



of India as also the Government of Bengal. Repression there was even before that time, but nothing was said or done in connection with it. But the repression that came in the wake of the notifications proclaiming the Criminal Law Amendment Act for the purpose of dealing with volunteers' associations and the Seditious Meetings Act for the purpose of dealing with public meetings held by Non-Co-operators, came upon the Non-Co-operation community as a bombshell.

I repeat, then, that these notifications and the arrests of Deshbandu Chittaranjan Das and Maulana Abul Kalam Asid in Bengal, the arrest of Pandit Motilal Nehru and his co-workers in the U. P. and of Lala Lajput Rai and his party in the Punjab made it absolutely necessary to take up, not yet aggressive civil disobedience, but only defensive civil disobedience, otherwise described as passive resistance. Even Sir Hormusji Wadia was obliged to declare that, if the Bombay Government followed the precedents set by the Governments of Bengal, U. P. and the Punjab, he would be bound to resist such notifications, that is, to enrol himself as a volunteer or to attend public meetings in defiance of Government order to the contrary. It is thus clear that a case has been completely made out for civil disobedience, unless the Government revised its policy which has resulted in the stopping of public meetings, public associations and the Non-Co-operation press in many parts of India.

Now for the statement that the Government have embarked on a policy of lawless repression instead of an ample expression of regret and apology for the barbarous deeds that have been committed by officers in the name of law and order. I regret to find in the Government



reply a categorical denial of any lawless repression. In this connection I urge the public and Government carefully to consider the following facts whose substance is beyond challenge :—(1) official shooting at Entally in Calcutta and the callous treatment even of a corpse (2) The admitted brutality of the civil guards (3) The forcible dispersal of a meeting at Dacca and the dragging of innocent men by their legs although they had given no offence or cause whatsoever (4) Similar treatment of volunteers in Aligarh (5) The conclusive (in my opinion) findings of the committee presided over by Dr. Gokhul Chand about the brutal and uncalled for assaults upon volunteers and the public in Lahore (6) The wicked and inhuman treatment of volunteers and the public at Jullundur (7) The shooting of a boy at Dehra Dun and the cruelly forcible dispersal of a public meeting of that place (8) The looting admitted by the Bihar Government of villages by an officer and his company without any permission whatsoever, from any one, but, as stated by Non-co-operators, at the invitation of a planter, assaults upon volunteers and the burning of Khaddar and papers belonging to the Congress at Sonapur (9) The midnight searches and arrests in the Congress and Khilafat offices.

I have merely given a sample of the many infallible proofs of official lawlessness and barbarism. I have mentioned not even a tithe of what is happening all over the country. I wish to state, without fear of successful contradiction, that the scale on which this lawlessness had gone on in so many provinces of India puts into shade the inhumanities that were practised in the Punjab, if we except the crawling order and the



massacre at Jallianwallabagh. It is my certain conviction that the massacre at Jallianwallabagh was a clean transaction compared to the unclean transactions described above, and the pity of it is that, because people are not shot or butchered, the tortures through which hundreds of inoffensive men have gone through do not produce a sufficient effect to turn everybody's face against this Government.

But as if this warfare against innocence was not enough the reins are being tightened in the jails. We know nothing of what is happening to-day in Karachi jail, to a solitary prisoner in the Sabarmati jail and to a batch in the Benares jail, all of whom are as innocent as I claim to be myself. Their crime consists in their constituting themselves the trustees of national honour and dignity. I am hoping that these proud and defiant spirits will not be sent into submission masquerading in the official garb. I deny the right of the authorities to insist on high-souled men appearing before them almost naked or paying any obsequious respect to them by way of salaming with open palms brought together, or reciting to the intonation of "Sarkar ike-Jai". No god-fearing man will do the latter even if he has to be kept standing in his stock for days and nights, as a Bengal schoolmaster is reported to have been for the sake of the dignity of human nature.

I trust that Lord Reading and his draftsmen do not know the facts that I have adduced or are being carried away by their belief in the infallibility of their employees. I refuse to believe in the statements which the public regards as God's truth. If there is the slightest exaggeration in the statements that I have made, I shall as publicly withdraw them and apologise



for them as I am making them now, but, as it is, I undertake to prove the substance of every one of these charges if not the very letter and much more of them, before any impartial tribunal of men or women unconnected with the Government. I invite Pandit Malaviyaji and those who are performing the thankless task of securing a round table conference to form an impartial commission to investigate these charges by which I stand or fall.

It is the physical and brutal ill-treatment of humanity which has made many of my co-workers and myself impatient of life itself and in the face of these things I don't wish to take public time by dealing in detail what I mean by abuse of the common law of the country but I cannot help correcting the mis-impression which is likely to be created in connection with the Bombay disorders, disgraceful and deplorable as they were. Let it be remembered that, of the persons who lost their lives, over 45 were Non-Co operators or their sympathisers, the hooligans, and of the 400 wounded, to be absolutely on the safe side, over 350 were also derived from the same class. I do not complain; the Co-operators, the Non-Co-operators and the friendly hooligans got what they deserved: they began the violence and they reaped the reward. Let it also not be forgotten that, with all deference to the Bombay Government, it was Non-Co-operators, ably assisted by Independents and Co-operators, who brought peace out of that chaos of the two days following the fateful 17th.

I must totally deny the imputation that the application of the Criminal Law Amendment Act was confined to associations the majority of the members of which



had habitually indulged in violence and intimidation. The prisons of India to-day hold some of the most in-offensive men and hardly any who are convicted under the law. Abundant proof can be produced in support of this statement as also of the statement of the fact that almost wherever meetings have been broken up, there was actually no risk of violence.

The Government of India deny that the Viceroy has laid down upon the apology of the Ali Brothers the civilised policy of non-interference with the non-violent activities of Non-Co-operators. I am extremely sorry for this repudiation. The very part of the communique reproduced in the reply is in my opinion sufficient proof that the Government did not intend to interfere with such activities. The Government did not wish to be inferred that speeches promoting disaffection of a less violent character were not an offence against the law. I have never stated that breach of any law was not to be an offence against it, but I have stated, as I repeat now, that it was not the intention of the Government then to prosecute for non-violent activities although they might amount to a technical breach of the law.

As to the conditions of the conference the Government reply evidently omits to mention the two words "and otherwise" after the words "Calcutta speech" in my letter. I repeat that the terms "I would gather from the Calcutta speech and otherwise" were nearly the same that were mentioned in the resolutions of the Malaviya Conference. What are called the unlawful activities of the N. C. O. party, being a reply to the notifications of the Government, would have ceased automatically with the withdrawal of those notifica-



tions, because the formation of volunteer corps and public meetings would not be unlawful activities after the withdrawal of the offending notification. Even while the negotiations were going on in Calcutta, the discharge of Fatwa prisoners was asked for and I can only repeat what I have said elsewhere that, if it is disloyal to say that military service under the existing system of Government is a sin against God and humanity, I fear that such disloyalty must continue.

The Government communique does me a cruel wrong imputing to me a desire that the proposed round table conference should be called merely to register my decrees. I did state, in order to avoid any misunderstanding the Congress demands, as I felt I was in duty bound, in as clear terms as possible. No Congressman could approach any conference without making his position clear. I accepted the ordinary courtesy of not considering me or any Congressmen to be impervious to reason or argument. It is open to anybody to convince me that the demands of the Congress regarding the Khilafat, the Punjab and Swaraj are wrong or unreasonable and I would certainly retrace my steps and, so far as I am concerned, rectify the wrong. The Government of India know that such has been always my attitude.

