

once significant and impressive. Tens and hundreds of thousands gathered in different cities, and never within living memory have such demonstrations been witnessed.

In the meanwhile the Satyagraha Committees in different centres of India were actively carrying on their propaganda. The Central Committee of which Mr. Gandhi was the president, advised that for the time being laws regarding prohibited literature and registration of newspapers might be civilly disobeyed. Accordingly on the 7th April Mr. Gandhi issued a notice to organise, regulate and control the sale of these publications. A leaflet called *Satyagrahi* was at once brought out as also some early writing of Mr. Gandhi's which was pronounced to be seditious. The first print stated among other things :

"The editor is liable at any moment to be arrested, and it is impossible to ensure the continuity of publication until India is in a happy position of supplying editors enough to take the place of those who are arrested. It is not our intention to break for all time the laws governing the publication of newspapers. This paper will, therefore, exist so long only as the Rowlatt Legislation is not withdrawn."

Meanwhile as contemplated by Mr. Gandhi he was arrested at Kosi on his way to Delhi on the morning of the 10th April and served with an order not to enter the Punjab and the District of Delhi. The officer serving the order treated him most politely, assuring him that it would be his most painful duty to arrest him, if he elected to disobey, but that there would be no ill-will between them. Mr. Gandhi smilingly said that he must elect to disobey as it was his duty, and that the officer ought also to do what was his duty. Mr. Gandhi then dictated a message to Mr. Desai, his secretary, laying special emphasis in his oral message that none should resent his arrest or do anything tainted with untruth or violence which was sure to harm the sacred cause.

Mr. Gandhi arrived in Bombay on the afternoon of the 11th April, having been prevented from entering the Provinces of the Punjab and Delhi. An order was soon after served on him requiring him to confine his activities within the limits of the Bombay Presidency. Having heard





of the riots and the consequent bloodshed in different places he caused the following message to be read at all the meetings that evening : —

I have not been able to understand the cause of so much excitement and disturbance that followed my detention. It is not Satyagraha. It is worse than *Duragraha*. Those who join Satyagraha demonstrations are bound one and all to refrain at all hazard from violence, not to throw stones or in any way whatever to injure anybody.

I therefore suggest that if we cannot conduct this movement without the slightest violence from our side, the movement might have to be abandoned or it may be necessary to give it a different and still more restricted shape. It may be necessary to go even further. The time may come for me to offer Satyagraha against ourselves. I would not deem it a disgrace that we die. I shall be pained to hear of the death of a Satyagrahi, but I shall consider it to be the proper sacrifice given for the sake of the struggle.

I do not see what penance I can offer excepting that it is for me to fast and if need be by so doing to give up this body and thus prove the truth of Satyagraha. I appeal to you to peacefully disperse and to refrain from acts that may in any way bring disgrace upon the people of Bombay.

But the *Duragraha* of the few upset the calculations of Mr. Gandhi, as he had so constantly been warned by many of his friends and admirers who could not however subscribe to his faith in civil disobedience. The story of the tragedy needs no repeating. It is written on the tablet of time with bitter memories, and the embers of that controversy have not yet subsided. But Mr. Gandhi, with a delicacy of conscience and a fine appreciation of truth, which we have learnt to associate with his name as with that of Newman, felt for the wrongs done to Englishmen with the same passionate intensity with which he felt for those inflicted on his own countrymen. Few words of remorse in recorded literature are more touching than those uttered by Mr. Gandhi in his speech at Ahmedabad on the 14th April 1919. They are in the supreme manner of Cardinal Newman's *Apologia* :

Brothers, the events that have happened in the course of the last few days have been most disgraceful to Ahmedabad, and as all these things have happened in my name, I am ashamed of them, and those who have been responsible for them have thereby not honoured me but disgraced me. A rapier run





through my body could hardly have pained me more. I have said times without number that Satyagraha admits of no violence, no pillage, no incendiarism; and still in the name of Satyagraha we burnt down buildings, forcibly captured weapons, extorted money, stopped trains, cut off telegraph wires, killed innocent people and plundered shops and private houses. If deeds such as these could save me from the prison house or the scaffold I should not like to be so saved.

It is open to anybody to say that but for the Satyagraha campaign there would not have been this violence. For this I have already done a penance, to my mind an unendurable one, namely, that I have had to postpone my visit to Delhi to seek re-arrest and I have also been obliged to suggest a temporary restriction of Satyagraha to a limited field. This has been more painful to me than a wound, but this penance is not enough, and I have therefore decided to fast for three days, *i.e.*, 72 hours. I hope my fast will pain no one. I believe a seventy-two hours' fast is easier for me than a twenty-four hours' fast for you. And I have imposed on me a discipline which I can bear.

In consequence of the violence, he ordered a general suspension of the movement on the 18th April only to be resumed on another occasion which was soon to follow in the heels of the Punjab tragedy.

#### THE PUNJAB DISORDERS

Before passing to a consideration of the Khilafat question and Mr. Gandhi's lead which made it such a potent and All-India agitation we must say a word on the aftermath of the Punjab tragedy. It is unnecessary to recount the extraordinary happenings in the Punjab as time and vigilant enquiries have laid bare the unscrupulous methods of that Government. For over a year, the tale of the Punjab atrocities, the shooting down of a defenceless and unarmed gathering of some 2,000 men, women and children in cold blood at the Jallianwallah Bagh, the monstrous methods of martial law administered by Col. Johnson and Bosworth Smith, the outrageous indignities to which the poor people of the place were subjected, the callous disregard of life and respect with which Sir Michael O'Dwyer and Brigadier Dyer were inflicting some of the worst features of Prussianism on a helpless people—the crawling order and the public flogging—these have been the theme of countless articles and speeches. The Punjab revelations have shocked the conscience of the civilized world which could





scarcely believe that such frightful acts of brutality could be possible in the British Government till the Hunter Commission confirmed their worst apprehensions.

But it was long before the Government could be forced to appoint a Commission of Inquiry. And at last only a Committee was appointed while all India was anxious for a Royal Commission. It was therefore decided to proceed with an independent enquiry. Mr. Gandhi headed the Congress Sub-Committee and carried out a most searching and thorough investigation. It was a pity he could not lead the Congress evidence before the Hunter Committee, owing to certain differences between the two Committees in regard to the freedom of certain witnesses then under confinement. Suffice it to say that the Congress Committee decided not to give evidence, or in any way participate with the Hunter Committee.

But under the able and indefatigable guidance of Mr. Gandhi the Congress Committee collected a great mass of material for judging the Punjab disorders. They examined over 1,700 witnesses and recorded the evidence of no less than 650. Mr. Gandhi's participation in the Committee was itself a guarantee to its merit as an authoritative and responsible body. In fact no name could carry more weight than Mr. Gandhi's in the matter of veracity in such an undertaking—an undertaking likely to prejudice and warp the judgment of many. When in April 1920 the Report was published it was hailed everywhere as an unanswerable document—the result of patient industry and dispassionate judgment on a most brutal and savage episode in contemporary history.

Soon after, the Hunter Report which was for many months in the hands of the Cabinet, was also issued, accompanied by a despatch by the Secretary of State. The Report recorded indeed many of the facts published already in the Congress Report, laid stress on the evils of Satyagraha, condoned the bloody exploits of Gen. Dyer as "an error of judgment" (a diplomatic euphemism for the slaughter of the innocents) and vindicated the statesmanship of Sir Michael O'Dwyer! The force of perversion





could no further go! Mr. Montagu, however, passionately denounced Gen. Dyer's savagery as inconsistent with the principles of British Government but curiously enough paid a tribute to Sir Michael's sagacity and firmness and the Viceroy's policy of masterly inactivity! This was bad enough from the Indian point of view. But there sprang up a wild scream from the Anglo Indian Press, and Mem-Sahebs in search of sensation and notoriety discovered in Gen. Dyer the saviour of British India. The *Pioneer* and other prints followed the lead of the *London Morning Post* and appealed for funds towards a memorial to this gallant soldier who shot men like rabbits, while a section of the Indian Press urged that "Chelmsford must go." Then followed the debate in the House of Commons which was looked forward to with some excitement. The House ultimately retained its honour in the debate and though Mr. Montagu, Mr. Asquith and Mr. Churchill spoke with a profound sense of justice and carried the day, there was no doubt of the mentality of the average Englishmen. But it was left to the House of Peers to betray the utter demoralisation that had set in. Lord Finlay's motion condoning Gen. Dyer was passed in spite of the masterly speeches of Lord Curzon and Lord Sinha. Though the noble Lords' action could have no constitutional value it was yet an index to the depth of English ignorance and prejudice. Above all, some officers who had misbehaved in the late tragedy still continued to exercise authority in the Punjab, and Mr. Lajpat Rai started a propaganda to boycott the New Councils so long as they were not dispensed with. Mr. Gandhi who had already made up his mind to offer Satyagraha in varying forms in connection with the Khilafat question readily joined the Lala and issued the following note in July 1920 :—

Needless to say I am in entire accord with Lala Lajpat Rai on the question of a boycott of the Reformed Councils. For me it is but one step in the campaign of Non-Co-operation, as I feel equally keenly on the Punjab question as on the Khilafat. Lala Lajpat Rai's suggestion is doubly welcome. I have seen a suggestion made in more quarters than one that Non-Co-operation with the Reforms should commence after the process of election has been gone through. I cannot help saying that





It is a mistake to go through the election farce and the expense of it, when we clearly do not intend to take part in the proceedings of these Legislative Councils. Moreover, a great deal of educative work has to be done among the people, and if I could I would not have the best attention of the country frittered away in electioneering. The populace will not understand the beauty of Non-Co-operation, if we seek election and then resign; but it would be a fine education for them if electors are taught not to elect anybody and unanimously to tell whosoever may be seeking their suffrage that he would not represent them if he sought election so long as the Punjab and Khilafat questions were not satisfactorily settled. I hope, however, that Lala Lajpat Rai does not mean to end with the boycott of the Reformed Councils. We must take, if necessary, every one of the four stages of Non-Co-operation if we are to be regarded as a self-respecting nation. The issue is clear. Both the Khilafat terms and the Punjab affairs show that Indian opinion counts for little in the Councils of the Empire. It is a humiliating position. We shall make nothing of the Reforms if we quietly swallow the humiliation. In my humble opinion, therefore, the first condition of real progress is the removal of these two difficulties in our path, and unless some better course of action is devised, Non-Co-operation must hold the field.

