that trust is ultimately shattered, then he will feel that at last the time has come to sever once and for all the British connexion.

Shantiniketan,  
May, 1922.

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C. F. ANDREWS.

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THREE CHARACTERISTIC PORTRAITS OF MR. GANDHI.

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MR. AND MRS. GANDHI.





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# M. K. GANDHI

A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE AND WORK.

## A SCENE IN JOHANNESBURG

THE scene is laid in Johannesburg. Summer is coming and the days are lengthening out. At Park Station, at 6 o'clock on a Sunday evening, in September 1908, whilst it was still broad daylight, a small animated group of dark-skinned people might have been observed eagerly looking in the direction from which the mail train from Natal, that stops at Volksrust, was expected. The watchers were Madrassi hawkers, who were apparently awaiting the arrival of one affectionately regarded by them. Punctually to time, the train steamed in and there was observed, descending from a second-class compartment, attended by a prison-warder in uniform, a small, slim, dark, active man with calm eyes and a serene countenance. He was clad in the garb of a South African native convict—small military cap, that did not protect him from the sun, loose, coarse jacket, bearing a numbered ticket and marked with the broad arrow, short trousers, one leg dark, the other light, similarly marked, thick grey woollen socks and leather sandals. But it was plain that he was not a South African native, and upon closer scrutiny, one became aware that he, too, was an Indian, like those who respectfully saluted him, as he turned quietly to the warder for instructions. He was carrying a white canvas bag, which held his clothing and other effects found upon him when he was received by the gaol authorities, and also a small basket containing books. He had been sent by the Government to travel nearly two hundred miles, for many hours, without food or the means of procuring it, as the warder





had no funds for that purpose and but for the charity of a European friend—a Government official—he would have had to starve for twenty-four hours. A brief consultation ensued between the prisoner and the warder. The latter appeared to realise the incongruity of the situation, for he bore himself towards the prisoner with every reasonable mark of respect. The latter was evidently a person of some importance, to whom a considerable amount of deference should be shown. The subject of conversation was whether the prisoner preferred to go by cab or to walk to the gaol. If the former, he (the prisoner) would have to pay for it. He, however, declined the easier method of locomotion, choosing to walk three-quarters of a mile in broad day-light, in his convict suit, to the gaol and resolutely shouldering his bag, he briskly stepped out, the Madrassi hawkers shamefacedly following at some distance. Later, he disappeared within the grim portals of the Johannesburg gaol, above which is carved, in Dutch, the motto, "Union makes strength."

Five years have passed. On the dusty, undulating road from Standerton to Greylingstad, for a distance of three miles, is seen a long, trailing "army" of men who, on closer inspection, are recognisable as Indians of the labouring classes, to the number of some two thousand. Upon questioning them, it would be found that they had been gathered from the coal mines of Northern Natal, where they had been working under indenture, or as "free" men, liable to the £3 annual tax upon the freedom of themselves, their wives, their sons of 16 years and their daughters of thirteen. They had marched from Newcastle to Charlestown, whence they had crossed the border into the Transvaal, at Volksrust. They were now marching stolidly and patiently on, until they reached Tolstoy Farm, near Johannesburg, or they were arrested, as prohibited immigrants, by the Government. Thus they had marched for several days on a handful of rice, bread and sugar a day, carrying with them all their few worldly belongings, hopeful that, at the end, the burden of the hated £3 tax would be removed from their shoulders. They appeared





to place implicit trust in a small, limping, bent, but dogged man, coarsely dressed, and using a staff, painfully marching at the head of the straggling column, but with a serene and peaceful countenance, and a look of sureness and content. A nearer inspection of this strange figure discloses the same individual that we have already seen entering the forbidding portals of the "Fort," at Johannesburg. But how much older looking and care-worn! He has taken a vow to eat only one poor meal a day, until the iniquitous tax upon the honour and chastity of his brothers and sisters shall have been repealed. Upon him, as the foremost protagonist of the movement, has fallen the main burden and responsibility of organising one of the greatest and noblest protests against tyranny that the world has ever seen during the preceding seven years. Time has left its mark upon him! ♣

Nine more years have passed. Bent down by the weight of years, but resolute of heart, that same figure is yet the cynosure of all eyes. The scene is laid now in Ahmedabad where thousands of Khadder-clad pilgrims march in solemn array to the court-house and await "the man of destiny." It was twelve noon on the 18th of March. That same frail figure in a loin cloth, with the dear old familiar smile of deep content, enters the court-house. The whole court suddenly rises to greet the illustrious prisoner. "This looks like a family gathering," says he with the benignant smile of his. The heart of the gathering throbs with alternate hopes and fears but the angust prisoner, pure of heart and meek of spirit, is calm like the deep sea. In a moment the great trial had begun; and as the prisoner made his historic statement, tears were seen trickling down the cheeks of the stoutest of hearts "I wish to endorse all the blame that the Advocate-General has thrown on my shoulders," says he with perfect candour. "To preach disaffection to the existing system of Government has become almost a passion with me. \* \* \* I do not ask for mercy. I do not plead any extenuating act. I am here therefore to invite and submit to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a deliberate crime and what





appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen." And then follows the terrible inditement of the Government. The judge himself is deeply moved. He feels the greatness of the occasion and in slow and deliberate accents he says: "It will be impossible to ignore the fact that you are in a different category from any person I have ever tried or am likely to try. It would be impossible to ignore the fact that in the eyes of millions of your countrymen you are a great patriot and a great leader. Even those who differ from you in politics look upon you as a man of high ideals and of noble and even saintly life." But, Oh, the irony of it! "I have to deal with you in one character only \* \* to judge you as a man subject to the law who has by his own admission broken the law and committed, what to an ordinary man must appear to be, grave offences against the state." A sentence of six years' simple imprisonment is passed; but the judge adds: "that if the course of events in India should make it possible for the Government to reduce the period and release you, no one will be better pleased than I." And the prisoner thanks the judge and there is perfect good humour. Was there ever such a trial in the history of British Courts or any other court for the matter of that? And finally he bids farewell to the tearful throng pressing forward to touch the bare feet of him whose presence was a benediction!

The man is Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Dewan's son, Barrister-at-Law, scholar, student, cultured Indian gentleman "farmer, weaver," and leader of his people. Because he preferred to obey the dictates of conscience, because he placed honour before comfort or even life itself, because he chose not to accept an insult to his Motherland, because he strove so that right should prevail and that his people might have life, a civilised, Christian Government in a Colony over which waves the British flag, deemed that the best way to overcome such dangerous contumacy was to cast his body into gaol, where at one time he was compelled to herd with and starve upon the diet of the most degraded aboriginal native felons, men barely emerging from the condition of brute beasts, or rather, with all their





human aspirations and instincts crushed out of them by the treatment accorded to them under the "civilising" process of the Transvaal's colour legislation. And, again obeying the behests of conscience, believing that he best serves India so, he has again chosen the refuge of prison, convinced like Thoreau that he is freer than his gaolers or those who mourn for him, but do not liberate themselves from bondage.

#### EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on the 2nd October, 1869. Though he has a Brahmin's spirituality and desire to serve and teach, he is not a Brahmin. Though he has a Kshattriya's courage and devotion, he is not a Kshattriya. He belongs to an old Bania family resident in Kathiawar, politics being a heritage of the family. His forefathers were Dewans of the State of Porbandar in that Province, his father having been Dewan of that State for 25 years, as also of Rajkote and other States in Kathiawar. He was likewise, at one time, a member of the Rajasthani Sabha, having been nominated thereto by the Government of Bombay. Mr. Gandhi's father was known to and loved by all with whom he came in contact and he did not hesitate, if need came, to oppose the will of the Rana of Porbandar and of the Political Agent, when he thought that they were adopting a wrong or unworthy line of conduct. This particular trait has evidently descended to his youngest son. Mr. Gandhi's mother was an orthodox Hindu lady, rigid in her observance of religious obligations, strict in the performance of her duties as wife and mother, and stern in determination that her children should grow up good and honest men and women. Between her youngest son and herself existed a strong affection and her religious example and influence left a lasting impression upon his character. Mohandas Gandhi received his education partly in Kathiawar and partly in London. It was only with the greatest difficulty that his mother could be prevailed upon to consent to his crossing the waters, and before doing so, she exacted from





him a threefold vow, administered by a Jain priest that he would abstain from flesh, alcohol and women. And this vow was faithfully and whole-heartedly kept amidst all the temptations of student life in London. Young Gandhi became an under-graduate of the London University and afterwards joined the Inner Temple, whence he emerged in due course a barrister-at-law. He returned to India immediately after his call, and was at once admitted as an Advocate of the Bombay High Court, in which capacity he began practice with some success.

#### VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA

In 1893, Mr. Gandhi was induced to go to South Africa, proceeding to Natal and then to the Transvaal, in connection with an Indian legal case of some difficulty. Almost immediately upon landing at Durban, disillusionment awaited him. Brought up in British traditions of the equality of all British subjects, an honoured guest in the capital of the Empire, he found that in the British Colony of Natal, he was regarded as a pariah, scarcely higher than a savage aboriginal native of the soil. He appealed for admission as an Advocate of the Supreme Court of Natal, but his application was opposed by the Law Society on the ground that the law did not contemplate that a coloured person should be admitted to practise. Fortunately, the Supreme Court viewed the matter in a different light and granted the application. But Mr. Gandhi received sudden warning of what awaited him in the years to come.

In 1894, on the urgent invitation of the Natal Indian community, he decided to remain in the Colony, in order that he might be of service in the political troubles that he foresaw in the near future. In that year, together with a number of prominent members of the community he founded the Natal Indian Congress, being for some years its honorary secretary, in which capacity he drafted a number of petitions and memorials admirable in construction, lucid and simple in phraseology, clear and concise in the manner of setting forth the subject matter. He took a leading part in the successful attempt to defeat the Asiatics' Exclusion Act passed by the Natal Parliament.





and in the unsuccessful one to prevent the disfranchisement of the Indian community, though the effort made obliged the Imperial authorities to insist that this disfranchisement should be effected along non-racial lines. At the end of 1895, he returned to India, being authorised by the Natal and Transvaal Indians to represent their grievances to the Indian public. This he did by means of addresses and a pamphlet, the mutilated contents of which were summarised by Reuter and cabled to Natal, where they evoked a furious protest on the part of the European colonists. The telegram ran thus: "A pamphlet published in India declares that the Indians in Natal are robbed, and assaulted, and treated like beasts, and are unable to obtain redress. The *Times of India* advocates an enquiry into these allegations."

This message was certainly not the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, though it had elements of truth in it. About the same time, Mr. Gandhi returned to Durban with his family, and with him, though independently of him, travelled several compatriots. The rumour arose that he was bringing with him a number of skilled Indian workers with the express object of ousting the European artisans from the field of employment, and the two circumstances combined to stimulate in the colonists, high and low alike, all the worst passions, and feeling ran so high that the Attorney-General, Mr. Escombe, felt himself obliged to side with the popular party, and accordingly gave instructions that the vessels bringing Mr. Gandhi and his companions should be detained in quarantine. The quarantine was only raised when the ship-owners announced their intention of taking legal action against the Government. The vessels now came alongside the wharf, but the crowd that assembled became so hostile that a police inspector, who came on board, warned Mr. Gandhi of his own personal danger if he landed then, and urged him to delay the landing until night. A little later, however, a well-known member of the Natal Bar came on board specially to greet Mr. Gandhi and offer his services, and Mr. Gandhi at once determined to land without waiting for darkness to





come, trusting, as he himself expressed it, to the British sense of justice and fair-play. He was soon recognised, however, set upon, and half-killed, when the wife of the superintendent of police, who recognised him, ran to his rescue, and, raising her umbrella over him, defied the crowd and accompanied him to the store of an Indian friend. Mr. Gandhi was, however, in order to save his friend's property, obliged to escape disguised as a police constable.

The affair was at an end, popular passions calmed down, and the newspapers apologised to him, though the incident demonstrated the temper of the mob towards the resident Indian community. Years afterwards, meeting Mr. Gandhi one day, Mr. Escombe expressed profound regret at his connection with this unsavoury business, declaring that, at the time, he was unacquainted with Mr. Gandhi's personal merits and those of the community to which he belonged. Half-an-hour later he was found dead in the streets, stricken down by heart-disease.

#### BOER WAR AND THE INDIAN AMBULANCE CORPS

In 1899, at the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War, Mr. Gandhi, after considerable opposition, induced the Government to accept the offer of an Indian Ambulance Corps. The Corps was one thousand strong and saw active service, being on one occasion, at least, under heavy fire, and on another, removing the dead body of Lord Robert's only son from the field. The Corps was favourably reported on, and Mr. Gandhi was mentioned in despatches and afterwards awarded the war medal. His object in offering the services of a body of Indian to do even the most menial work was to show that the Indian community desired to take their full share of public responsibilities, and that just as they knew how to demand rights, so they also knew to assume obligations. And that has been the keynote of Mr. Gandhi's public work from the beginning.

Writing in the *Illustrated Star* of Johannesburg in July 1911, a European, who had taken part in that campaign, says :—

My first meeting with Mr. M. K. Gandhi was under strange circumstances. It was on the road from Spion Kop, after the





fateful retirement of the British troops in January, 1900. The previous afternoon I saw the Indian mule-train moved up the slopes of the Kop carrying water to the distressed soldiers who had lain powerless on the plateau. The mules carried the water in immense bags, one on each side, led by Indians at their heads. The galling rifle-fire, which heralded their arrival on the top, did not deter the strangely-looking cavalcade, which moved slowly forward, and as an Indian fell, another quietly stepped forward to fill the vacant place. Afterwards the grim duty of the bearer corps, which Mr. Gandhi organised in Natal, began. It was on such occasions the Indians proved their fortitude, and the one with the greatest fortitude of all was the subject of this sketch. After a night's work which had shattered men with much bigger frames. I came across Gandhi in the early morning sitting by the roadside—eating a regulation Army biscuit. Every man in Buller's force was dull and depressed, and damnation was heartily invoked on everything. But Gandhi was stoical in his bearing, cheerful, and confident in his conversation, and had a kindly eye. He did one good. It was an informal introduction, and it led to a friendship. I saw the man and his small undisciplined corps on many a field of battle during the Natal campaign. When succour was to be rendered they were there. Their unassuming dauntlessness cost them many lives, and eventually an order was published forbidding them to go into the firing-line. Gandhi simply did his duty then, and his comment the other evening in the moment of his triumph, at the dinner to the Europeans who had supported the Indian movement, when some hundreds of his countrymen and a large number of Europeans paid him a noble tribute, was that he had simply done his duty.