The communique, strangely enough, says that the demands set forth in my manifesto are even larger than those of the Working Committee. I claim that they fall far below the demands of the Working Committee, for what I now ask against the total suspension of Civil Disobedience of an aggressive character is merely the stoppage of ruthless repression, the release of prisoners convicted under it and a clear declaration of



policy. The demands of the Working Committee included a round table conference. In my manifesto I have not asked for a Round Table Conference at all. It is true that this wanting of a Round Table Conference does not proceed from any expediency, but it is a confession of present weakness. I freely recognise that, unless India becomes saturated with the spirit of non-violence and generates disciplined strength that can only come from non-violence, she cannot enforce her demands and it is for that reason that I now consider that the first thing for the people to do is to secure a reversal of this mad repression and then to concentrate upon more complete organisation and more construction. And here again the communique does me an injustice by merely stating that Civil Disobedience of an aggressive character will be postponed until the opportunity is given to the imprisoned leaders of reviewing the whole situation after their discharge and by conveniently omitting to mention the following conclusion of my letter. "If the Government make the requested declaration I shall regard it as an honest desire on its part to give effect to public opinion and shall therefore have no hesitation in advising the country to be engaged in further moulding public opinion without violent restraint from either side and trust to its working to secure the fulfilment of its unalterable demands. Aggressive Civil Disobedience in that case will be taken up only when the Government departs from its policy of strictest neutrality or refuse to yield to the clearly expressed opinion of the vast majority of the people of India."

I venture to claim extreme reasonableness and moderation for the above presentation of the case. The alternative before the people, therefore, is



not, as the communique concludes, between "lawlessness with all its disastrous consequences on the one hand and on the other the maintenance of those principles which lie at the root of all civilised Governments' Mass Civil Disobedience, it adds, is fraught with such danger to the State that it must be met with "sternness and severity". The choice before the people is mass civil disobedience with all its undoubted dangers and lawless repression of the lawful activities of the people. I hold that it is impossible for any body of self-respecting men for fear of unknown dangers to sit still and do nothing effective when looting of property and assaulting of innocent men are going on all over the country in the name of law and order.

THE CRIME OF CHAURI CHAURA.

[While Mr. Gandhi was about to inaugurate Mass Civil Disobedience in Bardoli, there occurred a terrible tragedy at Chauri Chaura on the 14th February when an infuriated-mob, including some volunteers also, attacked the *thana*, burnt down the building and beat to death no less than twenty two policemen. Some constables and chaukidars were literally burnt to death and the whole place was under mobocracy. Mr. Gandhi took this occurrence as a third warning to suspend civil disobedience and the Bardoli programme was accordingly given up. On the 11th the Working Committee met at Bardoli and resolved to suspend all offensive action including even picketing and processions. The country was to confine itself to the constructive programme of Khaddar manufacture. The Working Committee advised the stoppage of all activities designed to court imprisonment. Commenting on the tragedy of Chauri Chaura and the Bardoli decisions, Mr. Gandhi wrote in *Young India* of February 6th, 1922 :]

God has been abundantly kind to me. He has warned me the third time that there is not as yet in India that truthful and non-violent atmosphere which

and which alone can justify mass disobedience which can be at all described as civil which means gentle, truthful, humble, knowing, wilful yet loving, never criminal and hateful.

He warned me in 1919 when the Rowlatt Act agitation was started. Ahmedabad, Viramgam, and Kheda erred; Amritsar and Kasur erred. I retraced my steps, called it a Himalayan miscalculation, humbled myself before God and man, and stopped not merely mass civil disobedience but even my own which I knew was intended to be civil and non-violent.

The next time it was through the events of Bombay that God gave a terrific warning. He made me eyewitness of the deeds of the Bombay mob on the 17th November. The mob acted in the interest of non-co-operation. I announced my intention to stop the mass civil disobedience which was to be immediately started in Bardoli. The humiliation was greater than in 1919. But it did me good. I am sure that the nation gained by the stopping. India stood for truth and non-violence by the suspension,

But the bitterest humiliation was still to come. Madras did give the warning, but I heeded it not. But God spoke clearly through Chauri Chaura. I understand that the constables who were so brutally hacked to death had given much provocation. They had even gone back upon the word just given by the Inspector that they would not be molested, but when the procession had passed the stragglers were interfered with and abused by the constables. The former cried out for help. The mob returned. The constables opened fire. The little ammunition they had was exhausted and they retired to the Thana for safety. The mob, my informant



tells me, therefore set fire to the Thana. The self-imprisoned constables had to come out for dear life and as they did so, they were backed to pieces and the mangled remains were thrown into the raging flames.

It is claimed that no non-co-operation volunteer had a hand in the brutality and that the mob had not only the immediate provocation but they had also general knowledge of the high-handed tyranny of the police in that district. No provocation can possibly justify the brutal murder of men who had been rendered defenceless and who had virtually thrown themselves on the mercy of the mob. And when Indian claims to be non-violent and hopes to mount the throne of liberty through non-violent means, mob-violence even in answer to grave provocation is a bad augury. Suppose the 'non-violent' disobedience of Bardoli was permitted by God to succeed, the Government had abdicated in favour of the victors of Bardoli, who would control the unruly element that must be expected to perpetrate inhumanity upon due provocation? Non-violent attainment of self-Government presupposes a non-violent control over the violent elements in the country. Non-violent non-co-operators can only succeed when they have succeeded in attaining control over the hooligans of India, in other words, when the latter also have learnt patriotically or religiously to refrain from their violent activities, at least whilst the campaign of non-co-operation is going on. The tragedy at Chaura, therefore, roused me thoroughly.

'But what about your manifesto to the Viceroy and your rejoinder to his reply?' spoke the voice of Satan. It was the bitterest cup of humiliation to drink. 'Surely it is cowardly to withdraw the next day after



pompous threat to the Government and promises to the people of Bardoli' Thus Satan's invitation was to deny Truth and therefore Religion, to deny God Himself. I put my doubts and troubles before the Working Committee and other associates whom I found near me. They did not all agree with me at first. Some of them probably do not even now agree with me. But never has a man been blessed, perhaps, with colleagues and associates so considerate and forgiving as I have. They understood my difficulty and patiently followed my argument. The result is before the public in the shape of the resolutions of the Working Committee. The drastic reversal of practically the whole of the aggressive programme may be politically unsound and unwise, but there is no doubt that it is religiously sound, and I venture to assure the doubters that the country will have gained by my humiliation and confession of error.

The only virtue I want to claim is Truth and Non-violence. I lay no claim to superhuman powers. I want none. I wear the same corruptible flesh that the weakest of my fellow beings wears and am therefore as liable to err as any. My services have many limitations, but God has up to now blessed them in spite of the imperfections.

For confession of error is like a broom that sweeps away dirt and leaves the surface cleaner than before, I feel stronger for my confession. And the cause must prosper for the retracing. Never has man reached his destination by persistence in deviation from the straight path.

It has been urged that Chauri Chaura cannot affect Bardoli. There is danger, it is argued, only if Bardoli is weak enough to be swayed by Chauri Chaura and is



betrayed into violence. I have no doubt whatsoever on that account. The people of Bardoli are in my opinion the most peaceful in India. But Bardoli is but a speck on the map of India. Its effort cannot succeed unless there is perfect co-operation from the other parts. Bardoli's disobedience will be civil only ~~when the other~~ parts of India remain non-violent. Just as the addition of a grain of arsenic to a pot of milk renders it unfit as food so will the civility of Bardoli prove unacceptable by the addition of the deadly poison from Chauri Chaura. The latter represents India as much as Bardoli.

Chauri Chaura is after all an aggravated symptom. I have never imagined that there has been no violence, mental or physical, in the places where repression is going on. Only I have believed, I still believe and the pages of *Young India* amply prove, that the repression is out of all proportion to the insignificant popular violence in the areas of repression. The determined holding of meetings in prohibited areas I do not call violence. The violence I am referring to is the throwing of brickbats or intimidation and coercion practised in stray cases. As a matter of fact in civil disobedience there should be no excitement. Civil disobedience is a preparation for mute suffering. Its effect is marvellous though unperceived and gentle. But I regarded certain amount of excitement as inevitable, certain amount of unintended violence even pardonable, *i.e.*, I did not consider civil disobedience impossible in somewhat imperfect conditions. Under perfect conditions disobedience when civil is hardly felt. But the present movement is admittedly a dangerous experiment under fairly adverse conditions.

The tragedy of Chauri Chaura is really the index



finger. It shows the way India may easily go, if drastic precautions be not taken. If we are not to evolve violence out of non-violence, it is quite clear that we must hastily retrace our steps and re-establish an atmosphere of peace, re-arrange our programme and not think of starting mass civil disobedience until we are sure of peace being started and in spite of Government provocation. We must be sure of unauthorised portions not starting mass civil disobedience.