### THE KHILAFAT QUESTION

We have referred more than once to Mr. Gandhi's connection with the Khilafat question. The country was in the throes of a tremendous agitation—an agitation which gained enormously in its intensity and popular appeal by the mere fact of Mr. Gandhi's participation in it. It would take us far afield to discuss the whole question of the history of the Khilafat movement. Briefly put, it resolves itself into two primary factors. The first was the Premier's pledge and promise, that after the war nothing would be done to disturb the integrity of the Ottoman Empire both as a concession to Muslim loyalty and in accordance with the principles of self-determination. The second was that the violation of imperial obligation was thoroughly immoral and should at all costs be resisted by all self-respecting Mahomedans. In this gigantic enterprise Hindus must help Mahomedans and join hands with them as a token of neighbourly regard. This at any rate was the interpretation put upon the Khilafat question by Mr. Gandhi. Mr. Gandhi would not stoop to consider





that the Government of India could possibly have no voice in the determination of an international negotiation. He knew that the Government of India had represented the Indian feeling with some warmth and that Mr. Montagu and Lord Sinha had done their best to voice the claims of India at the Peace Table. But he held that the Government of India had not done all in their power and when the terms of Treaty with Turkey were published with a lengthy note from the Government of India to soothe the injured sentiment of the Muslim people, Mr. Gandhi wrote a remarkably frank letter to H. E. Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, on June 14, 1920, in which he pointed out:—

The Peace terms and Your Excellency's defence of them have given the Mussulmans of India a shock from which it will be difficult for them to recover. The terms violate Ministerial pledges and utterly disregard the Mussulman sentiment. I consider that as a staunch Hindu, wishing to live on terms of the closest friendship with my Mussulman countrymen I should be an unworthy son of India if I did not stand by them in their hour of trial. In my humble opinion their cause is just. They claim that Turkey must not be punished if their sentiment is to be respected. Muslim soldiers did not fight to inflict punishment on their own Khalifa or to deprive him of his territories. The Mussulman attitude has been consistent throughout these five years. My duty to the Empire to which I owe my loyalty, requires me to resist the cruel violence that had been done to Mussulman sentiment. So far as I am aware the Mussulmans and Hindus have as a whole lost faith in British justice and honour.

The report of the majority of the Hunter Committee, Your Excellency's despatch thereon, and Mr. Montagu's reply have only aggravated the distrust. In these circumstances the only course open to one like me is either in despair to sever all connection with British Rule or if I still retained the faith in the inherent superiority of the British Constitution to all others at present in vogue, to adopt such means as will rectify the wrong done and thus restore that confidence.

Non-Co-operation was the only dignified and constitutional form of such direct action. For it is a right recognised from times immemorial of the subjects to refuse to assist the ruler who misrules. At the same time I admit Non-Co-operation practised by the mass of people is attended with grave risks. But in a crisis such as has overtaken the Mussulmans of India, no step that is unattended with large risks can possibly bring about the desired change. Not to run some risks will be to count much greater risks if not the virtual destruction of law





and order; but there is yet an escape from Non-Co-operation. The Mussulman representation has requested Your Excellency to lead the agitation yourself as did your distinguished predecessor at the time of the South African trouble, but if you cannot see your way to do so and Non-Co-operation becomes the dire necessity, I hope Your Excellency will give those who have accepted my advice and myself credit for being actuated by nothing less than a stern sense of duty.

#### THE NON-CO-OPERATION PROGRAMME

And what was the Non-Co-operation programme that Mr. Gandhi had worked out for the adoption of the country for rectifying the wrongs done to Muslim sentiment? He enunciated the four stages in the programme of Non-Co-operation in clear and unambiguous terms.

The first was the giving up of titles and honorary offices; the second was the refusal to serve Government in paid appointments or to participate in any manner in the working of the existing machinery of civil and judicial administration. The third was to decline to pay taxes and the last was to ask the police and the military to withdraw co-operation from the Government. From the first Mr. Gandhi realised the full scope of the movement and he had no doubt of its far-reaching effects. It cannot therefore be said that he started the movement in a fit of indignation. Far from it he had worked out his programme to the farthest limits of its logic and had a clear grasp of all its implications. From time to time he set right many a misconception in the mind of the non-co-operationists, such for instance, in regard to the position of the non-co-operationist Vakil. There is no ambiguity in what Mr. Gandhi said. The Vakil should quietly wash his hands off the court, cases and all. Mr. Gandhi took care to explain that no stage would be taken until he had made sure that he was on firm ground. That is, he would not embark on the last two stages till he had created an indigenous panchayat to dispense justice and an organization of volunteers to maintain peace and order. In any case, violence should be completely avoided.

Now it must be admitted that many people had only a vague and hazy notion of Mr. Gandhi's programme. There were of course those who plainly told Mr. Gandhi of



the impracticability of his scheme and the dangers involved in it. Many Liberal League organisations implored Mr. Gandhi not to lead the country to a repetition of the Punjab tragedy. Moderate leaders like Sir Narayan Chandavarkar argued the futility of methods leading to anarchy and chaos. But the most amusing, even at such serious times, was the attitude of some Congressmen. These were variously divided. All hailed Non-Co-operation in theory. But when the time came for practising it, they flooded the country with a mass of literature of the most tortuous kind; casuistry was dealt in abundance. Aspirants after Council honours refused to commit what they called "political suicide" by "boycotting the New Councils". Others affected to believe in the possibilities of further efforts of constitutional agitation. Still others detected illegalities in some stages of Non-Co-operation. And yet some would not commit themselves but await the verdict of the Special Congress. A minority would contest at the elections only to resign again and yet some others would join the New Councils just to wreck the Reforms! What a cloud of words and mystification of meaning! To all this warfare of words Mr. Gandhi's own direct and simple statements are in refreshing contrast. He spoke and wrote strongly on the subject. There could be no doubt of his intentions or his plans. There was no ambiguity in his language. His words went straight as a bullet and he had a wholesome scorn of diplomatic reserves in opinion. Whatever one may think of his views Mr. Gandhi's leadership was faultless and he held his ground with the fervour of faith. In no case would he play to the gallery nor make light of his cherished convictions even if he found the whole mass of the people ranged against him. He would not be led away by the passing gusts of popular frenzy and he has a wholesome contempt for sycophancy of any kind, even to the people. He has a noble way of bearing the brunt of all toil and trouble. He would not like many other "leaders" throw the followers into the fray while they continue to remain in comparative security. He





has an inconvenient way of urging the leaders really to lead. Accordingly on the 1st of August, as he had already announced he led the movement by returning his *Kaiser-i-hind* gold medal to the Viceroy. In returning it he wrote a letter to His Excellency from which we must quote the following sentences :—

“Events that have happened during the past month have confirmed me in the opinion that the Imperial Government have acted in the Khilafat matter in an unscrupulous, immoral, and unjust manner and have been moving from wrong to wrong in order to defend their immorality. I can retain neither respect nor affection for such a Government.

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Your Excellency's light-hearted treatment of official crime, your exoneration of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, Mr. Montagu's despatch, and above all the shameful ignorance of the Punjab events and callous disregard of the feelings of Indians betrayed by the House of Lords have filled me with the gravest misgivings regarding the future of the Empire, have estranged me completely from the present Government and have disabled me from rendering as I have hitherto—whole-heartedly tendered, my loyal co-operation.

“In my humble opinion the ordinary method of agitating by way of petitions, deputations, and the like is no remedy for moving to repentance a Government so hopelessly indifferent to the welfare of its charge as the Government of India has proved to be. In European countries condonation of such grievous wrongs as the Khilafat and the Punjab would have resulted in a bloody revolution by the people. They would have resisted, at all costs, national emasculation. Half of India is too weak to offer violent resistance, and the other half is unwilling to do so. I have therefore, ventured to suggest the remedy of Non-Co-operation, which enables those who wish to dissociate themselves from Government, and which, if it is unattended by violence and undertaken in ordered manner, must compel it to retrace its steps and undo the wrongs committed; but whilst I pursue the policy of Non-Co-operation, in so far as I can carry the people with me, I shall not lose hope that you will yet see your way to do justice. I therefore respectfully ask Your Excellency to summon a conference of recognised leaders of the people, and, in consultation with them, to find a way that will gladden Mussulmans and do reparation to the unhappy Punjab.”

Soon after, Mr. Gandhi started on an extensive campaign preaching Non-Co-operation to large audiences. In August he came to Madras where he delivered a power-





ful speech advocating his scheme. Mr. Gandhi went to Tanjore, Trichy, Bangalore and other places and discoursed on the same subject with his accustomed energy, while his weekly *Young India* was replete with regular contributions from his indefatigable pen. Week after week *Young India* came out with a series of articles from Mr. Gandhi's pen answering objections and formulating methods of Non-Co-operation.

#### CONGRESS AND NON-CO-OPERATION

Mr. Gandhi's immediate objective was to convert the Special Congress to his creed. For as we have said though many had jubilantly proclaimed their faith in his programme, it was found that as time drew near for putting his plans into practice they were busy finding loopholes to escape the rigours of Mr. Gandhi's discipline. Everybody would throw everybody else into the struggle. A body of men who had sworn by Mr. Gandhi and denounced those who had the courage to differ from him were suddenly faced with an awkward dilemma. They felt the inconvenience of suffering and sacrifice and would fain be relieved of their unwitting words of bravado. But Mr. Gandhi would stand four square to all the winds that blow. Nor could they with any grace secede from the Congress, having so violently denounced as treason the Moderates' disregard of the Delhi and Amritsar Resolutions. There was to their mind only one course left open, *i. e.*, to thwart Mr. Gandhi's resolution in the open Congress. But Mr. Gandhi had prepared the ground with characteristic thoroughness. Khilafat specials from Bombay and Madras had flooded the Congress with delegates sworn to vote for him. There was a tough fight in the Subjects Committee which sat for eight long hours without coming to any apparent decision. Over forty amendments were brought in by different members, twelve of them were ruled out as mere verbal repetitions and there remained no less than 28 amendments to consider. The speeches in the Subjects Committee were remarkably frank. Messrs. Malaviya, Das, Pal, Jinnah, Baptista, all attacked the original resolution with warmth while Mrs. Besant vigorously assailed the very principle of





**Non-Co-operation.** The debate was most exciting. The President, Mr. Lajpat Rai himself, spoke strongly against certain important provisions of the Resolution. He would not agree to the withdrawal of boys from schools nor could he think it at all possible to call upon lawyers to leave their practice. He was personally in favour of the principle of Non-Co-operation but he doubted the wisdom of committing the Congress to those extravagant and far-reaching items in Mr. Gandhi's programme.