## RETURN TO INDIA

In 1901, owing to a breakdown in health, Mr. Gandhi came to India, taking his family with him. Before he went, however, the Natal Indian community presented him, Mrs. Gandhi, and his children with valuable gold plate and jewellery. He refused, however, to accept a single item of this munificent gift, putting it on one side to be used for public purposes, should the need arise. The incident but endeared him the more to the people, who realised once again how selfless was the work that he had so modestly and unassumingly undertaken. Before the Ambulance Corps left for the front, its members had been publicly entertained by the late Sir John Robinson, then Prime Minister of Natal, and on the occasion of the presentation to Mr. Gandhi by the Indian community, he addressed a





letter to the organisers of the ceremony, in which, after excusing his unavoidable absence, he said :—

It would have given me great pleasure to have been present on the occasion of so well-earned a mark of respect to our able and distinguished fellow-citizen, Mr. Gandhi. . . . Not the less heartily do I wish all success to this public recognition of the good work done and the many services rendered to the community by Mr. Gandhi.

On his arrival in Bombay Mr. Gandhi once more resumed practice, as he then had no intention of returning to South Africa, believing that with the end of the war, a new era had arrived.

#### BACK TO SOUTH AFRICA

Scarcely, however, had he returned from the Calcutta Congress, where, under Mr. Wacha, he did some very useful organising work unobtrusively, when he received an urgent telegram from Natal, peremptorily calling him back to South Africa to draft the memorials to Mr. Chamberlain, whose visit was imminent, to take charge of the work required to secure the removal of existing grievances and to place Indian affairs finally on a higher level. Without a moment's hesitation he obeyed the call of duty, and a new chapter opened in his life. In Natal, he had been able to overcome official prejudice and was high in the esteem of all those heads of departments and ministers with whom his public duties brought him into contact. But when, after heading a deputation to Mr. Chamberlain in Natal, he was called to the Transvaal for a similar purpose, he found all officialdom hostile, and he was refused the right to attend upon Mr. Chamberlain as a member of a deputation of Transvaal Indians: and it was only after the utmost endeavours that he prevailed upon the Indian community to send a deputation that did not include him. Finding that the situation was becoming rapidly worse, and being without a trained guide, the Transvaal Indians pressed him to remain with them, and this he at last consented to do, being admitted to practise as an Attorney of the Supreme Court of the Transvaal. In 1903 together with other communal leaders, he founded the Transvaal British Indian Association, of which until his final





departure from South Africa, he was the Honorary Secretary and principal legal adviser.

FOUNDING OF "THE INDIAN OPINION"

About the middle of 1903, it had occurred to him that, if the South African Indians were to be brought into closer association with each other and with their European fellow-colonists, and to be politically and socially educated, it was absolutely necessary to have a newspaper, and, after consultation, he provided the greater part of the capital for its inauguration, with the late Mr. M. H. Nazar as editor, and thus the *Indian Opinion* was born. It was first published in English, Gujarati, Hindi and Tamil. For various reasons it afterwards became necessary to dispense with the Tamil and Hindi columns. But although Mr. Gandhi, had, in theory, delegated much of the work of conducting the paper to others, he was unremitting in his own efforts to make it a success. His purse was ever open to make good the deficits that continually occurred owing to the circumstances of its production, and to its English and Gujarati columns he contributed month after month and year after year out of the fund of his own political and spiritual wisdom and his unique knowledge of South African Indian affairs.

Towards the end of 1904, however, finding that the paper was absorbing most of the money that could be spared without making any appreciable financial headway, he went to Durban to investigate the situation. "During the journey he became absorbed in the perusal of Ruskin's 'Unto this Last,' and he received certain impressions that were confirmed whilst on a visit to some relatives, who had started a trading enterprise in an up-country village. His conclusions were that the town conditions in which the paper was produced were such as almost to compel unlimited waste, to act as a check upon the originality and individuality of the workers, and to prevent the realisation of his dearest desire to so infuse the columns of the paper with a spirit of tolerance and persuasiveness as to bring together all that was best in the European and Indian communities, whose fate it was to dwell side by side, either





mutually hostile to or suspicious of each other, or amicably co-operating in the securing of the welfare of the State and the building-up, of a wise-administration of its assets.

#### THE PHOENIX SETTLEMENT

Accordingly, he determined that the very first thing to be done was to put an end to the divorce of the workers from the land, and from this determination arose what has since become known as the Phoenix Settlement. Phoenix is situated about 12 miles from Durban, in the midst of a sugar-growing country, and Mr. Gandhi invested his savings, in the purchase of an estate of about 100 acres of land about two miles distant from the station, on which were erected the press buildings and machinery. A number of selected Indians and Europeans were invited to become settlers, and the original conditions were these—that they should have entire management of all the assets of the press, including the land itself; that each should practically vow himself to a life of poverty, accepting no more £3 (Rs. 45) a month, expenses being high in South Africa, and an equal share in the profits, if any; that a house should be built for him, for which he should pay when able, and in whatever instalments might seem suitable to him, without interest; that he should have two acres of land as his own for cultivation, payment being on similar conditions, and that he should devote himself to working for the public good, *Indian Opinion* being meanwhile the mainspring of the work. Whilst the fundamental principles remained, it became necessary later, in the light of further experience, to modify these conditions. Subsequently the Phoenix settlers extended the scope of their labours, to the task of educating some at least of the children of the lakh-and-a-half of Indians in South Africa. It is true that, in comparison with the magnitude of the task, only a small beginning was made, but this was principally due to the lack of qualified workers and also to the state of the exchequer.

#### SERVICE IN PLAGUE AREAS

In 1904, an outbreak of plague occurred in the Indian Location, Johannesburg, largely owing to gross negligence





on the part of the Municipal authorities, in spite of repeated warnings of the insanitary conditions prevailing. A week before the official announcement of the outbreak, Mr. Gandhi sent a final warning that plague had already broken out, but his statement was officially denied. When, however, a public admission of the existence of plague could no longer be withheld, but before the Municipal authorities had taken any steps to cope with the disease, he at once organised a private hospital and nursing home, and, together with a few devoted friends, personally tended the plague patients; and this work was formally appreciated by the Municipal authorities. In the same year, owing to arbitration proceedings between expropriated Indian standholders in the Location and the Johannesburg Municipality, in which he was busily engaged, he earned large professional fees which he afterwards devoted in their entirety to public purposes.

#### LEADING A STRETCHER BEARER CORPS

In 1906, a native rebellion broke out in Natal due to many causes, but realising that bloodshed was imminent and that hospital work would necessarily ensue therefrom, Mr. Gandhi offered, on behalf of the Natal Indians, a Stretcher Bearer Corps, which, after some delay, was accepted. Meanwhile, he had sent his family to Phoenix, where he thought it was most proper that they should live, rather than in the dirt, noise, and restlessness of the town. He himself volunteered to lead the Corps, which was on active service for a month, being mentioned in despatches and publicly congratulated and thanked by the Governor for the valuable services rendered. Each member of the Corps has had awarded to him the medal especially struck for the occasion, and as an indication of the manner in which the Transvaal Government appreciated the work so selflessly performed by Mr. Gandhi and his Corps, it may be noted that, together with at least three other members of the Corps, as well as some who belonged to or helped to fit out the old Ambulance Corps, he was flung into gaol, to associate with criminals of the lowest type. The work of the Corps was, besides that of carrying stretch-





ers and marching on foot behind mounted infantry, through dense bush, sometimes thirty miles a day, in the midst of a savage enemy's country unarmed and unprotected to perform the task of hospital assistants and to nurse the wounded natives, who had been callously shot down by the colonial troopers, or had been cruelly lashed by military command. Mr. Gandhi does not like to speak his mind about what he saw or learnt on this occasion. But many times he must have had searchings of conscience as to the propriety of his allying himself, even in that merciful capacity, with those capable of such acts of revolting and inexcusable brutality. However, it is well to know that nearly all his solicitude was exercised on behalf of aboriginal native patients, and one saw the Dewan's son ministering to the needs and allaying the sufferings of some of the most undeveloped types of humanity, whose odour, habits and surroundings must have been extremely repugnant to a man of refined tastes—though Mr. Gandhi himself will not admit this.