As it is, the Congress organisation is still imperfect and its instructions are still perfunctorily carried out. We have not established Congress Committees in every one of the villages. Where we have, they are not perfectly amenable to our instructions. We have not probably more than one crore of members on the roll. We are in the middle of February, yet not many have paid the annual four annas subscription for the current year. Volunteers are indifferently enrolled. They do not conform to all the conditions of their pledge. They do not even wear hand-spun and hand-woven *khaddar*. All the Hindu volunteers have not yet purged themselves of the sin of untouchability. All are not free from the taint of violence. Not by their imprisonment are we going to win Swaraj or serve the holy cause of the Khilafat or attain the ability to stop payment to faithless servants. Some of us err in spite of ourselves. But some others among us sin wilfully. They join volunteer corps well knowing that they are not and do not intend to remain non-violent. We are thus untruthful even as we hold the Government to be untruthful. We dare not enter the kingdom of Liberty with mere lip homage to Truth and Non-violence.



Suspension of mass civil disobedience and subsidence of excitement are necessary for further progress, indeed, indispensable to prevent further retrogression. I hope, therefore, that by suspension every Congressman or woman will not only feel disappointed but he or she will feel relieved of the burden of unreality and of national sin.

Let the opponent glory in our humiliation or so called defeat. It is better to be charged with cowardice and weakness than to be guilty of our oath and sin against God. It is million times better to *appear* untrue before the world than to *be* untrue to ourselves.

And so, for me the suspension of mass civil disobedience and other minor activities that were calculated to keep up excitement is not enough penance for my having been the instrument, howsoever involuntary, of the brutal violence by the people at Chauri Chaura.

I must undergo personal cleansing. I must become a fitter instrument able to register the slightest variation in the moral atmosphere about me. My prayers must have much deeper truth and humility about them than they evidence. And for me there is nothing so helpful and cleansing as a fast accompanied by the necessary mental co-operation.

I know that the mental attitude is everything. Just as a prayer may be merely a mechanical intonation as of a bird, so may a fast be a mere mechanical torture of the flesh. Such mechanical contrivances are valueless for the purpose intended. Again just as a mechanical chant may result in the modulation of voice, a mechanical fast may result in purifying the body. Neither will touch the soul within.

But a fast undertaken for fuller self-expression, for

attainment of the spirit's supremacy over the flesh, is a most powerful factor in one's evolution. After deep consideration, therefore, I am imposing on myself a five days' continuous fast permitting myself water. It commenced on Sunday evening, it ends on Friday evening. This is the least I must do.

I have taken into consideration the All-India Congress Committee meeting in front of me. I have in mind the anxious pain even the days' fast will cause many friends ; but I can no longer postpone the penance nor lessen it.

I urge co-workers not to copy my example. The motive in their case will be lacking. They are not the originators of civil disobedience. I am in the unhappy position of a surgeon proved skilless to deal with an admittedly dangerous case. I must either abdicate or acquire greater skill. Whilst the personal penance is not only necessary but obligatory on me, the exemplary self-restraint prescribed by the Working Committee is surely sufficient penance for every one else. It is no small penance, and if sincerely carried out, it can become infinitely more real and better than fasting. What can be richer and more fruitful than a greater fulfilment of the vow of non-violence in thought, word, and deed or the spread of that spirit? It will be more than food for me during the week to observe that comrades are all silently and without idle discussion engaged in fulfilling the constructive programme sketched by the Working Committee, in enlisting Congress members after making sure that they understand the Congress creed of truth and non-violence for the attainment of Swaraj, in daily and religiously spinning for a fixed time, in introducing the wheel of prosperity and freedom in



every home, in visiting 'untouchable' homes and finding out their wants, in inducing national schools to receive 'untouchable' children, in organising social service specially designed to find a common platform for every variety of man and woman, and in visiting the homes which the drink curse is desolating, in establishing real *Panchayats* and in organising national schools on a proper footing. The workers will be better engaged in these activities than in fasting. I hope, therefore, that no one will join me in fasting, either through false sympathy or an ignorant conception of the spiritual value of fasting.

All fasting and all penance must as far as possible be secret. But my fasting is both a penance and a punishment, and a punishment has to be public. It is penance for me and punishment for those whom I try to serve, for whom I love to live and would equally love to die. They have unintentionally sinned against the laws of the Congress though they were sympathisers if not actually connected with it. Probably they hacked the constables their countrymen and fellow beings with my name on their lips. The only way love punishes is by suffering. I cannot even wish them to be arrested. But I would let them know that I would suffer for their breach of the Congress creed. I would advise those who feel guilty and repentant to hand themselves voluntarily to the Government for punishment and make a clean confession. I hope that the workers in the Gorakhpur district will leave no stone unturned to find out the evil-doers and urge them to deliver themselves into custody. But whether the murderers accept my advice or not, I would like them to know that they have seriously interfered



with Swaraj operations, that in being the cause of the postponement of the movement in Bardoli, they have injured the very cause they probably intended to serve. I would like them to know, too, that this movement is not a cloak or a preparation for violence. I would, at any rate, suffer every humiliation, every torture, absolute ostracism and death itself to prevent the movement from becoming violent or a precursor of violence. I make my penance public also because I am now denying myself the opportunity of sharing their lot with the prisoners. The immediate issue has again shifted, we can no longer press for the withdrawal of notification, or discharge of prisoners. They and we must suffer for the crime of Chauri Chaura. The incident proves, whether we wish it or no, the unity of life. All, including even the administrators, must suffer. Chauri Chaura must stiffen the Government, must still further corrupt the police, and the reprisals that will follow must further demoralise the people. The suspension and the penance will take us back to the position we occupied before the tragedy. By strict discipline and purification we regain the moral confidence required for demanding the withdrawal of notifications and the discharge of prisoners.

If we learn the full lesson of the tragedy, we can turn the curse into a blessing. By becoming truthful and non-violent, both in spirit and deed, and by making the swadeshi i.e., the *khaddar* programme complete, we can establish full Swaraj and redress the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs without a single person having to offer civil disobedience.



IN DEFENCE OF THE BARDOLI DECISIONS.

[The suspension of mass civil disobedience in Bardoli, which was recommended by the Working Committee at the instance of Mr. Gandhi, was resented by some of his colleagues and followers. In reply to correspondants who attacked him, he wrote as follows in *Young India* of February, 23rd.]

A friend from Lahore without giving his name sends me the following thundering note :—

“On Tuesday the 14th I read the *Tribune* and the resolutions therein, passed at the emergency meeting of the All-India Congress Working Committee. On Monday when I came from my office I heard a flying rumour that Mahatmaji had postponed the date of the mass civil disobedience, but at that time I thought the news devoid of foundation. After a short time a friend of mine hawked me at my house and we went to bazaar. His face was somewhat sadder than usual. I enquired of him the reason of his sadness. He said he was utterly disgusted and so gave up the idea of following this movement. Mahatmaji was going to give up the lead of this movement and at the same time he had advised all the Provincial Congress Committees not to enrol any more volunteers. No picketing propaganda should be undertaken as long as the special session of the All-India Congress Committee had not confirmed what to do further.

“The people are of this opinion that you have turned your face and become fickle-minded. They will co-operate with the Government without any hesitation and join the ceremony of His Royal Highness the



Prince of Wales. Some say that they will not observe *hartal* and will accord a hearty reception at Lahore.

"Some merchants are under the impression that you have removed all the restrictions from all liquor shops and *videshi* cloth.

"Truly speaking, each and every one in Lahore city is holding meeting in the bazaar as well as in the house, and you will forgive me if I will say boldly that they are condemning the action of the All-India Congress Committee.

"I now for my sake ask you these questions.

"(1) Will you now give up the lead of this movement? If so, why?

"(2) Will you be good enough to let me know why you have given such instructions to all Provincial Congress Committees? Have you given an opportunity to Pandit Malaviya for a Round Table Conference for a settlement, or has Pandit Malaviya agreed to embrace your movement in case the Government has not turned true to its words?