#### BOYCOTT OF COUNCILS

But by far the most contentious item in the Resolution was that relating to the boycott of councils. The bulk of the nationalists were strangely enough opposed to it and by a curious stretch of logic they considered obstruction in the council as preferable to wholesale boycott.

Mr. C. R. Das, who was in charge of the main resolution on behalf of the Reception Committee, agreed to Mr. Bepin Chandra Pal's amendment of his resolution, but if it was defeated, he would stand by his own. Mr. Pal's amendment was put to the vote and was lost, 155 voting for and 161 against. Then another vote was taken on Mr. Das's resolution and Mr. Gandhi's resolution as amended by Pundit Motilal Nehru and as accepted by Mr. Gandhi himself. It is said that in the final voting a poll was taken 133 voting for Mr. Das's resolution and 148 for Mr. Gandhi's, thus giving a majority to Mr. Gandhi of 15 votes and thus showing that the voting was very close. It is clear that the Subjects Committee consisted of 296 members present and that 15 of whom remained neutral. The greatest excitement prevailed both inside the Committee room and outside when it was known that Mr. Gandhi won the day. Nearly two thousand people collected outside and shouted "Gandhi Mahatma Kee Jai" and "Bande Mataram."

#### EXCITEMENT IN THE CONGRESS

That gives the clue to the mentality of the Congress. If Mr. Gandhi could win in the Subjects Committee itself there was no doubt of his triumph in the open Congress. Still Mr. Das proposed to bring his amendments to the



open Congress and take the verdict. That verdict was a foregone conclusion. The Nationalists complained (what an irony of things!) that the Khilafats had packed the house and manœuvred a majority. There is no doubt that each party strove for victory. When the Congress met the next day, Sir Asutosh Choudhuri moved for adjournment of the question in the right legal way. Mr. V. P. Madhava Rao seconded it but the motion was lost by an overwhelming majority.

Mr. Gandhi then rose to move his resolution amidst thunderous applause. The Resolution ran as follows:—

This Congress is of opinion that there can be no contentment in India without redress of the two aforementioned wrongs and that the only effectual means to vindicate national honour and to prevent a repetition of similar wrongs in future is the establishment of Swarajya. This Congress is further of opinion that there is no course left open for the people of India but to approve of and adopt the policy of progressive non-violent Non-Co-operation until the said wrongs are righted and Swarajya is established.

And inasmuch as a beginning should be made by the classes who have hitherto moulded and represented public opinion and inasmuch as Government consolidates its power through titles and honours bestowed on the people, through schools controlled by it, its law courts and its legislative councils, and inasmuch as it is desirable in the prosecution of the movement to take the minimum risk and to call for the least sacrifice compatible with the attainment of the desired object, this Congress earnestly advises:

(a) surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignation from nominated seats in local bodies;

(b) refusal to attend Government levees, durbars, and other official and semi-official functions held by Government officials or in their honour;

(c) gradual withdrawal of children from schools and colleges owned, aided or controlled by Government and in place of such schools and colleges establishment of national schools and colleges in the various provinces;

(d) gradual boycott of British courts by lawyers and litigants and establishment of private arbitration courts by their aid for the settlement of private disputes;

(e) refusal on the part of the military, clerical and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits for service in Mesopotamia;

(f) withdrawal by candidates of their candidature for election to the Reformed Councils and refusal on the part of the





voters to vote for any candidate who may despite the Congress advice offer himself for election.

(g) And inasmuch as Non-Co-operation has been conceived as a measure of discipline and self-sacrifice without which no nation can make real progress, and inasmuch, as an opportunity should be given in the very first stage of Non-Co-operation to every man, woman, and child, for such discipline and self-sacrifice, this Congress advises adoption of Swadeshi in piecegoods on a vast scale, and inasmuch as the existing mills of India with indigenous capital and control do not manufacture sufficient yarn and sufficient cloth for the requirements of the nation, and are not likely to do so for a long time to come, this Congress advises immediate stimulation of further manufacture on a large scale by means of reviving hand-spinning in every home and hand-weaving on the part of the millions of weavers who have abandoned their ancient and honourable calling for want of encouragement.

In moving the resolution, Mr. Gandhi spoke with compelling fervour. "I stand before you, in fear of God," he said, "and with a sense of duty towards my country to commend this resolution to your hearty acceptance." Mr. Gandhi said that the only weapon in their hands was Non-Co-operation, and non-violence should be their creed. Dr. Kitchlew seconded the resolution in Urdu.

Mr. Pal then placed his amendment which proposed a mission to England to present our demands and meanwhile to establish national schools, formulate arbitration courts and not to boycott the councils.

Mr. Das in supporting the amendment made an appeal to Mr. Gandhi to consider the practical effect of his victory. Mrs. Besant opposed both the resolution and the amendment, while Pandit Malaviya and Mr. Jinnah preferred the latter. Messrs. Yakub Hasan, Jitendra Lal Banerjea, Nehru and Rambhuji Dutt supported Mr. Gandhi whose resolution was finally carried.

The Congress reassembled on the 9th and the whole morning was devoted to the taking of votes, province by province, for and against Mr. Gandhi's motion. Out of twelve provinces only the Central Provinces and Berar showed a majority against Mr. Gandhi's motion, while in the remaining ten provinces the majority of votes were in





his favour. The president announced that out of 5,814 delegates, the registered number of delegates who took part in voting was 2,728 while 63 did not vote. Actual voting showed that 1,855 voted for and 873 against Mr. Gandhi's motion.

After this fateful decision it is no wonder that Congressmen who were avowedly against Non-Co-operation found themselves in a difficult predicament. They hastily called for a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee and it was resolved to find a way out of the mess the Congress had made.

The mandatory nature of the Congress Resolution was relaxed at the instance of Pandit Malaviya and a few others who thought it suicidal to let slip the benefits of the new reforms. It was, however, thought inexpedient to impair the authority of the Congress and Congressmen like Mr. Patel in Bombay, Mr. Das in Bengal, Pandit Motilal Nehru in U. P., Messrs. Madhava Rao and Vijayaraghavachariar in Madras—though they had opposed the Resolution in the Congress—decided to abide by it, and withdrew their candidature from the forthcoming elections. Many leading Congressmen resigned their honorary offices and relinquished their titles. While Mr. Gokaran Nath Misra, one of the Secretaries of the All-India Congress Committee, and several office-bearers in the Provincial Congress Committees who were opposed to the Resolution resigned their offices so as to leave the Congress organisations free to work out Mr. Gandhi's programme.

If Mr. Gandhi's influence was so decisive at the Special Congress as to set at naught the opinions of Congressmen like C. R. Das and Bepin Chandra Pal, his authority was supreme at the Nagpur Session in December. Nagpur in fact, witnessed the turning point in the history of the Congress, as in that year Mr. Gandhi, with an overwhelming majority completely captured this institution and converted its leading spirits to his creed. Here it was that the old creed of the Congress was discarded for the new one of indifference to British overlordship.





With the change of creed and the wholesale adoption of the programme of Non-Co-operation the old Congress was virtually dead. The New Congress was inspired by a new hope and sustained by new methods altogether alien to the faith of men like Dadabhai and Gokhale who had guided it in its years of infancy and adolescence.

Mr. Gandhi was not slow to use his great authority over the Congress to further the movement of which he was the directing head. At his command were all the Congress and Khilafat organisations, and he set out on an extensive tour of the country preaching the new cult with the fervour of a prophet. Everywhere he was received with ovation. His Nagpur triumph was the beginning of an agitation before which even his Satyagraha demonstrations were as nothing. Mr. Gandhi, as might be expected of one of his ardent and generous impulse, staked his life on the agitation, and day after day he was unwearied in his services and unsparing of himself in his devotion to what might be called the most supreme and desperate adventure of his life.

As he went from place to place accompanied by the Ali Brothers the movement became popular among the ignorant and the literate. His fourfold programme of boycotting schools, cloths, councils and Government Service was the theme of his multitudinous discourses. But the most painful result (at any rate to those who are not of his persuasion) was the calling away of youths from their schools and colleges. Many a lad, led away by the glamour of the great ideal and the irresistible appeal of a saintly leader, gave up their school education, the only education available at present.

#### THE STUDENT MOVEMENT

At Aligarh and Benares great efforts were made to call away the students from the Muslim and Hindu Universities, if they could not nationalise them. They were not quite successful though a few joined the Congress, but in Bengal, at the instance of Messrs. C. R. Das and Jitendralal Banerjea, a large number of students flocked to their standard and deserted the schools. It was such appeals





that enthused the youth of Bengal who created a profound sensation by throwing themselves in their thousands at the steps of the Calcutta University Hall, that the few who did attend the examination had to do so by walking over their bodies.

One peculiarity of the programme was that emphasis was laid on each item as the occasion demanded. At one time it was the boycott of schools, again it was the collection of a crore of rupees for the Swarajya Fund, a third time it was the burning of mill cloths and yet again it was the boycott of the Duke or the good Prince. Each was in turn to bring Swarajya within the year. Thus in February the agitation centred on the boycott of the Duke of Connaught to whom Mr. Gandhi addressed a dignified if uncompromising letter. Mr. Gandhi wrote:—

Our non-participation in a hearty welcome to Your Royal Highness is thus in no sense a demonstration against your high personage, but it is against the system you come to uphold. I know individual Englishmen cannot even if they will, alter the English nature all of a sudden. If we would be the equals of Englishmen we must cast off fear. We must learn to be self-reliant and independent of schools, courts, protection and patronage of a Government we seek to end if it will not mend.