#### ANTI-ASIATIC LAW AND PASSIVE RESISTANCE

Scarcely had he returned to Johannesburg to resume practice (he had left his office to look after itself during his absence), than a thunderbolt was launched by the Transvaal Government by the promulgation of the Draft Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance, whose terms are now familiar throughout the length and breadth of India. After years of plotting and scheming, the anti-Asiatics of the Transvaal, having first secured the willing services of an administrative department anxious to find an excuse for the continuance of its own existence, compelled the capitulation of the executive itself with the afore-mentioned result. Mr. Gandhi at once realised what was afoot, and understood, immediately that, unless the Indian community adopted a decided attitude of protest, which would be backed up, if necessary, by resolute action, the whole Indian population of South Africa was doomed, and he accordingly took counsel with the leading members of the community, who agreed that the measure must be fought to the bitter end.





Mr. Gandhi is chiefly responsible for the initiation of the policy of passive resistance that was so successfully carried out by the Indians of South Africa during the next eight years. Since that day, Mr. Gandhi's history has been mainly that of the Passive Resistance struggle. All know how he took the oath not to submit to the Law on the 11th September, 1906; how he went to England with a compatriot in the same year, and how their vigorous pleading induced Lord Elgin to suspend the operation of the objectionable piece of legislation: how, when the law finally received the Royal assent, he threw himself into the forefront of the fight, and, by speech, pen, and example, inspired the whole community to maintain an adamant front to the attack that was being made upon the very foundations of its religion, its national honour, its racial self-respect, its manhood. No one was, therefore, surprised when, at the end of 1907, Mr. Gandhi was arrested, together with a number of other leaders, and consigned to gaol! or how, when he heard that some of his friends in Pretoria had been sentenced to six months' imprisonment with hard labour, the maximum penalty, he pleaded with the Magistrate to impose the penalty upon him too, as he had been the acknowledged leader and inspirer of the opposition against this Law. To him it was a terrible shock that his followers were being more harshly treated than he himself, and it was with bowed head and deep humiliation that he left the court, sentenced to two months' simple imprisonment only. Happily, the Government realised the seriousness of the situation, and after three weeks' imprisonment of the leading passive resisters, General Smuts opened negotiations with them, and a compromise was effected between him and the Indian community, partly written, partly verbal, whereby voluntary registration, which had been repeatedly offered, was accepted conditionally upon the Law being subsequently repealed. This promise of repeal was made personally to Mr. Gandhi by General Smuts in the presence of official witnesses. When, shortly afterwards, Mr. Gandhi was nearly killed by a few of his more fanati-





campaign of the Indian women whose marriages had been dishonoured by a fresh decision of the Supreme Court at the instigation of the Government, the awakening of the free and indentured labourers all over Natal, the tremendous strikes, the wonderful and historic strikers' march of protest into the Transvaal, the horrible scenes enacted later in the effort to crush the strikers and compel them to resume work, the arrest and imprisonment of the principal leaders and of hundreds—many thousands—of the rank and file, the enormous Indian mass meetings, held in Durban, Johannesburg, and other parts of the Union, the fierce and passionate indignation aroused in India, the large sums of money poured into South Africa from all parts of the Motherland, Lord Hardinge's famous speech at Madras, in which he placed himself at the head of Indian public opinion and his demand for a Commission of Inquiry, the energetic efforts of Lord Amphill's Committee, the hurried intervention of the Imperial authorities, the appointment over the heads of the Indian community of a Commission whose *personnel* could not satisfy the Indians, the discharge from prison of the leaders whose advice to ignore the Commission was almost universally accepted, the arrival of Messrs. Andrews and Pearson and their wonderful work of reconciliation, the deaths of Harbat Singh and Valliamma, the strained position relieved only by the interruption of the second European strike, when Mr. Gandhi, as on an earlier occasion, undertook not to hamper the Government whilst they had their hands full with the fresh difficulty and when it had been dealt with, the entirely new spirit of friendliness, trust, and co-operation that was found to have been created by the moderation of the great Indian leader and the loving influence spread around him by Mr. Andrews as he proceeded with his great Imperial mission.

All these things are of recent history, as are the favourable recommendations of the Commission on practically every point referred to it and out of which Passive Resistance had arisen, the adoption of the Commission's Report in its entirety by the Government, the





introduction and passing into law of the Indians' Relief Act, after lengthy and remarkable debates in both Houses of the Legislature, the correspondence between Mr. Gandhi and General Smuts, in which the latter undertook, on behalf of the Government, to carry through the administrative reforms that were not covered by the new Act, and the final letter of the Indian protagonist of Passive Resistance—formally announcing the conclusion of the struggle and setting forth the points upon which Indians would sooner or later have to be satisfied before they could acquire complete equality of civil status—and the scenes of his departure for his beloved Motherland, enacted throughout the country, wherein the deaths and sufferings of the Indian martyrs, Nagappan, Narayanasamy, Harbat Singh and Valliamma, were justified and sanctified to the world.

#### MR AND MRS. GANDHI IN LONDON

Faithful to his instinct for service, Mr. Gandhi hurried to England, where he heard that Gokhale was critically ill, and arrived, on the outbreak of the Great War, to find that his friend was slowly recovering from the almost fatal attack that had overwhelmed him. Here, too, his sense of responsibility revealed itself. He recognised that it was India's duty, in the hour of the Empire's trial, to do all in her power to help, and he at once set about the formation of the Indian Volunteer Ambulance Corps in London, enrolling himself and his devoted wife, who had herself been barely snatched from the jaws of death but a few weeks earlier, amongst the members. But the years of strain, his neglect of his own physical well-being, and his addiction to long fasts as a means to spiritual purification, had undermined a never very robust constitution, and his condition became so serious that private and official friends insisted upon his proceeding immediately, with Mrs. Gandhi, to India.

#### RETURN TO THE MOTHERLAND

Since his arrival in his Motherland, at the beginning of 1915, his movements have been much in the popular eye. His progress through India, from the day of the



M. K. GANDHI

public landing and welcome at the Apollo Bunder, was in the nature of a veritable triumph, marred only by the sudden death of his beloved teacher, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, who had sacrificed health and life itself upon the altar of his country's welfare.