"(3) Grant a compromise is arranged and the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs are redressed and in the case of Swaraj the Government may only extend the reforms, will you be satisfied with that or continue your activities till you have got the full dominion status?

"(4) Suppose no decision is arrived at. Will Pandit Malaviya and all others who are connected with this conference come to your side or will their fate remain in the balance just as now?

"(5) In case no decision is arrived at, will you give up the idea of civil disobedience, if there is danger of violence.



"(6) Is your intention now to disband the present volunteer corps and enlist those who know spinning and wear handspun and handwoven *khaddar* ?

"(7) Suppose violence has made appearance when you have started your mass civil disobedience, what will you do at that time ? Will you stop your activities at the very moment ?"

There is much more criticism in this letter than I have reproduced. The writer tells me that the people are so disgusted that they now threaten to become co-operators and are of opinion that I have sold Lala Lajpat Rai, the Deshabandhu Chitta Ranjan Das, Pandit Motilal Nehru, the Ali Brothers and others, and tells me that if I give up the leadership there are thousands who will leave this world by committing suicide. I may assure the citizens of Lahore in particular and Punjabis in general that I do not believe what is said of them. I used to receive such letters even during the Martial Law days because of the suspension of civil disobedience, but I discounted all the news and on my reaching the Punjab in October, I found that I was right in my analysis of the Punjab mind and I discovered that there was no one to challenge the propriety of my act. I feel still more confident of the correctness of the decision of the Working Committee, but if it is found that the country repudiates my action I shall not mind it. I can but do my duty. A leader is useless when he acts against the promptings of his own conscience, surrounded as he must be by people holding all kinds of views. He will drift like an anchorless ship if he has not the inner voice to hold him firm and guide him. Above all, I can easily put up with the denial of the world, but any denial by me of my God is unthinkable, and if I did not give at this



critical period of the struggle the advice that I have, I would be denying both God and Truth. The telegrams and letters I am receiving from all parts of the country thanking me for my decision—telegrams from both non-co-operators and co-operators—confirm my belief that the country appreciates the decision and that the Lahore writer has given undue prominence to some heated bazaar talk which was bound to take place after the Bardoli decision which all of a sudden disturbed all previous calculations. I can understand the effect of the first shock, but I am also sure that when the people begin to analyse the implications of non-violence, they will come to no other conclusion than that of the Working Committee.

And now for the questions of the correspondent :

(1) I am not likely to give up the lead of the movement unless I have a clear indication that the people want me to. One method of giving that indication is an adverse vote of the Working Committee or the All-India Congress Committee.

(2) I assure the public that *Pandit Malaviyaji had absolutely no hand in shaping my decision*. I have often yielded to Panditji, and it is always a pleasure for me to yield to him whenever I can and always painful to differ from one who has an unrivalled record of public service and who is sacrifice personified. But so far as the decision of suspension is concerned, I arrived at it on my reading the detailed report of the Chauri Chaura tragedy in the *Chronicle*. It was in Bardoli that telegrams were sent convening the Working Committee meeting and it was in Bardoli that I sent a letter to the members of the Working Committee advising them of my desire to suspend civil disobedience. I went



thereafter to Bombay at the instance of Panditji who together with the other friends of the Malaviya Conference undoubtedly wished to plead with me for a suspension and who were agreeably surprised when I told them that so far as I was concerned, my mind was made up, but that had kept it open so that I could discuss the point thoroughly with the members of the Working Committee. The suspension has no reference to a round table conference or to any settlement. In my opinion, a round table conference is bound to prove fruitless. It requires a much stronger Viceroy than Lord Reading has proved to be to perceive the situation in the country and then to describe it correctly. I certainly feel that Pandit Malaviyaji has already come into the movement. It is not possible for him to keep away from the Congress or from danger, but the Bardoli decision was arrived at purely on its merits and I could not have been shaken from the original purpose had I not been unnerved by the Chauri Chaura tragedy which was the last straw.

(3) Nothing short of a full Dominion status is likely to satisfy me personally and nothing short of complete severance will satisfy me if the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs remain unredressed, but the exact form does not depend upon me. I have no clear-cut scheme. It has to be evolved by the people's representatives.

(4) At the present moment there is no question of a settlement. Therefore, the question as to what Panditji and all others will do is premature if not irrelevant. But assuming that Panditji holds any conference and that its resolutions are ignored by the Government, Panditji and others will act as all self-respecting men do in such circumstances.

(5) I can never give up the *idea* of civil disobedience.



dience, no matter what danger there is of violence, but I shall certainly give up the idea of *starting* mass civil disobedience so long as there is a certain danger of violence. Individual civil disobedience stands on a different footing.

(6) There is no question of disbanding any Volunteer Corps, but the names of those who do not conform to the Congress pledge have certainly to be removed from the list if we are to be honest.

(7) If we have understood the essential parts of non-violence, we can but come to one conclusion, that any eruption of widespread violence—and I call the Chauri Chaura tragedy widespread for the purpose—automatically stops mass civil disobedience. That many other parts of the country have nobly responded to the spirit of non-violence is good, but it is not good enough to continue mass civil disobedience even as a most *peaceful* meeting is disturbed if one man obstructs or commits violence. Mass civil disobedience for becoming successful requires a non-violent environment. The reason for restricting it to one single small area is to prevent violence elsewhere. It, therefore, means that mass civil disobedience in a particular area is possible when the other areas passively co-operate by remaining non-violent.



THE DELHI RESOLUTIONS.

[The All-India Congress Committee met at Delhi on the 25th February and passed resolutions *with important modifications on the Bardoli decisions of the Working Committee. Mr. Gandhi explains in the following article in *Young India* of March 2, 1922, how the Bardoli programme came to be modified.]

The session just past of the All-India Congress Committee was in some respects more memorable than the Congress. There is so much under-current of violence, both conscious and unconscious, that I was actually and literally praying for a disastrous defeat. I have always been in a minority. The reader does not know that in South Africa I started with practical unanimity, reached a minority of sixty-four and even sixteen and went up again to a huge majority. The best and the most solid work was done in the wilderness of minority.

[The following resolution was passed on the 25th February at the session of the All-India Congress Committee held at Delhi:—

The All-India Congress Committee having carefully considered the resolutions passed by the Working Committee at its meeting held at Bardoli on the 11th and 12th instant, confirms the said resolutions with the modifications noted therein and further resolves that individual Civil Disobedience whether of a defensive or aggressive character may be commenced in respect of particular places or particular laws at the instance of and upon permission being granted therefor by the respective Provincial Committee ; provided that such Civil Disobedience shall not be permitted unless all the conditions laid down by the Congress or the All-India Congress Committee or the Working Committee are strictly fulfilled.

Reports having been received from various quarters that

NON-CO-OPERATION

I know that the only thing that the Government dread is this huge majority I seem to command. They little know that I dread it even more than they. I have become literally sick of the adoration of the unthinking multitude. I would feel certain of my ground, if I was spat upon by them. Then there would be no need for confession of Himalayan and other miscalculations, no retracing, no re-arranging.

But it was not to be.

picketing regarding foreign cloth is as necessary as liquor-picketing, the All-India Congress Committee authorises such picketing of a *bona fide* character on the same terms as liquor-picketing mentioned in the Bardoli resolutions.

The All-India Congress Committee wishes it to be understood that the resolutions of the Working Committee do not mean any abandonment of the original Congress programme of non-co-operation or permanent abandonment of Mass Civil Disobedience but considers that an atmosphere of necessary mass non-violence can be established by the workers concentrating upon the constructive programme framed by the Working Committee at Bardoli.

The All-India Congress Committee holds Civil Disobedience to be the right and duty of the people to be exercised and performed whenever the State opposes the declared will of the people.

*Note :—*Individual Civil Disobedience is disobedience of orders or laws by a single individual or an ascertained number or group of individuals. Therefore a prohibited public meeting where admission is regulated by tickets and to which no unauthorised admission is allowed, is an instance of Individual Civil Disobedience, whereas a prohibited meeting to which the general public is admitted without any restriction is an instance of Mass Civil Disobedience. Such Civil Disobedience is defensive when a prohibited public meeting is held for conducting a normal activity although it may result in arrest. It would be aggressive if it is held not for any normal activity but merely for the purpose of courtjng arrest and imprisonment.