By May the spirit of lawlessness had spread far and wide and strikes and hartals became the order of the day. Mr. Gandhi, however, resolutely discountenanced all violence and he was seldom sparing in his admonition of those who took part in the incident at Malegaon and other places. Again and again, he spoke strongly against the spirit of non-violence which for a time broke out as often as he decried it in all earnestness.

#### INTERVIEW WITH THE NEW VICEROY

It was about this time too that Lord Chelmsford retired and his place was taken by Lord Reading, who came to India with a great reputation. An Ex-Lord Chief Justice of England and sometime British Ambassador at Washington during the fateful years of war—the new Viceroy inspired great hopes. His reputation for justice, strengthened by his repeated assurances, and his reputation for tactful dealing of delicate questions were just the things of





momentous need for India. No wonder, an air of hope and expectancy hung over the whole country.

Soon after Lord Reading arrived in India, an interview was arranged by Pandit Malaviya between the new Viceroy and Mr. Gandhi. This interview, which lasted many hours, took place at Simla in May 1921. Much speculation was rife as to its result and Mr. Gandhi explained the circumstances and the results of his talk in an article in *Young India* under the title "The Simla Visit." What was the upshot of the visit? The leader of the Non-Co-operation movement and the head of the Government of India got to know each other. It was a great thing.

But the immediate result of this was the statement issued by the Ali Brothers—a statement in which they regretted their occasional lapse into excessive language and promised to refrain from writing or speaking in any manner likely to provoke violence. This "definite result of the interview" was claimed as a victory for the Government. Others claimed that it was a victory for Mr. Gandhi who explained that it was no apology or undertaking to the Government but a reassertion of the principle of non-violence to which the Ali Brothers had subscribed. It was a statement to the public irrespective of what the Government might or might not do with them. In answer to criticisms against his advice to the Brothers, Mr. Gandhi stoutly defended his action, and praised the Brothers' attitude.

Indeed Mr. Gandhi's loyalty to his colleagues and particularly his affectionate and fraternal regard for the brothers is beautiful and touching to a degree. And when in September 1921 the Brothers were prosecuted by the Bombay Government, Mr. Gandhi with fifty others issued a public manifesto that "it is the inherent right of every one to express his opinion without restraint about the propriety of citizens offering their services to, or remaining in the employ of the Government whether in the civil or the military department."



### THE ETHICS OF DESTRUCTION

Another feature of Mr. Gandhi's activity which for a time threw a baleful light over the movement was the cult of destruction, as typified in the burning of foreign cloth. Rabindranath Tagore and C. F. Andrews and several others, horrified at the wanton waste, pointed out from time to time the evil effects of this burning business. Mr. Gandhi, mercilessly logical as ever, would heed no such counsel but continued literally to feed the flames. With that cultivated sense of distinction between the deed and the thing done, which is ever present in men such as he, there might be some efficacy in this form of purification and self-denial. But many were the critics who held that his *bonfire* mania was the surest way to rouse all the evil passions of the multitude and as surely lead to hatred and civil strife.

### THE BOMBAY RIOTS

Whatever the root cause of the breaking out of violence and hooliganism, the landing of the Prince of Wales in Bombay on the 17th November was made the occasion of a ghastly tragedy. Mr. Gandhi had since the announcement of the Royal visit appealed to his countrymen to refrain from participating in the functions got up in honour of the Prince. Non-Co operators all over the country had organised what are known as 'hartals,' closing of shops and suspending all work, and boycotting the Prince. In Bombay such activities resulted in a great riot in which all parties suffered owing to the hooliganism of the mischievous elements in the mob who violated Mr. Gandhi's injunctions to be non-violent and brought about a terrible riot. Mr. Gandhi was then in Bombay and after witnessing the scene of the tragedy, wrote some of the most stirring letters which, coupled with the exertions of men of all parties, restored peace in the city.

As a penance for this ghastly tragedy he pledged himself to fast till complete peace was restored. Strangely enough, the situation was well in hand in a couple of days and on the fourth day in breaking the fast in the





midst of a gathering of Co-operators, Non-Co-operators, Hindus, Mussulmans, Parsis and Christians, Mr. Gandhi made a thrilling statement.

I am breaking my fast upon the strength of your assurances. I have not been unmindful of the affection with which innumerable friends have surrounded me during these four days. I shall ever remain grateful to them. Being drawn by them I am plunging into this stormy ocean out of the heaven of peace in which I have been during these few days. I assure you that, in spite of the tales of misery that have been poured into my ears, I have enjoyed peace because of a hungry stomach. I know that I cannot enjoy it after breaking the fast. I am too human not to be touched by the sorrows of others, and when I find no remedy for alleviating them, my human nature so agitates me that I pine to embrace death like a long-lost dear friend. Therefore I warn all the friends here that if real peace is not established in Bombay and if disturbances break out again and if as a result they find me driven to a still severer ordeal, they must not be surprised or troubled. If they have any doubt about peace having been established, if each community has still bitterness of feeling and suspicion and if we are all not prepared to forget and forgive past wrongs, I would much rather that they did not press me to break the fast. Such a restraint I would regard as a test of true friendship.

And then Mr. Gandhi drove the moral home to the gathering as also to the eager and anxious public all over India.

Warned by the disasters at Bombay and the Moplah rebellion which was still going on in Malabar, it was expected that Mr. Gandhi would reconsider his position and stop short of the extreme steps in Non-Co-operation. But that was not to be. The Congress had by this time become an organ for registering his decrees. And the Committee met frequently to devise methods in pursuance of Non-Co-operation. Thundering resolutions, alternating with hopes and warnings, came in quick succession. Province after Province vied with one another for the exciting novelty of civil disobedience.

Though the author of the Civil Disobedience movement in India, Mr. Gandhi was always alive to its dangers. He therefore insisted that his conditions should be fulfilled in toto before any Taluka could embark on a campaign of





Civil Disobedience. And those conditions were very rigorous indeed.

### THE CALCUTTA HARTAL

Meanwhile the hartal organised by Non-Co operators in connection with the Prince's visit was more or less successful in many places. It was alleged that by intimidation and otherwise, the hartal in Calcutta on the day of the Prince's landing in Bombay was phenomenally complete. The Bengal Chamber of Commerce and the Anglo-Indian press took an alarmist view of the situation and expressed grave indignation against the passivity of the Government. With a view to suppress the activity of the Congress in this direction Government resuscitated part II of the Criminal Law Amendment Act which was then literally under a sentence of death. When volunteering was declared unlawful Congress leaders took up the challenge and called on the people to disobey the order and seek imprisonment in their thousands. Men like Messrs. C. R. Das in Calcutta and Motilal Nehru in Allahabad openly defied the order and canvassed volunteers in total disregard of legal consequences. They sought imprisonment and called on their countrymen to follow them to prison. The situation was grave. It was then that Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Sir P. C. Ray and others thought that the time had come when they should step into the breach and try to bring about a reconciliation between Government and Non Co-operators. With this view Pandit Madan Mohan and others interviewed leading Non-Co operators and those in authority. Lord Ronaldshay, in his speech at the Legislative Council referred to the gravity of the situation and defined the firm attitude of Government.

The Viceroy who had invited the Prince was naturally very indignant at the strange form of "reception" that awaited the innocent scion of the Royal House. Could anything be done at all towards a rapprochement?

### THE DEPUTATION TO THE VICEROY

A Deputation headed by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya waited on His Excellency the Viceroy at Calcutta





on December 21 and requested him to call a Round Table Conference of representatives of people of all shades of opinion with a view to bring about a final settlement. Lord Reading replied at some length and defined the attitude of the Government. He regretted that "it is impossible even to consider the convening of a conference if agitation in open and avowed defiance of law is meanwhile to be continued." Mr. Gandhi's refusal to call off the hartal in connection with H.R.H. the Prince of Wales' visit to Calcutta on December 24, apparently stiffened the attitude of the Government. Interviewed by the Associated Press, Mr. Gandhi made the following statement regarding the Viceroy's reply to the Deputation:—

I repeat for the thousandth time that it is not hostile to any nation or any body of men but it is deliberately aimed at the system under which Government of India is being to-day conducted, and I promise that no threats and no enforcement of threats by the Viceroy or any body of men will strangle that agitation or send to rest that awakening.

#### THE AHMEDABAD CONGRESS

Meanwhile the Annual Session of the Congress met at Ahmedabad, the headquarters of Mr. Gandhi. It was virtually a Gandhi Session. The President-elect, Mr. C. R. Das, was in prison and so were many other leaders besides. Hakim Ajmal Khan was elected to take the chair and the proceedings were all in Hindi and Gujarati. Mr. Gandhi was invested with full dictatorial powers by the Congress and the central resolution of the session, which he moved, ran as follows:

"This Congress, whilst requiring the ordinary machinery to remain intact and to be utilised in the ordinary manner whenever feasible, hereby appoints, until further instructions, Mahatma Gandhi as the sole executive authority of the Congress and invests him with the full power to convene a special session of the Congress or of the All-India Congress Committee or the Working Committee and also with the power to appoint a successor in emergency.

"This Congress hereby confers upon the said successor and all subsequent successors appointed in turn by their predecessors, all his aforesaid powers, provided that nothing in this resolution shall be deemed to authorise Mahatma Gandhi or any of the aforesaid successors to conclude any terms of peace





with the Government of India or the British Government without the previous sanction of the All-India Congress Committee, to be finally ratified by the Congress specially convened for the purpose, and provided also that the present creed of the Congress shall in no case be altered by Mahatma Gandhi or his successor except with the leave of the Congress first obtained."

There were yet some in the Congress who went a step further than Mr. Gandhi himself. Moulana Hazrat Mohani stood out for complete independence and it is interesting to note how valiantly Mr. Gandhi fought against the motion of absolute severance from Britain. Mr. Gandhi opposed all his amendments and pinned the Congress down to his own dubious resolution. Soon after the session, some of the Provincial organisations were busy preparing for a no-tax campaign. In U. P., Guzerat, the Andhra and in the Punjab the movement threatened to assume a serious turn. Mr. Gandhi, himself, while insisting that his conditions should be fulfilled before any taluka should embark on an offensive campaign, threw the onus of responsibility on the Province itself—Provincial autonomy with a vengeance! But then there were hopes of peace in the air.