The Government of India marked their appreciation of Mr. Gandhi's unique services by recommending him for the Kaiser-i-Hind gold medal, which was conferred upon him by the King-Emperor amongst the 1915 New Year Honours. To Gokhale he had given a promise to make no public utterance on Indian affairs until at least a year had passed, and he had visited the principal centres of public life in India. This promise, which was faithfully kept, was exacted, because Gokhale, hoping to see in him his own successor, had been somewhat disturbed by the very advanced views expressed by Mr. Gandhi in the proscribed pamphlet, *Hind Swaraj*, whose pages, we now know, were written to show the basic similarity of civilisation the world over, the superiority of India for the particular Indian phase of that civilisation, and the stupidity of the barriers of luxury erected by the modern industrial civilisation of the West, that constantly separate man from man and make him a senseless machine drudge, and that threaten to invade that holy Motherland that stands in his eyes for the victory of spirit over matter. He had condemned some things of which he had disapproved, in Gokhale's opinion, somewhat hastily, and the older man had thought that, after an absence from India of so many years, during which he had perhaps idealised certain phases of Indian life, a year's travel and observation would be a useful corrective. Which of the two, if either, has correctly diagnosed the situation, time alone can show.

SATYAGRAHASHRAM

Mr. Gandhi, however, made his headquarters at Ahmedabad, the capital of his own Province of Gujarat and here he founded his *Satyagrahashram*,\* where he is endeavouring to train up from childhood public servants upon a basis of austerity of life and personal subordination

\* For a full account of the Ashram, see appendix.





to the common good, the members supporting themselves by work at the hand-loom or other manual labour.

#### TRAVELS IN INDIA

True to his promise to Gokhale, Mr. Gandhi, on his return to India, started on an extensive tour through the country. Though his idea was merely to visit every place of importance and acquaint himself thoroughly with the conditions of the country and thus acquire first-hand knowledge of men and things, he had of course to speak wherever he went. He was given a warm and enthusiastic welcome at every station and the magnificent demonstrations in his honour bore eloquent testimony to the great regard in which his countrymen have always held him. Mr. Gandhi accepted these marks of affection and respect with his accustomed grace, but spoke out his mind on every subject, as the occasion demanded. One characteristic feature of these speeches is that Mr. Gandhi seldom repeats second-hand opinions and his views on every subject are, therefore, refreshingly original. Undeterred by fear or any exaggerated sense of conventional respectability he retains his independence, indifferent to the applause or contumely of his listeners. Speaking at the Students' Hall, College Square, Calcutta, in March 1915, when the Hon. Mr. Lyon presided he said with reference to

#### ANARCHICAL CRIMES :

Whatever his personal views were, he must say that misguided zeal that resorts to dacoities and assassinations cannot be productive of any good. These dacoities and assassinations are absolutely a foreign growth in India. They cannot take root here and cannot be a permanent institution here. History proves that assassinations have done no good. The religion of this country, the Hindu religion, is abstention from "himsa," that is taking animal life. That is, he believes the guiding principle of all religions. The Hindu religion says that even the evil-doer should not be hated. It says that nobody has any right to kill even the evil-doer. These assassinations are a western institution and the speaker warned his hearers against these western methods and western evils.

#### LOYALTY TO THE BRITISH RAJ

At the Madras Law Dinner in April of the same year he observed in proposing (at the request of the President





the Hon. Mr. Corbett, the Advocate-General) the toast of the British Empire:—

As a passive resister I discovered that a passive resister has to make good his claim to passive resistance, no matter under what circumstances he finds himself, and I discovered that the British Empire had certain ideals with which I have fallen in love, and one of those ideals is that every subject of the British Empire has the freest scope possible for his energies and honour and whatever he thinks is due to his conscience. I think that this is true of the British Empire, as it is not true of any other Government. (*Applause*) I feel, as you here perhaps know, that I am no lover of any Government and I have more than once said that that Government is best which governs least. And I have found that it is possible for me to be governed least under the British Empire. Hence my loyalty to the British Empire. (*Loud applause*).

#### ADDRESS TO THE STUDENTS

Addressing the students of Madras at the Y. M. C. A. when the Hon. Mr. (now the Rt. Hon.) V. S. Srinivasa Sastri presided, he pointed out:—

I am and I have been a determined opponent of modern civilisation. I want you to turn your eyes to-day upon what is going on in Europe and if you have come to the conclusion that Europe is to-day groaning under the heels of the modern civilisation then you and your elders will have to think twice before you can emulate that civilisation in our Motherland. But I have been told, "How can we help it, seeing that our rulers bring that culture to our Motherland." Do not make any mistake about it at all. I do not for one moment believe that it is for any rulers to bring that culture to you, unless you are prepared to accept it, and if it be that the rulers bring that culture before us, I think that we have forces within ourselves to enable us to reject that culture without having to reject the rulers themselves.

He concluded:—

I ally myself to the British Government, because I believe that it is possible for me to claim equal partnership with every subject of the British Empire. I to-day claim that equal partnership. I do not belong to a subject race. I do not call myself a subject race. (*Applause*). But there is this thing: it is not for the British Governors to give you, it is for you to take the thing. I want and I can take the thing. That I want only by discharging my obligations. Max Muller has told us,—we need not go to Max Muller to interpret our own religion—but he says, our religion consists in four letters "D-u-t-y" and not in the five letters "R-i-g-h-t." And if you believe that all that





we want can flow from a better discharge of our duty, then think always of your duty and fighting along those lines you will have no fear of any man, you will fear only God.

#### UNVEILING MR. GOKHALE'S PORTRAIT

In May Mr. Gandhi went to visit some cities in the south where he discoursed on social reform and the vexed question of untouchability which is somewhat rampant on the banks of the *Kaveri* and its environs. He spoke with characteristic candour somewhat to the chagrin of the orthodox.

Later he was invited to Bangalore to unveil the portrait of Mr. Gokhale, when he made a brief and highly suggestive speech:—

I saw in the recitation,—the beautiful recitation that was given to me,—that God is with them whose garment was dusty and tattered. My thoughts immediately went to the end of my garment; I examined and found that it is not dusty and it is not tattered; it is fairly spotless and clean. God is not in me. There are other conditions attached; but in these conditions too I may fail; and you, my dear countrymen, may also fail; and if we do tend this well, we should not dishonour the memory of one whose portrait you have asked me to unveil this morning. I have declared myself his disciple in the political field and I have him as my *Raja Guru*: and this I claim on behalf of the Indian people. It was in 1896 that I made this declaration, and I do not regret having made the choice.

Later in the year he presided over the anniversary function at the Gurukul and spoke in Hindi on the meaning of true Swadeshism, the doctrine of Ahimsa and other kindred topics.

#### HINDU UNIVERSITY SPEECH

On Feb. 4, 1916, he attended the Hindu University celebrations and delivered an address which unfortunately was intercepted. But the regrettable incident of which far too much was made, revealed the hold that he possesses upon the esteem and affection of his countrymen, for his version of what transpired was generally accepted. Since then Mr. Gandhi has been taking a prominent part in the building-up of the Indian nation along his own peculiar lines. For, he teaches both by precept and by example.





But he goes his own way, untrammelled by precedent, carefully analysing the criticism to which he is naturally subjected, holding himself answerable, however, to his own conscience alone. For he is of the prophets, and not merely of the secondary interpreters of life.