A friend warned me against exploiting my dictatorship. He little knew that I had never once used it, if only because the legal occasion had not yet arisen for its use. The 'dictatorship' accrues to me only when the ordinary Congress machinery is rendered unworkable by the Government.

Far from my consciously or unconsciously exploiting my 'dictatorship', I have begun to wonder if I am not unconsciously allowing myself to be 'exploited'. I confess that I have a dread of it such as I never had before. My only safety lies in my shamelessness. I have warned my friends of the Committee that I am incorrigible. I shall continue to confess blunders each time the people commit them. The only tyrant I accept in this world is the 'still small voice' within. And even though I have to face the prospect of a minority of one, I humbly believe I have the courage to be in such a hopeless minority. That to me is the only truthful position.

But I am a sadder and I hope a wiser man to-day. I see that our non-violence is skin-deep. We are burning with indignation. The Government is feeding it by its insensate acts. It seems almost as if the Government wants to see this land covered with murder, arson and rapine, in order to be able once more to claim exclusive ability to put them down.

This non-violence therefore seems to be due merely to our helplessness. It almost appears as if we are nursing in our bosoms the desire to take revenge the first time we get the opportunity.

Can true voluntary non-violence come out of this seeming forced non-violence of the weak? Is it not a futile experiment I am conducting? What if, when the



fury bursts, not a man, woman or child is safe and every man's hand is raised against his fellow being? Of what avail is it then if I fast myself to death in the event of such a catastrophe coming to pass?

What is the alternative? To lie and say that what I know to be evil, is good? To say that true and voluntary co-operation will come out of false and forced co-operation is to say that light will result from darkness.

Co-operation with the Government is as much a weakness and a sin as alliance with suspended violence.

The difficulty is almost insurmountable. Hence with the growing knowledge of the fact that this non-violence is merely superficial, I must continually make mistakes and retrace, even as a man wading his way through a tractless forest must continually stop, retrace, stumble, be hurt and even bleed.

I was prepared for a certain amount of depression, dis-appointment and resentment, but I confess I was totally unprepared for the hurricane of opposition. It became clear to me that the workers were in no mood to do any serious work of construction. The constructive programme lent no enchantment. They were not a social reform association. They could not wrest power from the Government by such humdrum reform work. They wanted to deliver 'non-violent' blows! All this appeared so thoroughly unreal. They would not stop to think that even if they could defeat the Government by a childish display of rage, they could not conduct the Government of the country for a single day without serious and laborious organisation and construction.

We must not go to gaol, as Mahomed Ali would



say, 'on a false issue'. It is not *any* imprisonment that will lead to Swaraj. It is not *every* disobedience that will fire us with the spirit of obedience and discipline. Jails are no gate-way to liberty for the confirmed criminal. They are temples of liberty only for those who are innocence personified. The execution of Socrates made immortality a living reality for us,—not so the execution of countless murderers. There is no warrant for supposing that we can steal Swaraj by the imprisonment of thousands of nominally non-violent men with hatred, ill-will and violence raging in their breasts.

It would be otherwise if we were fighting with arms, giving and receiving blow for blow. The imprisonment of those who may be caught intimidating, assaulting and murdering will certainly embarrass the Government and when they are tired, they would as elsewhere yield. But such is not our fight to-day. Let us be truthful. If it is through 'show of force' that we wish to gain Swaraj, let us drop non-violence and offer such violence as we may. It would be a manly, honest and sober attitude an attitude the world has been used to for ages past. No one can then accuse us of the terrible charge of hypocrisy.

But the majority will not listen to me in spite of all my warnings and passionate plea for rejecting my resolution, if they did not believe in non-violence as indispensable for the attainment of our goal. They accepted it without a single material change. I would ask them therefore to realise their responsibility. They are now bound not to rush to civil disobedience but to settle down to the quiet work of construction. I would urge them to be indifferent to the clamour for immediate action



The immediate action is not courting imprisonment, nor even free speech and free association or free pen, but self-purification, introspection, quiet organisation. We have lost our foothold. If we do not take care, we are likely to be drowned in the waters whose depth we do not know.

It is no use thinking of the prisoners. When I heard of Chauri Chaura I sacrificed them as the first penitential act. They have gone to jail to be released only by the strength of the people, indeed the hope was the Swaraj Parliament's first act would be to open the prison gates. God had decreed otherwise. We who are outside have tried and failed. The prisoners can now only gain by serving the full term of their imprisonment. Those who went under false pretences, or under any mis-apprehension or under mistaken understanding of the movement can come out by apologising and by petitioning. The movement will be all the stronger for the purging. The stoutest hearts will rejoice in the opportunity of unexpectedly greater suffering. Though thousands of Russians have 'rotted' in the Russian prisons for years and years, that unhappy people are not yet free. Liberty is a jilt most difficult to woo and please. We have shown the power of suffering. But we have not suffered enough. If the people in general keep passively non-violent and if only a few are actively, honestly and knowingly non-violent in intent, word and deed, we can reach the goal in quickest time with the least suffering. But we shall indefinitely postpone the attainment, if we send to prison men who harbour violence in their breasts.

Therefore the duty of the majority in their respective provinces is to face taunts, insults and if need be



depletion in their ranks but determinedly to pursue their goal without swerving an inch. The authorities mistaking our suspension for weakness may resort to still greater oppression. We should submit to it. We should even abandon defensive civil disobedience and concentrate all our energy on the tasteless but health-giving economic and social reform. We should bend down on our knees and assure the moderates that they need fear no harm from us. We should assure the Zamindars that we have no ill-will against them.

The average Englishman is haughty, he does not understand us, he considers himself to be a superior being. He thinks that he is born to rule us. He relies upon his forts or his gun to protect himself. He despises us. He wants to compel co-operation *i.e.*, slavery. Even him we have to conquer, not by bending the knee, but remaining aloof from him, but at the sametime not hating him nor hurting him. It is cowardly to molest him. If we simply refuse to regard ourselves as his slaves and pay homage to him, we have done our duty. A mouse can only shun the cat. He cannot treat with her till she has filed the points of her claws and teeth. At the same time we must show every attention to those few Englishmen who are trying to cure themselves and fellow Englishmen of the disease of race superiority.

The minority has different ideals. It does not believe in the programme. Is it not right and patriotic for them to form a new party and a new organisation ? They will then truly educate the country. Those who do not believe in the creed should surely retire from the Congress. Even a national organisation must have a creed. One, for instance, who does not believe in



Swaraj has no place in the Congress. I submit that even so has one who does not believe in 'peaceful and legitimate means' no place in the Congress. A Congressman may not believe in non-co-operation and still remain in it but he cannot believe in violence and untruth and still be a Congressman. I was therefore deeply hurt when I found opposition to the note in the resolution about the creed and still more when I found opposition to my paraphrase of the two adjectives 'peaceful' and 'legitimate' into 'non-violent' and 'truthful' respectively. I had reasons for the paraphrase. I was seriously told that the creed did not insist upon non-violence and truth as the indispensable means for the attainment of Swaraj. I agreed to remove the paraphrase in order to avoid a painful discussion but I felt that truth was stabbed.

I am sure that those who raised this opposition are as patriotic as I claim to be, they are as eager for Swaraj as every other Congressman. But I do say that the patriotic spirit demands their loyal and strict adherence to non-violence and truth and that if they do not believe in them they should retire from the Congress organisation.

Is it not national economy to let all the ideals be sharply defined and to work independently of one another? That then which is most popular will win the day. If we are going to evolve the real spirit of democracy, we shall not do so by obstruction but by abstention.

The session of the All-India Congress Committee was a forcible demonstration of the fact that we are retarding the country's progress towards Swaraj and not the Government. Every mistake of the Government helps. Every neglect of duty on our part hinders.



REPLY TO CRITICS.