#### THE BOMBAY CONFERENCE

A conference of representatives of various shades of political opinion convened by Pundit Malaviya, Mr. Jinnah and others, assembled at Bombay on the 14th January, 1922, with Sir C. Sankaran Nair, in the Chair. On the second day Sir Sankaran withdrew and Sir M. Visveswaraya took up his place. Over two-hundred leading men from different provinces attended. Mr. Gandhi was present throughout and though he refused to be officially connected—an attitude resented by many—with the resolutions, he took part in the debates and helped the conference in framing the resolutions which were also ratified by the Congress Working Committee.

#### THE ULTIMATUM

While negotiations were going on between the representatives of the Malaviya Conference and H. E. the Viceroy, Mr. Gandhi addressed an open letter to Lord





Reading. The letter was in effect an ultimatum threatening with the inauguration of offensive civil disobedience in Bardoli. The efforts of the Conference thus came to nothing as neither Mr. Gandhi nor the Viceroy would give up any one of their points. Compromise was impossible. And the Government of India in a *communiqué* published on the 6th February in reply to Mr. Gandhi's letter, repudiated his assertions and urged that the issue before the country was no longer between this or that programme of political advance, but between lawlessness with all its consequences on the one hand and the maintenance of those principles which lie at the root of all civilised governments. Mr. Gandhi in a further rejoinder issued on the very next day pointed out that the only choice before the people was mass civil disobedience with all its undoubted dangers and lawless repression of the lawful activities of the people.

#### THE CHAURI CHAURA TRAGEDY

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 not less than twenty-two policemen. Some constables and chaukedars were literally burnt to death and the whole place was under mobocracy. Mr. Gandhi took this occurrence as a third warning from God 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.

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 corre-



spondents who attacked him, he wrote as follows in *Young India* of February, 23 :

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 All-India Congress Committee met on the 25th at Delhi to consider the Bardoli decisions and though the latter were endorsed it was not done without some important modifications, to feed the growing demand for aggressive action on the part of the extreme Non-Co-operators. From subsequent events it is fairly certain that the Delhi resolutions confirmed the Government's resolve to prosecute Mr. Gandhi, a resolve which was held in abeyance after the Bardoli programme was made known.

#### MR. GANDHI'S ARREST

For months past the rumour of Mr. Gandhi's impending arrest was in the air. Expecting the inevitable Mr. Gandhi had more than once written his final message. But in the first week of March the rumour became more widespread and intense. The stiffening of public opinion in England and Mr. Montagu's threatening speech in defence of his Indian policy in the Commons, revealed the fact that the Secretary of State had already sanctioned Mr. Gandhi's prosecution. Chauri Chaura and the Delhi decisions were presumably the immediate cause of Government's action on Mr. Gandhi. Realising that his arrest would not long be deferred, Mr. Gandhi wrote a farewell message in *Young India* calling on his countrymen to continue the work of the Congress undeterred by fear, to prosecute the Khadder programme, to promote Hindu-Muslim Unity and to desist from violence at any cost.

Meanwhile he was arrested at the Satyagraha Ashram, Ahmedabad, on Friday the 10th March. On the 11th noon





Messrs. Gandhi and Sankarlal Banker the publisher were placed before Mr. Brown, Assistant Magistrate, the Court being held in the Divisional Commissioner's Office at Sahibab. The Superintendent of Police, Ahmedabad, the first witness, produced the Bombay Government's authority to lodge a complaint for four articles published in *Young India*, dated the 15th June, 1921, entitled "Disaffection a Virtue", dated the 20th September, "Tampering with Loyalty" dated the 15th December, "The Puzzle and Its Solution" and "Shaking the Manes," dated the 23rd February 1922. Two formal police witnesses were then produced. The accused declined to cross-examine the witnesses. Mr. M. K. Gandhi, who described himself as farmer and weaver by profession, residing at Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati, said :

I simply wish to state that when the proper time comes I shall plead guilty so far as disaffection towards the Government is concerned. It is quite true that I am the Editor of *Young India* and that the articles read in my presence were written by me and the proprietors and publishers had permitted me to control the whole policy of the paper.

The case then having been committed to the Sessions, Mr. Gandhi was taken to the Sabarmati Jail where he was detained till the hearing which was to come off on March 18. From his prison Mr. Gandhi wrote a number of inspiring letters to his friends and colleagues urging the continuance of the Congress work.

#### THE GREAT TRIAL

At last the trial came off on Saturday the 18th March before Mr. C. N. Broomfield, I. C. S., District and Sessions Judge, Ahmedabad. Of the trial itself it is needless to write at length. For it will be long before the present generation could forget the spell of it. It was historic in many ways. Men's minds involuntarily turned to another great trial nineteen hundred years ago when Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate. Mr. Gandhi's statement (both the oral and the written statements) was in his best form, terse and lucid, courageous and uncompromising, with just that touch of greatness which elevates it to the level of a





masterpiece. Never before was such a prisoner arraigned before a British Court of Justice. Never before were the laws of an all-powerful Government so defiantly, yet with such humility, challenged. Men of all shades of political opinion, indeed all who had stood aloof from the movement and had condemned it in no uncertain terms, marvelled at the wisdom and compassion and heroism of the thin spare figure in a loin cloth thundering his anathemas against the Satanic system. And yet none could be gentler nor more sweetly tempered than the prisoner at the bar with a smile and a nod of thanks and recognition for every one, including his prosecutors. An eye-witness has given an account of the scene and we can not do better than quote his words:—

Mahatmaji stood up and spoke a few words complimenting the Advocate-General on his fairness and endorsing every statement he made regarding the charges. "I wish to endorse all the blame that the Advocate-General has thrown on my shoulders", said Mahatmaji in pathetic earnestness, "and I have come to the conclusion that it is impossible for me to dissociate myself from the diabolical crimes of Chauri Chaura or the mad outrages of Bombay." These words of confession seemed to penetrate every heart throbbing in that hall and make those present there feel miserable over the mad deeds of their thoughtless countrymen. The speech finished and Mahatmaji sat down to read his immortal statement. It is impossible to describe the atmosphere of the Court-house at the time he was, and a few minutes after he finished reading his statement. Every word of it was eagerly followed by the whole audience. The Judge and the Advocate-General, the military officers and the political leaders all alike strained their ears and were all attention to hear the memorable statement of the Great Man. Mahatmaji took nearly 15 minutes to read his statement. As he proceeded with his reading, one could see the atmosphere of the Hall changing every minute. This historic production was the master's own. The ennobling confessions, the convincing logic, the masterly diction, the elevated thoughts and the inspiring tone—all produced instantaneous effect on the audience including the Judge and the prosecutor. For a minute everybody wondered who was on trial—whether Mahatma Gandhi before a British Judge or whether the British Government before God and Humanity. Mahatmaji finished his statement and for a few seconds there was complete silence in the Hall. Not a whisper was heard. One could hear a pin falling on the ground.





The most unhappy man present there was perhaps the Judge himself. He restrained his emotion, cleared his voice, gathered his strength and delivered his oral judgment in careful and dignified words. No one could have performed this duty better. To combine the dignity of his position with the courtesy due to the mighty prisoner before him was no easy task. But he succeeded in doing it in a manner worthy, of the highest praise. Of course, the prisoner before him belonged of a different category from "any person he ever tried" or is likely try in future. And this fact influenced his whole speech and demeanour. His words almost fell when he came to the end and pronounced the sentence of simple imprisonment for six years.

And who is this Mr. Gandhi, who at the age of 53, has been sentenced to six years' imprisonment? He is the man whom the convicting judge himself described "as a great patriot and a great leader, as a man of high ideals and leading a noble and even saintly life," a man in whom, as Gokhale aptly described, 'Indian humanity has really reached its high water-mark' and in whom a Christian Bishop witnesseth 'the patient sufferer for the cause of righteousness and mercy.' Such a man has been condemned despite his public avowal of his huge mistake, his penitance for the same, his decision to suspend his aggressive programme, and his grave warnings that it would be "criminal" to start civil disobedience in the existing state of the country. Even some of the Anglo-Indian papers have condemned the action of the Government as a blunder; and one of these has gone so far as to characterise it as 'a masterpiece of official ineptitude.' And such a criticism cannot be described as altogether undeserved or unjust. Mr. Gandhi's agitation originated with the Rowlatt Act. It received strength on account of the calculated brutalities and humiliations of the Martial Law regime. And the climax was reached when the solemn pledges of the British Prime Minister in regard to Turkey were conveniently forgotten at Severs. The Rowlatt Act has since been repealed, the Punjab wrongs have been admitted and an appeal has been made to "forget and forgive." Mr. Gandhi's bitter complaint that the British Ministers have not sincerely fought for the redemption of the solemn pledges to the Mussulmans has been proved to





be well founded. And so the three great grievances for which Mr. Gandhi has been fighting—are grievances admitted by all to be just. In the opinion of Mr. Gandhi and most of his countrymen there would never have arisen these festering sores 'if we were in our country what others are in their own,' if in short, we too had been given "the Self-determination," for which elsewhere so much blood and treasure have been sacrificed. The whole question therefore reduces itself to one dominant problem—the Problem of Swaraj. And the problem of Mr. Gandhi is no less than that. But for the lost faith of the people in the sincerity of the British, even this question would not have assumed such an acute form as we find it to-day.

You cannot solve this problem by clapping its best, brightest and noblest exponent even though his methods may be novel and his activities inconvenient and sometimes dangerous. Sir John Rees was not far wrong when he observed that "Gandhi in Jail might prove to be more dangerous than Gandhi out of it." There is a world of significance in the warning of Professor Gilbert Murray :—

"Persons in power should be very careful when they deal with a man who cares nothing for sensual pleasures, nothing for riches, nothing for comfort or praise or promises but simply determines to do what he believes to be right. He is a dangerous and uncomfortable enemy because his body, which you can always conquer, gives you so little purchase upon his soul."