The same month he came to Madras and on the 10th spoke on Social Service to a large audience presided over by Mrs. Whitehead. On the 14th he spoke on Swadeshi before the Missionary Conference and a couple of days later gave a lucid account of his Satyagrahashram to a large gathering of students in the precincts of the Young Men's Christian Association, Madras, the Hon. Rev. G. Pittendrigh of the Christian College presiding. He then went back to Ahmedabad to look after his Ashram. Late in the year on December 22, he made a remarkable speech on "*Economic versus Moral Progress*" at the Muir Central College, Allahabad, Mr. Stanley Jevons presiding. The address contains some of his most mature and thoughtful reflections on life, and both in style and sentiment is one of the most characteristic of Mr. Gandhi's utterances.

#### MR. GANDHI IN CHAMPARAN

Then came the Champaran incident which has since become historic. In the Lucknow Congress of December 1916, Mr. Gandhi, though pressed by some of the citizens of Behar, declined to talk about the grievances of the labourers in the Behar plantations without first-hand knowledge of the real state of affairs. This he resolved to acquire soon after the Congress session: and in response to an insistent public demand, to inquire into the conditions under which Indians work in the indigo plantations, Mr. Gandhi was in Muzaffarpur on the 15th April 1917, whence he took the mid-day train for Motihari. Next day he was served with a notice from the Champaran District Magistrate to quit the district "by the next available train" as his presence "will endanger the public peace and may lead to serious disturbance which may be accompanied by loss of life." But the local authorities in issuing this mandate counted without the host. For Mr. Gandhi, who had initiated the Passive





Resistance Movement in South Africa, replied in a way that did not surprise those who had known him :—

Out of a sense of public responsibility, I feel it to be my duty to say that I am unable to leave this district, but if it so pleases the authorities, I shall submit to the order by suffering the penalty of disobedience.

I most emphatically repudiate the Commissioner's suggestion that "my object is likely to be agitation." My desire is purely and simply for "a genuine search for knowledge" and this I shall continue to satisfy so long as I am left free.

Mr. Gandhi appeared before the District Magistrate on the 18th, when he presented a statement. Finding that the case was likely to be unnecessarily prolonged he pleaded guilty and the judgment was deferred pending instructions from higher authorities. The rest of the story is pretty familiar. The higher authorities subsequently issued instructions not to proceed with the prosecution, while a commission of enquiry was at once instituted to enquire into the conditions of the Behar labourers with Mr. Gandhi as a member of that body. As usual, Mr. Gandhi worked in perfect harmony with the other members and though with the findings of his own private enquiry he could have raised a storm of indignant agitation against the scandals of the plantations, he refrained from using his influence and knowledge for a merely vindictive and vainglorious cry. He worked quietly, with no thought of himself, but absorbed in the need for remedial measures; and when in December 1917 the Champaran Agrarian Bill was moved in the Behar Legislative Council, the Hon. Mr. Maude made a frank statement of the scandals which necessitated an enquiry by a Commission and acknowledged Mr. Gandhi's services in these handsome terms :—

It is constantly asserted, and I have myself often heard it said, that there is in reality nothing wrong or rotten in the state of affairs; that all concerned are perfectly happy so long as they are left alone, and that it is only when outside influences and agitators come in that any trouble is experienced. I submit that this contention is altogether untenable in the light of the history of the last fifty years. What is it we find on each individual occasion when fresh attention has been, at remarkably short intervals, drawn once more to the conditions



of the production of the indigo plant? We do not find on each occasion that some fresh little matter has gone wrong which can be easily adjusted, but we find on every occasion alike that it is the system itself, which is condemned as being inherently wrong and impossible, and we see also repeated time after time the utter futility of bringing the matter to any lasting or satisfactory settlement by the only solutions that have so far been attempted, namely, an enhancement of the price paid for indigo and a reduction of the tenant's burden by reducing the limit of the proportion of his land which he would be required to earmark for indigo cultivation. Repeatedly those expedients have been tried—repeatedly they have failed to effect a lasting solution, partly because they could not be universally enforced, but chiefly because no thinking can set right a system which is in itself inherently rotten and open to abuse.

The planters of course could not endure this. They took occasion to indulge in the most rapid and unbecoming attacks on Mr. Gandhi. One Mr. Irwin earned an unenviable notoriety by writing all sorts of scurrilous attacks touching personalities which have nothing to do with the subject of enquiry. Columns of such stuff appeared in the pages of the *Pioneer*; but Mr. Gandhi with a quiet humour replied in words which should have made the soul of Irwin penitent. The controversy on Mr. Gandhi's dress and Mrs. Gandhi's stall-keeping reveals the character of the two men, Mr. Irwin, fussy, vindictive, violent, ill-tempered, writhing like a wounded snake in anger and agony, and Mr. Gandhi secure in his righteousness, modest, quiet, strong and friendly with no malice and untainted by evil passions.

#### THE CONGRESS-LEAGUE SCHEME

By this time Mr. Gandhi had made the Guzerat Sabha a well-equipped organisation for effective social service. When in August 1917 it was announced that Mr. Montagu would be in India in connection with the scheme of Post-War Reforms the Guzerat Sabha under the direction of Mr. Gandhi devised in November the admirable scheme of a monster petition in connection with the Congress League Scheme. The idea and the movement alike were opportune. Mr. Gandhi himself undertook the work in his province of Guzerat and carried it out with characteristic thoroughness. The suggestion was taken up by

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the Congress and the Home Rule League and the piles of books containing the monster signatures were duly presented to Mr. Montagu at Delhi.

Meanwhile Mr. Gandhi was not idle. On the 17th September he presided over the Bombay Co-operative Conference. On Nov. 3, he delivered a remarkable address as president of the Guzerat Political Conference and later, of the Guzerat Educational Conference. Then came the Congress week in Calcutta in December and he presided over the First Session of the Social Service League when he made a striking speech.

Mr. Gandhi has always travelled in the third class in all his journeyings and the grievances of the third-class passengers are driven home in this address to the Social Service League. But even before this he had already sent a letter to the press on the subject on the 25th September, 1917, in which he gave a vivid and true account of the woes of the third-class passengers.

#### FAMINE IN THE KAIRA DISTRICT

After his return from the Calcutta Congress of Dec. 1917, Mr. Gandhi was occupied in connection with the famine in the Kaira district. The facts of the story can be easily told in Mr. Gandhi's own words uttered at a meeting in Bombay on Feb. 5, 1918.

The responsibility for the notice issued by the Guzerat Sabha of Ahmedabad was his; and nobody expected that the Government would misinterpret the objects of the notice. The Guzerat Sabha had sufficient proof of the plight of the people in the Kaira District and that the people were even obliged to sell their cattle to pay taxes, and the notice was issued to console those suffering from hardships. The Sabha's request was to suspend the collection of dues till negotiations were over. If the Commissioner of the Division had not been angry with the deputation and had talked to them politely, such crises would not have happened. He fully expected that the deputation which would wait on the Governor would be able to explain the situation to His Excellency and the people's cause would succeed in the end. Public men had every right to advise the people of their rights. He trusted that those who had given the people the right advice would stand by them and would not hesitate to undergo hardships in order to secure justice.





The first and last principle of passive resistance is that we should not inflict hardships on others but put up with them ourselves in order to get justice, and the Government need not fear anything if we make up our mind as we are bent on getting sheer justice from it and nothing else. We can have two weapons on occasions like this:—Revolt or passive resistance, and my request is for the second remedy always. In order to remove distress through which the Guzerat people are passing, it is my firm conviction that if we tell the truth to the Government, it will ultimately be convinced and if we are firm in our resolve, the Kaira District people shall suffer wrongs no more.