If the Pardoli decisions offended a few zealous followers of Mr. Gandhi, the Delhi resolutions were condemned by a large section of the public. Congressmen were uncomfortable at the sudden and incessant changes of programme. Doubts as to the validity of the principles of non-violence were openly discussed, some adhering to it as a mere policy and as policy, liable to change. To these Mr. Gandhi replied:—]

I am sorry that I find a nervous fear among some Hindus and Mahomedans that I am undermining their faith and that I am even doing irreparable harm to India by my uncompromising preaching of non-violence. They seem almost to imply that violence is their creed. I touch a tender spot if I talk about extreme non-violence in their presence. They confound me with texts from the Mahabharata and the Koran eulogising or permitting violence. Of the Mahabharata I can write without restraint, but the most devout Mahomedan will not, I hope, deny me the privilege of understanding the message of the Prophet. I make bold to say that violence is the creed of no religion and that whereas non-violence in most cases is obligatory in all, violence is merely permissible in some cases. But I have not put before India the final form of non-violence. The non-violence that I have preached from Congress platforms is non-violence as a policy. But even policies require honest adherence in thought, word and deed. If I believe that honesty is the best policy, surely whilst I so believe, I must be honest in thought, word and deed; otherwise I become an imposter. Non-violence being a policy means that it can upon due

notice be given up when it proves unsuccessesful or ineffective. But simple morality demands that whilst a particular policy is pursued, it must be pursued with all one's heart. It is simple policy to march along a certain route, but the soldier who marches with an unsteady step along that route is liable to be summarily dismissed. I become therefore incredulous when people talk to me sceptically about non-violence or are seized with fright at the very mention of the word non-violence. If they do not believe in the expedient of non-violence, they must denounce it but not claim to believe in the expedient when their heart resists it. How disastrous it would be if, not believing in violence even as an expedient, I joined, say, a violence party and approached a gun with a perturbed heart! The reader will believe me when I say that I have the capacity for killing a fly. But I do not believe in killing even flies. Now suppose I joined an expedition for fly-killing as an expedient. Will I not be expected before being permitted to join the expedition to use all the available engines of destruction whilst I remained in the army of fly killers? If those who are in the Congress and the Khilafat Committees will perceive this simple truth, we shall certainly either finish the struggle this year to a successful end or be so sick of non-violence as to give up the pretention and set about devising some other programme.

I hold that Swami Shraddhanandji has been needlessly criticised for the proposition he intended to move. His argument is absolutely honest. He thinks that we as a body do not really believe in non-violence even as a policy. Therefore we shall never fulfil the programme of non-violence. Therefore, he says, let us



go to the Councils and get what crumbs we may. He was trying to show the unreality of the position of those who believe in the policy with their lips whereas they are looking forward to violence for final deliverance. I do say that if Congressmen do not fully *believe* in the policy, they are doing an injury to the country by pretending to follow it. If violence is to be the basis of future Government, the Councillors are undoubtedly the wisest. For it is through the Councils that by the same devices by which the present administrators rule us, the Councilors hope to seize power from the former's hands. I have little doubt that those who nurse violence in their bosoms will find no benefit from the lip profession of non-violence. I urge, therefore, with all the vehemence at my command that those who do not believe in non-violence should secede from the Congress and from non-co-operation and prepare to seek election or re-join law courts or Government colleges as the case may be. Let there be no manner of doubt that Swaraj established by non-violent means will be different in kind from the Swaraj that can be established by armed rebellion. Police and punishments there will be even under such Swaraj. But there would be no room for brutalities such as we witness to-day both on the part of the people and the Government. And those, whether they call themselves Hindus or Mussulmans, who do not fully believe in the policy of non-violence, should abandon both non-co-operation and non-violence.

For me, I am positive that neither in the Koran nor in the Mahabharata there is any sanction for and approval of the triumph of violence. Though there is repulsion enough in Nature, she *lives* by attraction.



Mutual love enables Nature to persist. Man does not live by destruction. Self-love compels regard for others. Nations cohere because there is mutual regard among the individuals composing them. Some day we must extend the national law to the universe, even as we have extended the family law to form nations—a larger family. God has ordained that India should be such a nation. For so far as reason can perceive, India cannot become free by armed rebellion for generations. India can become free by refraining from national violence. India has now become tired of rule based upon violence. That to me is the message of the plains. The people of the plains do not know what it is to put up an organised armed fight. And they must become free, for they want freedom. They have realised that power seized by violence will only result in their greater grinding.

Such at any rate is the reasoning that has given birth to the *policy*, not the *dharma*, of non-violence. And even as a Mussulman or a Hindu believing in violence applies the creed of non-violence in his family, so are both called upon without question to apply the policy of non-violence in their mutual relation and in their relation to other races and classes not excluding Englishmen. Those who do not believe in this policy and do not wish to live up to it in full, retard the movement by remaining in it.

It is thus clear what I would like the Provincial organisations to do. They must not for the present disobey the Government orders so far as it is at all possible. They must not, before they have searched their hearts, take forward action but bring about an absolutely calm atmosphere. No imprisonment courted



in anger has availed us anything. I agree with the Mussulman view which is also the Hindu view that there is no imprisonment for the sake of it. All imprisonment to be useful has to be courted for religion or country and that by men and women clad in *khaddar* and without anger or violence in their hearts. If the provinces have no such men and women, they should not embark on civil disobedience at all.

Hence it is that the constructive programme has been framed. It will steady and calm us. It will wake our organising spirit, it will make us industrious, it will render us fit for Swaraj, it will cool our blood. We shall be spat upon, laughed at, sworn at, may be even kicked and cursed. We must put up with it all inasmuch as we have harboured anger in our breasts even though we have been under the pledge of non-violence. I must frankly state that unless we can retrieve our steps deliberately, cultivate non-violence and manufacture *khaddar*, we cannot render effective help to the Khilafat, we cannot get redress of the Punjab wrong, nor can we attain Swaraj. My leadership is perfectly useless if I cannot convince co-workers and the public of the absolute and immediate necessity of vigorously prosecuting the constructive programme.

We must know whether we can get a crore men and women in all India who believe in the attainment of Swaraj by peaceful *i. e.*, non-violent and legitimate *i. e.*, truthful means.

We must get money for the prosecution of Swadeshi and we will know how many people there are in India who are willing honestly to pay one rupee out of every hundred of their past year's income to the Tilak



Memorial Swaraj Fund. This subscription the Committee expects from Congressmen and sympathisers.

We must spend money like water in introducing the spinning wheel in every home, in the manufacture and the distribution of *khaddar* wherever required.

Surely we have long neglected the 'untouchable' brother. He has slaved for us too long. We must now serve him.

Our liquor picketing has done some good but not substantial. Not till we pierce the home of the drunkard shall we make any real advance. We must know why he drinks; but we can substitute for it. We must have a census of all the drunkards of India.

Social Service Department has been looked at with the utmost contempt. If the non-co-operation movement is not malicious, that department is a necessity. We want to render alike to friend and foe service in times of distress. We are thereby able to keep our relations sweet with all in spite of our political aloofness.

Social service and temperance reform were laughed at as part of the struggle for Swaraj. It was a painful exhibition of ignorance of the essentials of Swaraj. I claim that human mind or human society is not divided into water-tight compartments called social, political and religious. All act and react upon one another. What is more, the vast majority of Hindus and Mussulmans have joined the struggle believing it to be religious. The masses have come in because they want to save the Khilafat and the cow. Deprive the Mussalman of the hope of helping the Khilafat and he will shun the Congress; tell the Hindu he cannot save the cow if he joins the Congress, he will to a man leave it. To



laugh at moral reform and social service is to laugh at Swaraj, the Khilafat and the Punjab.

Even the organisation of schools was laughed at. Let us see what it means. We have demolished the prestige of Government schools. It was perhaps necessary in 1920 to do the picketing and certainly not to mind the boys being neglected, but it would be criminal any longer to picket Government schools or to neglect National institutions. We can now only draw more boys and girls by putting existing National schools on a better footing. They have the advantage of being in institutions where they breathe free air and where they are not shadowed. But the advantage of scientific training in carding, hand-spinning and hand-weaving and of having intellectual training in keeping with the requirements of the country must be added. We shall show by successful experiment the superiority of training in National schools and colleges.

Even the *Panchayats* came in for ridicule. Little did the critics realise that the masses in many parts of India had ceased to resort to law courts. If we do not organise honest *Panchayats*, they will certainly go back to the existing law courts.