## THE South African Indian Question

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### THE BEGINNING OF THE STRUGGLE

*The following is the full text of a lecture delivered at the Pachaiyappa's Hall, Madras, on October 26, 1896, by Mr. M. K. Gandhi on the "Grievances of Indian settlers in South Africa." The Hon. Mr. P. Ananda Charlu presided. Resolutions sympathising with the Indian settlers and expressing regret at the action of the Home and Indian Governments in having assented to the Indian Immigration Amendment Bill were passed. Mr. Gandhi said :—*

Mr. President and Gentlemen,—I am to plead before you this evening for the 100,000 British Indians in South Africa, the land of gold and the seat of the late Jameson Raid. This document will show you (here Mr. Gandhi read a credential from the people of Natal deputing him to plead their cause) that I have been deputed to do so by the signatories to it who profess to represent the 100,000 Indians. A large majority of this number are people from Madras and Bengal. Apart, therefore, from the interest that you would take in them as Indians, you are specially interested in the matter.

South Africa may, for our purposes, be divided into the two self-governing British Colonies of Natal and the Cape of Good Hope, the Crown Colony of Zululand, the Transvaal or the South African Republic, the Orange





Free State, the Chartered Territories and the Portuguese Territories comprising Delagoa Bay and Beira.

South Africa is indebted to the Colony of Natal for the presence of the Indian population there. In the year 1860, when in the words of a member of the Natal Parliament, "the existence of the Colony hung in the balance," the Colony of Natal introduced indentured Indians into the Colony. Such immigration is regulated by law, is permissible only to a few favoured States, *e.g.*, Mauritius, Fiji, Jamaica, Straits Settlements, Damarara and other States and is allowed only from Madras and Calcutta. As a result of the immigration, in the words of another eminent Natalian, Mr. Saunders, "Indian immigration brought prosperity, prices rose, people were no longer content to grow or sell produce for a song, they could do better." The sugar and tea industries as well as sanitation and the vegetable and fish supply of the Colony are absolutely dependent on the indentured Indians from Madras and Calcutta. The presence of the indentured Indians about sixteen years ago drew the free Indians in the shape of traders who first went there with a view to supply the wants of their own kith and kin; but afterwards found a very valuable customer in the native of South Africa, called Zulu or Kaffir. These traders are chiefly drawn from the Bombay Memon Mahomedans and, owing to their less unfortunate position, have formed themselves into custodians of the interests of the whole Indian population there. Thus, adversity and identity of interests have united in a compact body the Indians from the three Presidencies and they take pride in calling themselves Indians rather than Madrascers or Bengalees or Gujaratees, except when it is necessary to do so. That however by the way.





These Indians have now spread all over South Africa. Natal which is governed by a Legislative Assembly consisting of 37 members elected by the voters, a Legislative Council consisting of 11 members nominated by the Governor who represents the Queen, and a movable Ministry consisting of 5 members, contains a European population of 50,000, a native population of 400,000, and an Indian population of 51,000. Of the 51,000 Indians about 16,000 are at present serving their indenture, 30,000 are those that have completed their indenture, and are now variously engaged as domestic servants, gardeners, hawkers and petty traders and about 5,000 are those who emigrated to the Colony on their own account and are either traders, shop-keepers, assistants or hawkers. A few are also school-masters, interpreters and clerks.

The self-governing Colony of the Cape of Good Hope has, I believe, an Indian population of about 10,000 consisting of traders, hawkers and labourers. Its total population is nearly 1,500,000 of whom not more than 400,000 are Europeans. The rest are natives of the country and Malays.

The South African Republic of the Transvaal which is governed by two elective Chambers called the Volksraad and an Executive with the President at its head has an Indian population of about 5,000 of whom about 200 are traders with liquidated assets amounting to nearly £100,000. The rest are hawkers and waiters or household servants, the latter being men from this Presidency. Its white population is estimated at roughly 120,000 and the Kaffir population at roughly 650,000. This Republic is subject to the Queen's suzerainty. And there is a convention between Great Britain and the





Republic which secures the property, trading and farming right of all persons other than natives of South Africa in common with the citizens of the Republic.

The other States have no Indian population to speak of, because of the grievances and disabilities except the Portuguese territories which contain a very large Indian population and which do not give any trouble to the Indians.

The grievances of the Indians in South Africa are two-fold, i.e., those that are due to the popular ill-feeling against the Indians and, secondly, the legal disabilities placed upon them. To deal with the first, the Indian is the most hated being in South Africa. Every Indian without distinction is contemptuously called a "coolie." He is also called "Sammy," Ramasawmy," anything but "Indian." Indian school-masters are called "coolie school masters." Indian storekeepers are "coolie storekeepers." Two Indian gentlemen from Bombay, Messrs. Dada Abdulla and Moos Hajeer Cassim, own steamers. Their steamers are "coolie ships."

There is a very respectable firm of Madras traders by name, A. Colandaveloo Pillay & Co. They have built a large block of buildings in Durban, these buildings are called "coolie stores" and the owners are "coolie owners." And I can assure you, gentlemen, that there is as much difference between the partners of that firm and a "coolie" as there is between any one in this hall and a coolie. The railway and tram-officials, in spite of the contradiction that has appeared in official quarters which I am going to deal with presently, I repeat, treat us as beasts. We cannot safely walk on the foot-paths. A Madrassi gentleman, spotlessly dressed, always avoids





## THE BEGINNING OF THE STRUGGLE

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the footpaths of prominent streets in Durban for fear he should be insulted or pushed off.

We are the "Asian dirt" to be "heartily cursed," we are "chokeful of vice" "and we live upon rice," we are "stinking coolies" living on "the smell of an oiled rage," we are "the black vermin," we are described in the Statute Books as "semi-barbarous Asiatics, or persons belonging to the uncivilised races of Asia." We "breed like rabbits" and a gentleman at a meeting lately held in Durban said he "was sorry we could not be shot like them." There are coaches running between certain places in the Transvaal. We may not sit inside them. It is a sore trial, apart from the indignity it involves and contemplates, to have to sit outside them either in deadly winter morning, for the winter is severe in the Transvaal, or under a burning sun, though we are Indians. The hotels refuse us admission. Indeed, there are cases in which respectable Indians have found it difficult even to procure refreshments at European places. It was only a short time ago that a gang of Europeans set fire to an Indian store in a village (*cries of shame*) called Dundee in Natal, doing some damage, and another gang threw burning crackers into the Indian stores in a business street in Durban. This feeling of intense hatred has been reproduced into legislation in the various States of South Africa restricting the freedom of Indians in many ways. To begin with, Natal, which is the most important from an Indian point of view, has of late shown the greatest activity in passing Indian legislation. Till 1894, the Indians had been enjoying the franchise equally with the Europeans under the general franchise law of the Colony, which entitles any adult male being a British subject to be placed on the voters' list, who 'possesses immoveable





property worth £50 or pays an annual rent of £10. There is a separate franchise qualification for the Zulu. In 1894, the Natal Legislature passed a Bill disfranchising Asiatics by name. We resisted it in the Local Parliament but without any avail. We then memorialised the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and as a result that bill was this year withdrawn and replaced by another which, though not quite so bad as the first one, is bad enough. It says that no natives of countries (not of European origin) which have not hitherto possessed elective representative institutions, founded on the Parliamentary Franchise, shall be placed on the voters roll unless they shall first obtain an exemption from the Governor in Council. This bill excepts from its operation those whose names are already rightly contained in any voters' list. Before being introduced it was submitted to Mr. Chamberlain who has approved of it. We have opposed it on the ground that we have such institutions in India, and that, therefore, the Bill will fail in its object if it is to disfranchise the Asiatics and that therefore also it is a harassing piece of legislation and is calculated to involve us in endless litigation and expense. This is admitted on all hands. The very members who voted for it thought likewise. The Natal Government organ says in effect:—

We know India has such institutions and therefore the bill will not apply to the Indians. But we can have that bill or none. If it disfranchises Indians, nothing can be better. If it does not, then too we have nothing to fear! for the Indian can never gain political supremacy and if necessary, we can soon impose an educational test or raise the property qualification which, while disfranchising Indians wholesale, will not debar a single European from voting.

Thus the Natal legislature is paying a game of "toss up" at the Indians' expense. We are a fit subject for vivisection under the Natal Pasteur's deadly scalpel and





## THE BEGINNING OF THE STRUGGLE

CSL

knife, with this difference between the Paris Pasteur and the Natal Pasteur that, while the former indulged in vivisection with the object of benefiting humanity, the latter has been indulging in it for the sake of amusement out of sheer wantonness. The object of this measure is not political. It is purely and simply to degrade the Indians in the words of a member of the Natal Parliament, "to make the Indian's life more comfortable in his native land than in Natal," in the words of another eminent Natalian, "to keep him for ever a hewer of wood and drawer of water." The very fact that, at present, there are only 250 Indians as against nearly 10,000 European voters shows that there is no fear of the Indian vote swamping the European. For a fuller history of the question, I must refer you to the Green Pamphlet. The *London Times* which has uniformly supported us in our troubles, dealing with the franchise question in Natal, thus puts it in its issue of the 27th day of June of this year :—

The question now put before Mr. Chamberlain is not an academic one. It is not a question of argument but of race feeling. We cannot afford a war of races among our own subjects. It would be a wrong for the Government of India to suddenly arrest the development of Natal by shutting all the supply of immigrants, as it would be for Natal to deny the right of citizenship to British Indian subjects, who, by years of thrift and good work in the Colony, have raised themselves to the actual status of citizens.

If there is any real danger of the Asiatic vote swamping the European, we should have no objection to an educational test being imposed or the property qualifications being raised. What we object to is class legislation and the degradation which it necessarily involves. We are fighting for no new privilege in opposing the Bill, we are resisting the deprivation of the one we have been enjoying.