## INTEREST IN SOUTH AFRICA

In spite of all these activities in India, Mr. Gandhi has not forgotten the scene of his early labours. His South African friends and fellow-workers are always dear to him. In a communication to the *Indian Opinion* he wrote under date 15th December, 1917 :—

When I left South Africa, I had fully intended to write to my Indian and English friends there from time to time, but I found my lot in India to be quite different from what I had expected it to be. I had hoped to be able to have comparative peace and leisure but I have been irresistibly drawn into many activities. I hardly cope with them and local daily correspondence. Half of my time is passed in the Indian trains. My South African friends will, I hope, forgive me for my apparent neglect of them. Let me assure them that not a day has passed but I have thought of them and their kindness. South African associations can never be effaced from my memory.

I note, too, that our people in South Africa are not yet free from difficulties about trade licences and leaving certificates. My Indian experience has confirmed the opinion that there is no remedy like passive resistance against such evils. The community has to exhaust milder remedies but I hope that it will not allow the sword of passive resistance to get rusty. It is our duty whilst the terrible war lasts to be satisfied with petitions, etc., for the desired relief but I think the Government should know that the community will not rest until the questions above mentioned are satisfactorily solved. It is but right that I should also warn the community against dangers from within. I hear from those who return from South Africa that we are by no means free of those who are engaged in illicit traffic. We, who seek justice must be above suspicion, and I hope that our leaders will not rest till they have urged the community of internal defects.





## AHMEDABAD MILL STRIKE

Passive Resistance in some form or other has always been Mr. Gandhi's final panacea for all ailments in the body politic. He has applied it with resolute courage, and has at least as often succeeded as he has undoubtedly failed. But success or failure in the pursuit of a righteous cause is seldom the determining factor, with men of Mr. Gandhi's moral stamina. When in March 1918 the mill hands at Ahmedabad went on strike, Mr. Gandhi was requisitioned to settle the dispute between the millowners and the workmen. He was guiding the latter to a successful settlement of their wages when some of them betrayed a sense of weakness and despair; and demoralisation was apprehended. At a critical stage in the crisis Mr. Gandhi and Miss Anusuyabhai took the vow of fast. This extreme action on the part of Mr. Gandhi was disquieting to friends and provoked some bitter comments from the unfriendly. He, of course, would be the last person to resort to such a method of forcing the millowners by appealing to their sense of pity, knowing that they were his friends and admirers. He explained the circumstances in a statement issued subsequently:—

I am not sorry for the vow, but with the belief that I have, I would have been unworthy of the truth undertaken by me if I had done anything less. Before I took the vow I knew that there were serious defects about it. For me to take such a vow in order to affect in any shape or form the decision of the millowners would be a cowardly injustice done to them, and that I would so prove myself unfit for the friendship which I had the privilege of enjoying with some of them. I knew that I ran the risk of being misunderstood. I could not prevent my fast from affecting my decision. That knowledge moreover put a responsibility on me which I was ill-able to bear. From now I disabled myself from gaining concessions for the men which ordinarily in a struggle such as this I would be entirely justified in securing. I knew, too, that I would have to be satisfied with the minimum I could get from the millowners and with a fulfilment of the letter of the men's vow rather than its spirit and so hath it happened. I put the defects of my vow in one scale and the merits of it in the other. There are hardly any acts of human beings which are free from all taint. Mine, I know, was exceptionally tainted, but better the ignominy of having unworthily compromised by my vow the position and indepen-



dence of the mill-owners than that it should be said by posterity that 10,000 men had suddenly broken the vow which they had for over twenty days solemnly taken and repeated in the name of God. I am fully convinced that no body of men can make themselves into a nation or perform great tasks unless they become as true as steel and unless their promises come to be regarded by the world like the law of the Medes and Persians, inflexible, and unbreakable, and whatever may be the verdict of friends, so far as I can think 'present, on given occasions, I should not hesitate in future to repeat the humble performance which I have taken the liberty of describing in the communication.

#### DELHI WAR CONFERENCE

Mr. Gandhi was one of those invited to attend the Delhi War Conference in April 1918. At first he refused to participate in the discussions on the ground that Mr. Tilak, Mrs. Besant and the Ali Brothers were not invited to the Conference. He however waived the objection at the pressing invitation personally conveyed by H. E. the Viceroy in an interview. At the Conference he spoke briefly, supporting the loyalty resolution. He explained his position more clearly in a communique issued by him soon after the Conference. He pointed out:—

I recognise that in the hour of its danger we must give, as we have decided to give, ungrudging and unequivocal support to the Empire of which we aspire in the near future to be partners in the same sense as the Dominions Overseas. But it is the simple truth that our response is due to the expectation that our goal will be reached all the more speedily. On that account even as performance of duty automatically confers a corresponding right, people are entitled to believe that the imminent reforms alluded to in your speech will embody the main general principles of the Congress-League scheme, and I am sure that it is this faith which has enabled many members of the Conference to tender to the Government their full-hearted co-operation. If I could make my countrymen retrace their steps, I would make them withdraw all the Congress resolutions and not whisper "Home Rule" or "Responsible Government" during the pendency of the War. I would make India offer all her able-bodied sons as a sacrifice to the Empire at its critical moment and I know that India, by this very act, would become the most favoured partner in the Empire and racial distinctions would become a thing of the past. But practically the whole of educated India has decided to take a less effective course, and it is no longer possible to say that educated India does not exercise any influence on the masses.





I feel sure that nothing less than a definite vision of Home Rule to be realised in the shortest possible time will satisfy the Indian people. I know that there are many in India who consider no sacrifice is too great in order to achieve the end, and they are wakeful enough to realise that they must be equally prepared to sacrifice themselves for the Empire in which they hope and desire to reach their final status. It follows then that we can but accelerate our journey to the goal by silently and simply devoting ourselves heart and soul to the work of delivering the Empire from the threatening danger. It will be a national suicide not to recognise this elementary truth. We must perceive that, if we serve to save the Empire, we have in that very act secured Home Rule.

Whilst, therefore, it is clear to me that we should give to the Empire every available man for its defence, I fear that I cannot say the same thing about the financial assistance. My intimate intercourse with the raiyats convinces me that India has already donated to the Imperial Exchequer beyond her capacity. I know that, in making this statement, I am voicing the opinion of the majority of my countrymen.

It is interesting to note that even so early as this Mr. Gandhi foreshadowed his views on the Khilafat question of which we shall hear so much indeed in the subsequent pages. Mr. Gandhi wrote these words in a letter to the Viceroy:—

Lastly, I would like you to ask His Majesty's Ministers to give definite assurance about the Muhammadan States. I am sure you know that every Muhammadan is deeply interested in them. As a Hindu I cannot be indifferent to their cause. Their sorrows must be our sorrows. In the most scrupulous regard for the rights of these States and for the Muslim sentiment as to the places of worship and in your just and timely treatment of the Indian claim to Home Rule lie the safety of the Empire. I write this, because I love the English nation and I wish to evoke in every Indian the loyalty to Englishman.