Nor is a single step devoid of vast political results. Adequate manufacture and universal use of *khaddar* means a permanent boycott of foreign cloth and automatic distribution of sixty crores of rupees annually among the poor people. Permanent disappearance of the drink and the opium evils mean an annual saving of seventeen crores to the people and a diminution of that revenue for the Government. Constructive effort for the untouchables means the addition to the Congress ranks of six crores of men and women who will for



ever be bound to the Congress. Social Service Department, if it becomes a live thing, will restore the strained relations that exist to-day among co-operators (whether Indian or English) and non-co-operators. To work the full constructive programme therefore is to achieve all we want. To fail in fulfilling the programme is to postpone all possibility of effective civil disobedience.

Several Mussulman friends have said, "Your programme is good for Swaraj but it is too slow to be good enough for saving the Khilafat. The Khilafat question will be solved in a few months and whatever can be done must be done now." Let us examine the question. The cause of the Khilafat, thank God, is safe in the hands of Gazi Mustafa Kamal Pasha. He has retrieved the prestige of the Khilafat as no Mussalman of modern times has done. India has in my opinion helped not much by her money though that has meant something, but by Hindu-Muslim unity and by telling the Government in the plainest terms possible that India will have nothing to do with the Government and will declare complete independence if England persists in her anti-Turk policy and exploits India's resources against the Turks. The greater the strength in that declaration the greater becomes the prestige of Islam and the greater the power of Mustafa Kamal Pasha. Some people think that mere temporary embarrassment of the Government by a few thousand men, irrespective of qualification, going to jail, will make the Government yield to our wishes. Let us not underrate the power of the Government. I am sure that the Government does possess as yet the power to crush the spirit of violence. And it is nothing but



violence to go to jail anyhow. It is the suffering of the pure and God-fearing which will tell, not the bluster of the rabble. The purer India becomes, the stronger she becomes. Purity is the only weapon of the weak in body. The strong in body in their insolence often mobilise their 'hard fibre' and seek to usurp the very function of the Almighty. But when that 'hard fibre' comes in contact not with its like but with the exact opposite, it has nothing to work against. A solid body can only move on and against another solid body. You cannot build castles in the air. Therefore, the impatient Mussalmans must see the obvious truth that the little disorganised bluster of the rabble, whether it expresses itself by going to jail or by burning buildings or by making noisy demonstrations, will be no match for the organised insolence of the 'hard fibre' of the 'most determined people in the world'. This terrific insolence can only be met by the utter humility of the pure and the meek. God helps the helpless, not those who believe they can do something. Every page of the Koran teaches me, a non-Muslim, this supreme lesson. Every *sura* of Koran begins in the name of God the Compassionate and the Merciful. Let us therefore be strong in soul though weak in body.

If the Mussalmans believe in the policy of non-violence, they must give it a fair trial and they will not have given it any trial at all if they harbour anger *i.e.* violence in their breasts.

As it is, by our bluster, by intimidation, by show of force, by violent picketing, we shall estrange more men than intimidate into co-operation with us. And how can we dare seek co-operation by compulsion when we have refused to be coerced into co-operation with the

Government? Must we not observe the same law that we expect others to observe towards us?

If the Treaty of Sevres is not revised to our satisfaction, it is not finished. The virtue lies in India's determination not to be satisfied with anything less than her demands. After all Mustafa Kamal may insist upon the settlement of the Juzurut-ul-Arab. We must continue the fight so long as it is not returned intact to the Mussulmans. If the Mussal-mans consider that they can gain their end by force of arms, let them secede from the non-violent alliance by all means. But if they know that they cannot, let them carry it out in thought, word and deed and they will find that there is no surer or quicker remedy for assuaging their grief and redressing the Khilafat wrong.

Some friends argue that in order to continue the struggle, the people need some stimulant. No person or nation can be kept alive merely upon stimulants. We have had much too much of it latterly. And the antidote now is a depressant. If therefore depression follows the cessation of all aggressive activities and people forsake us, it would not only not hinder our cause but help it. Then we shall not have to shoulder the responsibility for a Chauri Chaura. Then we could go forward with a steady step without any danger of having to look back. If however we can survive the depression and keep the people with us, we shall have positive proof that the people have caught the message of non-violence and that the people are as capable of doing constructive work as they have shown themselves capable of doing destructive work.



Whatever the result, the present excitement must be abated at any cost.

I have carefully read Mr. Kelkar's article in the "*Mahratta*" criticising the Bardoli resolutions. I acknowledge the gentle and considerate manner with which he has handled me. I wish I could persuade him and many who think like Mr. Kelkar that what he calls a somersault was an inevitable operation. Consistency is a desirable quality, but it becomes a 'hobgoblin' when it refuses to see facts. I have known dispositions of armies changed from hour to hour. Once during the Zulu revolt we were all asleep. We had definite orders for the morrow. But suddenly at about midnight we were awakened and ordered to retire behind bags of grain which served as protecting walls because the enemy was reported to be creeping up the hill on which we had encamped. In another hour it was understood that it was a false alarm and we were permitted to retire to our tents. All the 'somersaults' were necessary changes. Remedies vary with the variation in diagnosis. The same physician one day detects malaria and gives a large dose of quinine, detects typhoid the next and stops all medicine and orders careful nursing and fasting, later detects consumption and orders change and solid food. Is the physician capricious or cautious and honest?

Without being untruthful and indifferent if not stupid, I could not do what Mr. Kelkar suggests I should have done at the time of the Bombay Conference. It would have been untruthful to have yielded to the Moderate friends beyond what was conceded, as the Indian sky appeared to me to be clear blue and promised to remain so. My diagnosis may be blamed but not my



decision based on the then diagnosis, nor could I possibly conceal the demands especially in the teeth of the Viceregal declaration at Calcutta that nothing was to be expected in the matters of the Khilafat and the Punjab and that as the reforms had only just been granted no advance was to be expected. I would have been unfair to the Viceroy as also to the Moderate friends if I had not said that our demands were emphatic and clear cut. To have then suspended mass civil disobedience would have been a weakness. But Chauri Chaura darkened the horizon and I discovered a new diagnosis. It would have been idiotic on my part not to have declared in the clearest possible language that the patient required a drastic change of treatment. Not to have suspended after Chauri Chaura would have been unpardonable weakness. I assure the reader that Bardoli's unpreparedness had nothing to do with the decision. For Bardoli in my opinion was quite able to give battle. I have stated several times in the column of *Young India* and *Nava Jivan* that I considered Bardoli to be quite ready for the fray.

The fact is that the critics do not realise the implications of civil disobedience. They seem unconsciously to ignore the potent adjective 'civil.'

The more I think of the Bardoli decision and the more I rehearse the debates and the talks at Delhi, the more convinced I am of the correctness of the decision and of the necessity of Provinces stopping all offensive activities for the time being even at the risk of being considered weak and forfeiting popular applause and support.

A correspondent from Lahore writes under date, 3rd March:—



"So far as the facts about 'Bardoli decision' have come to light, it appears the decision was arrived at either under the influence of Pundit Malaviya or under some far fetched notions of non-violence. In the former case the act is most unworthy, and in the latter it is most unwise. Is not the ideal of the Congress Swaraj and not Non-violence? People have imbibed non-violence generally, which surely must do for the Congress purpose. How the breaches like those at Bombay and Gorakhpur can make the engine come to a standstill I cannot understand. And if M. Paul Richard is true as to your aspirations of a World Leader through non-violence even at the cost of Indian interest, it is surely unbecoming and, excuse me to say, dishonest.

"And have you realised the effects of this sudden standstill? Mr. Montagu's threat comes for that, Lord Reading and his Government are harder to us than even before. It had almost yielded. As to the public, there is a general distrust prevailing among the classes and the masses. Surely it is difficult to make men play things of the hour and their disgust and disappointment show how the fight was carried on in right earnest. Don't you perceive that it is a shock and that two such shocks must enervate the combatants altogether?