## THE SOUTH AFRICAN INDIAN QUESTION

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In strict accordance with the policy of degrading the Indian to the level of a raw Kaffir and, in the words of the Attorney-General of Natal, "that of preventing him from forming part of the future South African nation that is going to be built," the Natal Government last year introduced their Bill to amend the Indian Immigration Law which, I regret to inform you, has received the Royal sanction in spite of our hopes to the contrary. This news was received after the Bombay meeting, and it will, therefore, be necessary for me to deal with this question at some length, also because this question more immediately affects this Presidency and can be best studied here. Up to the 18th day of August, 1894, the indentured immigrants went under a contract of service for five years in consideration for a free passage to Natal, free board and lodging for themselves and their families and wages at the rate of ten shillings per month for the first year to be increased by one shilling every following year. They were also entitled to a free passage back to India, if they remained in the Colony another five years as free labourers. This is now changed, and, in future, the immigrants will have either to remain in the Colony for ever under indenture, their wages increasing to 20 shillings at the end of the 9th year of indentured service, or to return to India or to pay an annual poll-tax of £3 sterling, equivalent to nearly half a year's earnings on the indentured scale. A Commission consisting of two members was sent to India in 1893 by the Natal Government to induce the Indian Government to agree to the above alterations with the exception of the imposition of the poll-tax. The present Viceroy, while expressing his reluctance, agreed to the alteration subject to the sanction of the Home Govern-





ment, refusing to allow the Natal Government to make the breach of the clause about compulsory return a criminal offence. The Natal Government have got over the difficulty by the poll-tax Clause.

The Attorney-General in discussing that clause said that while an Indian could not be sent to gaol for refusing to return to India or to pay the tax, so long as there was anything worth having in his hut, it will be liable to seizure. We strongly opposed that Bill in the local Parliament and failing there, sent a memorial to Mr. Chamberlain, praying either that the Bill should be disallowed or emigration to Natal should be suspended.

The above proposal was mooted 10 years ago and it was vehemently opposed by the most eminent colonists in Natal. A Commission was then appointed to inquire into various matters concerning Indians in Natal. One of the Commissioners, Mr. Saunders, says in his additional report :—

Though the Commission has made no recommendation on the subject of passing a law to force Indians back to India at the expiration of their term of service, unless they renew their indentures, I wish to express my strong condemnation of any such idea, and I feel convinced that many, who now advocate the plan, when they realise what it means, will reject it as energetically as I do. Stop Indian emigration and face results, but don't try to do what I can show is a great wrong.

What is it but taking the best of our servants (the good as well as the bad), and then refusing them the enjoyment of the reward, forcing them back (if we could, but we cannot) when their best days have been spent for our benefit. Where to? Why back to face a prospect of starvation from which they sought to escape when they were young. Shylock-like, taking the pound of flesh, and Shylock-like we may rely on it meeting Shylock's reward.

The Colony can stop Indian immigration, and that, perhaps, far more easily and permanently than some 'popularity seekers' would desire. But force men off at the end of their service, this the Colony cannot do. And I urge on it not to discredit a fair name by trying.





The Attorney-General of Natal who introduced the Bill under discussion expressed the following views while giving his evidence before the Commission :—

With reference to time-expired Indians, I do not think that it ought to be compulsory on any man to go to any part of the world save for a crime for which he is transported. I hear a great deal of this question; I have been asked again and again to take a different view, but I have not been able to do it. A man is brought here, *in theory with his own consent in practice very often without his consent*, he gives the best five years of his life, he forms new ties, forgets the old ones, perhaps establishes home here, and he cannot, according to my view of right and wrong, be sent back. Better by far to stop the further introduction of Indians altogether than to take what work you can out of them and order them away. The Colony, or part of the Colony, seems to want Indians but also wishes to avoid the consequences of Indian immigration. The Indian people do no harm as far as I know; in certain respects they do a great deal of good. I have never heard a reason to justify the extradition of a man who has behaved well for five years.

And Mr. Binns who came to India as one of the Natal Commissioners to induce the Indian Government to agree to the above-mentioned alterations gave the following evidence before the Commission ten years ago :—

I think the idea which has been mooted, that all Indians should be compelled to return to India at the end of their term of indenture, is most unfair to the Indian population, and would never be sanctioned by the Indian Government. In my opinion the free Indian population is a most useful section of the community.

But then great men may change their views as often and as quickly as they may change their clothes with impunity and even to advantage. In them, they say, such changes are a result of sincere conviction. It is a thousand pities, however, that unfortunately for the poor indentured Indian his fear or rather the expectation that the Indian Government will never sanction the change was not realised.

The London *Star* thus gave vent to its feelings on reading the Bill :—





These particulars are enough to throw light upon the hateful persecution to which British Indian subjects are being subjected. The new Indian Immigration Law Amendment Bill, which virtually proposes to reduce Indians to a state of slavery, is another example. The thing is a monstrous wrong, an insult to British subjects, a disgrace to its authors, and a slight upon ourselves. Every Englishman is concerned to see that the commercial greed of the South African trader is not permitted to wreak such bitter injustice upon men who alike by proclamation and by statute are placed upon an equality with ourselves before the Law.

The London *Times* also in supporting our prayer has compared the state of perpetual indenture to a "state perilously near to slavery." It also says:—

The Government of India has one simple remedy. It can suspend indentured immigration to South Africa as it has suspended such immigration to foreign possessions until it obtains the necessary guarantees for the present well-being and the future status of the immigrants. . . . It is eminently a case for sensible and conciliatory action on both sides. . . . But the Indian Government may be forced to adopt measures in connection with the wider claim now being urged by every section of the Indian community and which has been explicitly acknowledged by Her Majesty's Government at home—namely, the claim of the Indian races to trade and to labour with the full status of British subjects throughout the British Empire and in allied States.

The letters from Natal informing me of the Royal sanction to this Bill ask me to request the Indian public to help us to get emigration suspended. I am well aware that the idea of suspending emigration requires careful consideration. I humbly think that there is no other conclusion possible in the interests of the Indians at large. Emigration is supposed to relieve the congested districts and to benefit those who emigrate. If the Indians instead of paying the poll-tax, return to India, the congestion cannot be affected at all. And the returned Indians will rather be a source of difficulty than anything else as they must necessarily find it difficult to get work and cannot be expected to bring sufficient to live upon the interest of their capital. It certainly with





not benefit the emigrants as they will never, if the Government can possibly help it, be allowed to rise higher than the status of labourers. The fact is that they are being helped on to degradation.

Under such circumstances I humbly ask you to support our prayer to suspend emigration to Natal, unless the new law can be altered or repealed. You will naturally be anxious to know the treatment of the Indians while under indenture. Of course, that life cannot be bright under any circumstances ; but I do not think their lot is worse than the lot of the Indians similarly placed in other parts of the world. At the same time they too certainly come in for a share of the tremendous colour prejudice. I can only briefly allude to the matter here and refer to the curious Green Pamphlet wherein it has been more fully discussed. There is a sad mortality from suicides on certain estates in Natal. It is very difficult for an indentured Indian to have his services transferred on the ground of ill-treatment. An indentured Indian after he becomes free is given a free pass. This he has to show whenever asked to do so. It is meant to detect desertion by the indentured Indians. The working of this system is a source of much irritation to poor free Indians and often puts respectable Indians in a very unpleasant position. This law really would not give any trouble, but for the unreasonable prejudice. A sympathetic Protector of Immigrants, preferably an Indian gentleman of high standing and knowing the Tamil, Telugu and Hindustani languages, would certainly mitigate the usual hardships of the indentured life. An Indian immigrant who loses his free pass is, as a rule, called upon to pay £3 sterling for





a duplicate copy. This is nothing but a system of blackmail.

The 9 o'clock rule in Natal which makes it necessary for every Indian to carry a pass if he wants to be out after 9 P.M., at the pain of being locked up in a dungeon, causes much heart-burning especially among the gentlemen from this Presidency. You will be pleased to hear that children of many indentured Indians receive a pretty good education; and then wear as a rule the European dress. They are a most sensitive class and yet unfortunately most liable to arrest under the 9 o'clock rule. The European dress for an Indian is no recommendation in Natal. It is rather the reverse. For the flowing robe of a Memon frees the wearer from such molestation. A happy incident described in the Green Pamphlet led the police in Durban some years ago to free Indians thus dressed from liability to arrest after 9 P.M. A Tamil school-mistress, a Tamil school-master and a Tamil Sunday school-teacher were only a few months ago arrested and looked up under this law. They all got justice in the law courts, but that was a poor consolation. The result, however, was that the Corporations in Natal are clamouring for an alteration in the law so that it might be impossible for such Indians to get off scot-free in the Law Courts.

There is a Bye-Law in Durban which requires registration of coloured servants. This Rule may be and perhaps is necessary for the Kaffirs who would not work, but absolutely useless with regard to the Indians. But the policy is to class the Indian with the Kaffir whenever possible.





This does not complete the list of grievances in Natal. I must beg to refer the curious to the Green Pamphlet for further information.

But, gentlemen, you have been told lately by the Natal Agent-General that the Indians are nowhere better treated than in Natal; that the fact that a majority of the indentured labourers do not avail themselves of the return passage is the best answer to my pamphlet, and that the railway and tram-car officials do not treat the Indians as beasts nor do the Law Courts deny them justice.

With the greatest deference to the Agent-General, all I can say as to the first statement is that he must have very queer notions of good treatment, if to be locked up for being out after 9 P.M. without a pass, to be denied the most elementary right of citizenship in a free country, to be denied a higher status than that of bondman and at best a free labourer and to be subjected to other restrictions referred to above, are instances of good treatment. And if such treatment is the best the Indians receive throughout the world, then the lot of the Indians in other parts of the world and here must be very miserable indeed, according to the commonsense view. The thing is that Mr. Walter Peace, the Agent-General, is made to look through the official spectacles and to him everything official is bound to appear rosy. The legal disabilities are condemnatory of the action of the Natal Government and how can the Agent-General be expected to condemn himself? If he or the Government which he represents only admitted that the legal disabilities mentioned above were against the fundamental principles of the British Constitution, I should not stand before you this evening. I respectfully submit that statements of opinions made





by the Agent-General cannot be allowed to have greater weight than those of an accused person about his own guilt.

The fact that the indentured Indians as a rule do not avail themselves of the return passage we do not dispute, but we certainly dispute that it is the best answer to our complaints. How can that fact disprove the existence of the legal disabilities? It may prove that the Indians who do not take advantage of the return passage either do not mind the disabilities or remain in the Colony in spite of such disabilities. If the former be the case, it is the duty of those who know better to make the Indians realise their situation and to enable them to see that submission to them means degradation. If the latter be the case it is one more instance of the patience and the forbearing spirit of the Indian Nation which was acknowledged by Mr. Chamberlain in his Despatch in connection with the Transvaal arbitration. Because they bear them is no reason why the disabilities should not be removed or why they should be interpreted into meaning the best treatment possible.