#### LORD WILLINGDON AND HOME RULERS

On June 10, 1918, Lord Willingdon, then Governor of Bombay, presiding over the Bombay War Conference, happened to make an unfortunate reference to Home Rulers. Mr. Tilak who was on the war-path resented what he deemed an unwarranted insult to Home Rulers and instantly launched on a downright political oration. His Excellency ruled him out of order and one by one the Home Rulers left the Conference. Mr. Gandhi was asked





to preside over the protest meeting in Bombay held on the 16th June. He spoke as follows :—

Lord Willingdon has presented them with the expression Home Rule Leaguers distinguished from Home Rulers. I cannot conceive the existence of an Indian who is not a Home Ruler; but there are millions like myself who are not Home Rule Leaguers. Although I am not a member of any Home Rule League I wish to pay on this auspicious day my humble tribute to numerous Home Rule Leaguers whose association I have ever sought in my work and which has been extended to me ungrudgingly. I have found many of them to be capable of any sacrifice for the sake of the Motherland.

#### RECRUITING FOR THE WAR

Mr. Gandhi did a great deal to stimulate recruiting for the war. Though he did not hesitate to criticise the bureaucracy for individual acts of wrong, he went about in the Districts of Kaira calling for recruits. Time and again he wrote to the press urging the need for volunteers and he constantly spoke to the educated and the illiterate alike on the necessity for joining the Defence Force. On one occasion he said in Kaira where he had conducted Satyagraha on an extensive scale :—

You have successfully demonstrated how you can resist Government with civility, and how you can retain your own respect without hurting theirs. I now place before you an opportunity of proving that you bear no hostility to Government in spite of your strenuous fight with them.

You are all Home Rulers, some of you are members of Home Rule Leagues. One meaning of Home rule is that we should become partners of the Empire. To-day we are a subject people. We do not enjoy all the rights of Englishmen. We are not to-day partners of the Empire as are Canada, South Africa and Australia. We are a Dependency. We want the rights of Englishmen, and we aspire to be as much partners of the Empire as the Dominions Overseas. We wish for the time when we may aspire to the Viceregal office. To bring such a state of things we should have the ability to defend ourselves, that is the ability to bear arms and to use them. As long as we have to look to Englishmen for our defence, as long as we are not free from the fear of the military, so long we cannot be regarded as equal partners with Englishmen. It, therefore, behoves us to learn the use of arms and to acquire the ability to defend ourselves. If we want to learn the use of arms with the greatest possible despatch, it is our duty to enlist ourselves in the Army.





The easiest and the straightest way to win *Swarajya*, said Mr. Gandhi, is to participate in the defence of the Empire. This argument, doubtless, went home, and he appealed in the following words:—

There are 600 villages in the Kaira District. Every village has on an average a population of over 1,000. If every village gave at least twenty men the Kaira District would be able to raise an army of 12,000 men. The population of the whole district is seven lakhs and this number will then work out at 17 per cent.—a rate which is lower than the death-rate. If we are not prepared to make even this sacrifice for the Empire and *Swarajya*, it is no wonder if we are regarded as unworthy of it. If every village gives at least twenty men they will return from the war and be the living bulwarks of their village. If they fall on the battle-field, they will immortalise themselves, their villages and their country and twenty fresh men will follow suit and offer themselves for national defence.

#### THE MONTAGU REFORMS

We have noticed how Mr. Gandhi took a leading part in the agitation for post-war reforms and how his idea of a monster petition was taken up by every political body of importance in the country. It must, however, be noted with regret that his enthusiasm for the reforms was not kept up as he was absolutely engrossed in other affairs. On the publication of the Joint Report in July 1918, Mr. Gandhi wrote to the *Servant of India* at the request of the Hon. Mr. (now the Rt. Hon.) V. S. S. Sastri for an expression of opinion:—

No scheme of reform can possibly benefit India that does not recognise that the present administration is top-heavy and ruinously expensive and for me even law, order and good government would be too dearly purchased if the price to be paid for it is to be the grinding poverty of the masses. The watchword of our Reform Councils will have to be not the increase of taxation for the growing needs of a growing country, but a decrease of financial burdens that are sapping the foundation itself of organic growth. If this fundamental fact is recognised there need be no suspicion of our motives and I think I am perfectly safe in asserting that in every other respect British interests will be as secure in Indian hands as they are in their own.

It follows from what I have said above that we must respectfully press for the Congress-League claim for the immediate granting to Indians of 50 per cent. of the higher posts in the Civil Service.





## THE ROWLATT BILLS AND SATYAGRAHA

But soon there began a movement which was to tax the utmost energies of Mr. Gandhi, a movement fraught with grave consequences. The Government of India persisted in passing a piece of legislation known as the Rowlatt Laws which were designed to curb still further what little liberty is yet possessed by Indians in their own country. The legislation was presumed to be based on the Report of the Rowlatt Committee which announced the discovery of plots for the subversion of Government. Friends of Government, solicitous of the peaceful and well-ordered condition of society, warned it of the danger of passing such acts which betrayed a tactless want of confidence and trust in the people at a time when Responsible Government was contemplated. The bill was stoutly opposed by the public and the press. It was denounced by every political organisation worth the name. It was severely and even vehemently attacked in the Imperial Council. Irrespective of parties, the whole country stood solid against a measure of such iniquity. The Hon. Mr. Sastri and Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya, and in fact every one of the non-official members condemned the bill as outrageous and forebode grave consequences if it should be passed. But Government was obstinate and the bill was passed in the teeth of all opposition.

Mr. Gandhi who travelled all over the country and wrote and spoke with amazing energy was not to be easily silenced. Every other form of constitutional agitation having failed he resorted as usual to his patent—Satyagraha. On February 28, 1919, he published a momentous pledge which he asked his countrymen to sign and observe as a covenant binding on them. The pledge ran as follows :—

“Being conscientiously of opinion that the Bills known as the Indian Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill No. 1 of 1919, and the Criminal Law (Emergency Powers) Bill No. 11 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 and until they are withdrawn, we shall refuse civilly to obey these laws and such other laws as a committee to be hereafter appointed may think fit and further affirm that in this struggle we will faithfully follow truth and refrain from violence to life, person or property."

He then started on an extensive tour through the country educating the learned and the unlearned, in the principles and practice of Satyagraha. At Bombay, Allahabad, Madras, Tanjore, Trichy, Tuticorin and Negapatam he addressed large gatherings in March. Sunday the 6th April was appointed the Satyagraha Day when complete *hartal* was to be observed, prayers offered and the vow to be taken amidst great demonstrations. Delhi observed the Satyagraha day on the 30th, and there ensued a scuffle between the people and the police. It was alleged against the Delhi people at the Railway Station

(1) that some of them were trying to coerce sweetmeat sellers into closing their stalls; (2) that some were forcibly preventing people from plying tramcars and other vehicles; (3) that some of them threw brickbats; (4) that the whole crowd that marched to the Station demanded the release of men who were said to be coercers and who were for that reason arrested at the instance of the Railway authorities; (5) that the crowd declined to disperse when the Magistrate gave orders to disperse.

Swami Shraddhananda (the well-known Mahatma Munshi Ram of the Gurukula, who had taken the orders of the Sannyasi) denied the first three allegations. Granting they were all true there was no need, argued Mr. Gandhi, for the interference of the military who were called on to fire on the unarmed mob. But the crowd was completely self-possessed and though there was some loss of life, it spoke volumes in praise of the Delhi people that they conducted a meeting of 40,000 in perfect peace and order. But the Delhi tragedy had burnt itself into the soul of Mr. Gandhi and his friends. The incident he said, "imposed an added responsibility upon Satyagrahis of steeling their hearts and going on with their struggle until the Rowlatt Legislation was withdrawn." The whole country answered Mr. Gandhi's call in a way that was at