"Besides, I have heard the responsible Mussalmans talk of withdrawing co-operation even from the Hindus. The fight is religious with them. It is the 'Jehad', I should say. God's Command and the Prophet's is no joke to start and to stop the 'Jehad' at will. If the Hindus should retire, they say they must devise their own course. Will you take care to ease one heart that feels uneasy on this account?"

It is impossible to withhold sympathy from the



writer. His letter is typical of the attitude I saw reflected in Delhi. I have already given the assurance that Pundit Malaviyaji had nothing to do with the Bardoli decision. Nor have any 'far-fetched notions of non-violence' anything to do with it. The correspondent's letter is the best justification for it. To me the Bardoli decision is the logical outcome of the national pledge of limited non-violence. I entirely endorse the opinion that Swaraj is the nation's goal, not non-violence. It is true that my goal is as much Swaraj as non-violence, because I hold Swaraj for the masses to be unattainable save through non-violence. But have I not repeatedly said in these columns that I would have India become free even by violence rather than that she should remain in bondage? In slavery she is a helpless partner in the violence of the slave-holder. It is however true that I could not take part in a violent attempt at deliverance if only because I do not believe in the possibility of success by violence. I cannot pull the trigger against my worst enemy. If I succeed in convincing the world of the supremacy of the law of non-violence and the futility of violence for the progress of mankind, the correspondent will find that India will have automatically gained her end. But I freely confess my utter inability to do so without first convincing India that she can be free only by non-violent and truthful means and no other.

I must further confess that what Mr. Montagu or Lord Reading would think of the decision did not concern me and therefore their threats do not perturb or affect me. Nor should they affect any non-co-operator. He burnt his boats when he embarked upon his mission. But this I know that if



India becomes non-violent in intent, word and deed, even the hearts of Mr. Montagu and Lord Reading will be changed. As it is, marvellous though our progress has been in non-violent action, our hearts and our speech have not become non-violent. Mr. Montagu and Lord Reading do not believe in the sincerity of our profession nor in the possibility of sincere workers succeeding in creating a truly non-violent atmosphere. What is therefore required is more and yet more non-violence "in intent, word and deed."

As for the people, I have little doubt that they will survive the purifying shock. I regard the present depression as a prelude to steady progress. But should it prove otherwise, the truth of the Bardoli decision cannot be denied. It stands independent of public approval. God *is*, even though the whole world deny Him. Truth *stands*, even if there be no public support. It is self-sustained.

I should be sorry, indeed, if responsible Mussalmans will not see the obvious corollaries of non-violence. In my opinion the fight is as religious with Hindus as with Mussalmans. I agree that ours is a spiritual 'Jehad.' But a 'Jehad' has, like all other wars, its strict restrictions and limitations. The Hindus and Mussalmans sail in the same boat. The dissatisfaction is common to both and it is open to both to dissolve partnership with each other. Either or both may also depose me from generalship. It is purely a partnership at will. Finally I assure the correspondent that when I find that I cannot carry conviction home to the people, I shall withdraw from the command myself.

I invite the reader to study the leading article of the week on non-violence. The article became fairly



long even with a discussion of the main principles. I did not therefore discuss the important side issues in it but reserved them for the Notes.

Such for instance are the questions :—

(1) When can even individual civil disobedience be resumed ?

(2) What kind of violence will stop civil disobedience ?

(3) Is there room for self-defence in the limited conception of non-violence ?

(4) Supposing the Mussalmans or the Hindus secede, can a non-violent campaign be carried on by one community alone ?

(5) Supposing Hindus and Mussalmans both reject me, what would become of my preaching ?

I shall take the questions seriatim. Civil disobedience, even individual civil disobedience—requires a tranquil atmosphere. It must not be commenced till the workers have assimilated the spirit of non-violence and have procured a certificate of merit from the co-operators whether English or Indian, *i.e.*, till they have really ceased to think ill of them. The surest test will be when our meetings are purged of intolerance and our writings of bitterness. Another necessary test will be our serious handling of the constructive programme. If we cannot settle down to it, to me it will be proof positive of our disbelief in the capacity of non-violence to achieve the purpose.

It is not every kind of violence that will stop civil disobedience. I should not be dismayed by family feuds even though they may be sanguinary. Nor will the violence of robbers baffle me though they would be to me an indication of the absence of general purifica-



tion. It is political violence which *must* stop civil disobedience. Chauri Chaura was an instance of political violence. It arose from a political demonstration which we should have avoided if we were not capable of conducting it absolutely peacefully. I did not allow Malabar and Malegaon to interrupt our course, because the Moplahs were a special people and they had not come under the influence of non-violence to any appreciable extent. Malegaon is more difficult, but there is clear evidence that the chief non-co-operators had tried their best to prevent the murders. Nor was mass civil disobedience imminent at the time. It could not interrupt individual civil disobedience elsewhere.

The non-co-operator's pledge does not exclude the right of private self-defence. Non-co-operators are under prohibition as to political violence. Those, therefore, with whom non-co-operation is not their final creed, are certainly free to defend themselves or their dependents and wards against their assailants. But they may not defend themselves against the police acting in discharge of their duties whether assumed or authorised. Thus there was no right of self-defence under the pledge against Collectors who have, I hold, illegally belaboured volunteers.

If one of the big communities secede from the compact of non-violence, I admit that it is most difficult, though certainly not impossible, for one party only to carry on the struggle. That party will need to have an invulnerable faith in the policy of non-violence. But if one community does realise that India cannot gain Swaraj for generations through violent means, it can, by its consistently non-violent *i.e.*, loving conduct, bring round all the opposing parties to its side.



If both the parties reject me, I should keep my peace just as ever and most decidedly carry on my propaganda of non-violence. I should then not be restricted as I am now. Then I should be enforcing my creed as to-day I seem to be enforcing only the policy.

A DIVINE WARNING *

If a person commits a mistake for the first time he is excused ; only the generous public forgives in him the repetition of the error. But if he is responsible even on a third occasion for the same mistake, the public leaves him severely alone. If a man is deceived once or twice, he is thought a simpleton but if is ever being deceived, he is rightly condemned a fool. Mass Civil Disobedience at Bardoli has passed off as a dream. God thought it fit in His supreme wisdom to dispose of my plans just at the moment when I thought that Mass Civil Disobedience could be commenced. There is nothing strange in this. In the Ramayana we see that Rama was banished to the wild forests when all was ready for his coronation. That has a lesson for us. We understand the true meaning of Swaraj only when we readily recognise the unreality of things which we had all along thought to be too true. It seems to me that the attempt made to win Swaraj is Swaraj itself. The faster we run towards it, the longer seems to be the distance to be traversed. The same is the case with all ideals. When one goes in pursuit of truth, he finds that it is always eluding his grasp because he sees now and then that what he once thought too true is no more than a fond illusion. The righteous man is always humble. He recognises

* From the *Navjivan*, January 1922.



his shortcomings day by day. A Brahmachari who seeks true Brahmacharyam, feels too often that the longing after wordly pleasures is still in him, making the attainment of his ideal almost impossible. He who seeks "Moksha" or deliverance experiences a similar feeling. All this explains the great "Nathi." The sages who retired for *tapas* to the mountains and forests found themselves confronted with the "Nathi." Some of the Maharishis had probably a glimpse of the truth.

SWARAJ IS THE ATTEMPT TO WIN IT.

I am now convinced more firmly than ever that Swaraj lies in our efforts to win it. Ahmedabad and Viramgaum committed excesses. So too did Amristar and Kasur. Satyagraha was then postponed because of those mob excesses. Last November I was eye-witness to the horrid outbreak at Bombay. Then too Mass Civil Disobedience was postponed. But the bitterest cup of humiliation was yet to come. Chauri Chaura taught me the most valuable lesson. I do not know how much more is still in store for me. Now if people grow impatient and consider me a fool, it will not be their fault. Why should I meddle in their affairs, if I had not the capacity to understand their true nature? I could not sit with folded arms allowing things to drift. I could not but make open confession of error when any occurred. I would prefer being deposed from leadership, to paying lip-homage to truth and allowing the spirit within me to get corrupt by the overpowering weakness of the flesh. "If the Rana gets angry the people will give me shelter, but no one can protect me from God's wrath" is the strain of Mirabai's song and this has a moral for the world.