Moreover, who are these people who, instead of returning to India, settle in the Colony? They are the Indians drawn from the poorest classes and from the most thickly populated districts possibly living in a state of semi-starvation in India. They migrated to Natal with their families, if any, with the intention of settling there, if possible. Is it any wonder, if these people after the expiry of their indenture, instead of running 'to face semi-starvation,' as Mr. Saunders has put it, settled in a country where the climate is magnificent and where they may earn a decent living? A starving man generally would stand any





amount of rough treatment to get a crumb of bread.

Do not the Uitlanders make out a terribly long list of grievances in the Transvaal? And yet do they not flock to the Transvaal in thousands in spite of the ill-treatment they receive there because they can earn their bread in the Transvaal more easily than in the old country?

This, too, should be borne in mind that in making his statement, Mr. Peace has not taken into account the free Indian trader who goes to the Colony on his own account and who feels most the indignities and disabilities. If it does not do to tell the Uitlander that he may not go to the Transvaal if he cannot bear the ill-treatment, much less will it do to say so to the enterprising Indian. We belong to the Imperial family and are children, adopted it may be, of the same august mother, having the same rights and privileges guaranteed to us as to the European children. It was in that belief that we went to the Colony of Natal and we trust that our belief was well-founded.

The Agent-General has contradicted the statement made in the pamphlet that the railway and tramcar officials treat the Indians as beasts. Even if the statements I have made were incorrect, that would not disprove the legal disabilities which and which alone have been made the subject of memorials and to remove which we invoke the direct intervention of the Home and the Indian Governments. But I venture to say that the Agent-General has been misinformed and beg to repeat that the Indians are treated as beasts by the railway and the tramcar officials. That statement was made now nearly two years ago in quarters where it could have been contradicted at once. I had the honour to address





an 'open letter' to the members of the Local Parliament in Natal. It was widely circulated in the Colony and noticed by almost every leading newspaper in South Africa. No one contradicted it then. It was even admitted by some newspapers. Under such circumstances, I ventured to quote it in my pamphlet published here. I am not given to exaggerate matters and it is very unpleasant to me to have to cite testimony in my own favour, but since an attempt has been made to discredit my statements and thereby the cause I am advocating, I feel it to be my duty for the sake of the cause to tell you what the papers in South Africa thought about the 'open letter' in which the statement was made.

The *Star*, the leading newspaper in Johannesburg, says:—

Mr. Gandhi writes forcibly, moderately and well. He has himself suffered some slight measure of injustice since he came into the Colony, but that fact does not seem to have coloured his sentiment, and it must be confessed that to the tone of the open letter no objection can reasonably be taken. Mr. Gandhi discusses the questions he has raised with conspicuous moderation.

The *Natal Mercury*, the Government organ in Natal, says:—

Mr. Gandhi writes with calmness and moderation. He is as impartial as any one could expect him to be and probably a little more so than might have been expected, considering that he did not receive very just treatment at the hands of the Law Society when he first came to the Colony.

Had I made unfounded statements, the newspapers would not have given such a certificate to the 'open letter.'

An Indian, about two years ago, took out a second class ticket on the Natal railway. In a single night journey he was thrice disturbed and was twice made to change compartments to please European passengers. The case came before the Court and the Indian got £10





damages. The following is the plaintiff's evidence in the case :—

Deponent got into a second class carriage in the train, leaving Charlestown at 1-30 P.M. Three other Indians were in the same compartment, but they got out at New Castle. A white man opened the door of the compartment and beckoned to witness, saying "come out, Sammy." Plaintiff asked, "why," and the white man replied "Never mind, come out, I want to place someone here." Witness said, "why should I come out from here when I have paid my fare?" . . . . The white man then left and brought an Indian who, witness believed, was in the employ of the railway. The Indian was told to tell plaintiff to get out of the carriage. Thereupon the Indian said, "the white man orders you to come out and you must come out." The Indian then left. Witness said to the white man, "what do you want to shift me about for. I have paid my fare and have a right to remain here." The white man became angry at this and said, "well, if you don't come out, I will knock hell out of you." The white man got into the carriage and laid hold of witness by the arm and tried to pull him out. Plaintiff said, "Let me alone and I will come out." The witness left the carriage and the white man pointed out another second class compartment and told him to go there. Plaintiff did as he was directed. The compartment he was shown into was empty. He believed some people who were playing a band were put into the carriage from which he was expelled. This white man was the District Superintendent of Railways at New-castle. (*Shame*). To proceed, witness travelled undisturbed to Maritzberg. He fell asleep and when he awoke at Maritzberg he found a white man, a white woman and a child in the compartment with him. A white man came up to the carriage and said, "Is that your boy speaking to the white man in the compartment?" Witness's fellow-traveller replied "yes," pointing to his little boy. The other white man then said, "No, I don't mean him. I mean the damned coolie in the corner." This gentleman with the choice language was a railway official, being a shunter. The white man in the compartment replied, "Oh never mind him, leave him alone." Then the white man outside (the official) said, "I am not going to allow a coolie to be in the same compartment with white people." This man addressed plaintiff, saying "Sammy, come out." Plaintiff said, "why, I was removed at New Castle to this compartment." The white man said, "well, you must come out" and was about to enter the carriage. Witness thinking he would be handled as at New Castle said he would go out and left the compartment. The white man pointed out another second class compartment which witness entered. This was empty for a time but before leaving, a white man entered. Another white man, (the official), afterwards came up and said if you don't like to travel with that stinking coolie I will find you another carriage." (*The Natal Advertiser*, 22nd November, 1893.)





You will have noticed that the official at Maritzberg mal-treated the Indian passenger although his white fellow-passenger did not mind him. If this is not bestial treatment, I should very much like to know what is, and such occurrences take place often enough to be irritating.

It was found during the case that one of the witnesses for the defendant was coached. In answer to a question from the Bench whether the Indian passengers were treated with consideration, the witness who was one of the officials referred to replied in the affirmative. Thereupon the presiding Magistrate who tried the case is reported to have said to the witness, "Then you have a different opinion to what I have and it is a curious thing that people who are not connected with the railway observe more than you."

The *Natal Advertiser*, a European daily in Durban, made the following remarks on the case :—

It was indisputable from the evidence that the Arab had been badly treated and seeing that second class tickets are issued to Indians of this description, the plaintiff ought not to have been subjected to unnecessary annoyance and indignity. . . . . Some definite measures should be taken to minimise the danger of trouble arising between European and coloured passengers without rendering the carrying out of such measures annoying to any person whether black or white.

In the course of its remarks on the same case the *Natal Mercury* observed :—

There is throughout South Africa a tendency to treat all Indians, as coolies pure and simple, no matter whether they be educated and cleanly in their habits or not. . . . On our railways we have noticed on more than one occasion that coloured passengers are not by any means treated with civility, and although it would be unreasonable to expect that the white employees of the N.C.R. should treat them with the same deference as is accorded to European passengers still we think it would not be in any way derogatory to their dignity if the officials were a little more *Suaviter in modo* when dealing with coloured travellers.

The *Cape Times*, a leading newspaper in South Africa, says :—





Natal presents the curious spectacle of a country entertaining a supreme contempt for the very class of people she can least do without. Imagination can only picture the commercial paralysis which would inevitably attend the withdrawal of the Indian population from that Colony. And yet the Indian is the most despised of creatures, he may not ride in the tram-cars, nor sit in the same compartment of a railway carriage with the Europeans, hotel-keepers refuse him food or shelter and he is denied the privilege of the public bath!

Here is the opinion of an Anglo-Indian, Mr. Drummond who is intimately connected with the Indians in Natal. He says, writing to the *Natal Mercury* :—

The majority of the people here seem to forget that they are British subjects, that their Maharani is our Queen and for that reason alone one would think that they might be spared the opprobrious term of 'coolie,' as it is here applied. In India it is only the lower class of white men who calls native a 'nigger' and treats him as if he were unworthy of any consideration or respect. In their eyes, as in the eyes of many in this colony, he is treated either as a heavy burden or a mechanical machine.....It is a common thing and a lamentable thing to hear the ignorant and the unenlightened speak of the Indian generally as the scum of the earth, etc. It is depreciation from the white man and not appreciation that they get.

I think I have adduced sufficient outside testimony to substantiate my statement that the railway officials treat the Indians as beasts. On the tramcars, the Indians are often not allowed to sit inside but are sent upstairs,' as the phrase goes. They are often made to remove from one seat to another or prevented from occupying front benches. I know an Indian officer, a Tamil gentleman, dressed in the latest European style who was made to stand on the tram-car board although there was accommodation available for him.

Quoting statistics to prove the prosperity of the Indian community is quite unnecessary. It is not denied that the Indians who go to Natal do earn a living and that in spite of the persecution.





In the Transvaal we cannot own landed property, we may not trade or reside except in specified locations, which are described by the British Agent, "as places to deposit the refuse of the town without any water except the polluted soakage in the gully between the location and the town." We may not as of right walk on the footpaths in Johannesburg and Pretoria, we may not be out after 9 P. M. We may not travel without passes. The law prevents us from travelling first or second class on the railways. We are required to pay a special registration fee of £3 to enable us to settle in the Transvaal and though we are treated as mere "chattels" and have no privileges whatever, we may be called upon to render compulsory military service, if Mr. Chamberlain disregards the Memorial which we have addressed to him on the subject. The history of the whole case as it affects the Indians in the Transvaal is very interesting and I am only sorry that for want of time I cannot deal with it now. I must, however, beg you to study it from the Green Pamphlet. I must not omit to mention that it is criminal for an Indian to buy native gold.

The Orange Free State has made "the British Indian an impossibility by simply classifying him with the Kaffir," as its chief organ puts it. It has passed a special law whereby we are prevented from trading, farming or owning property under any circumstances. If we submit to these degrading conditions we may be allowed to reside after passing through certain humiliating ceremonies. We were driven out from the State and our stores were closed causing to us a loss of £9,000. And this grievance remains absolutely without redress. The Cape Parliament has passed a Bill granting the East