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LONDON
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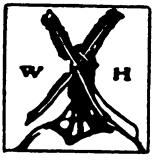
Atonement

A Play of Modern India
in Four Acts

By Edward Thompson



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TO

ARTHUR MARSHMAN SPENCER

"What do they know of England who only England know?"
—*Kipling.*

PREFACE

THIS play deals with a situation and problems which are exciting deep passion. This makes it necessary that the reader should be reminded that it is presented as a play and not as propaganda —that no statement purports to be anything but the belief or opinion of the *dramatis persona* who utters it.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

GANAPATI BANERJEE	*District Collector and Magistrate, Durgapur.*
WALSH	*District Judge.*
GREGORY	*Principal, Baptist Missionary College.*
LOMAX	*District Superintendent of Police.*
HORTON	*Labour Recruiting Agent.*
THORP	*An ex-Missionary, now with the Non-Co-operation Party.*
NAGENDRANATH SINGH	*Leader of the Non-Co-operation Party, Durgapur.*
SARATCHANDRA DATTA	*Professor at the Baptist Missionary College.*
BASANTAKUMAR CHATTERJEE	*Indian Extremists.*
INAYAT KHAN	
MAHATMA RANADE	*Leader of the Non-Co-operation Party in India.*
SUB-INSPECTOR OF POLICE	
MRS. WALSH	
MRS. GREGORY	
MRS. LOMAX	

Indian Police, Servants, etc.

The action takes place in Durgapur, an up-country town in Bengal, and in a village near Durgapur.

Acts I, II, and III take place on the afternoon and night of a day in April. Act IV takes place three months later.

ACT I

ACT I

The Judge's compound, in the mofussil station of Durgapur, Bengal. An arid stretch of brown "lawn." Large trees at the back, along the whitewashed compound wall, and several smaller trees towards the front (left). In the shade of the smaller trees, a row of easy chairs facing the tennis-court, which is just off the stage (right.) In charge of a uniformed, turbaned "bearer," a table holding drinks, glasses, etc., and an ice-box containing bottles of soda-water.

It is late afternoon in mid-April, sunny and sweltering. The trees are casting long shadows.

WALSH, *the Judge, is lying back in an easy chair. He is dressed in flannels, a racquet under his chair. He is a man of about forty, well-preserved and young-looking, with keen, sharp face.*

There is the sound of a car being driven up, and stopping a little distance away. WALSH *rises, and goes to the left of the stage, to greet two ladies, his guests.*

[*Enter two ladies.* MRS. LOMAX *is a large, motherly person, to the initiated unmistakably*

country-born. She is the wife of the Superintendent of Police, and still rather surprised to find herself one of a European station. People wonder why LOMAX *married her; they would not have wondered if they had seen her ten years ago—she has aged rapidly, after the manner of her race, and lost her good looks.*

[MRS. GREGORY, *the College Principal's wife, tall, attractive in appearance, seems much younger. Her manner is languid and bored, though she can show a sprightly enough vivacity on occasion.*

WALSH: Good afternoon, ladies. Aren't any men going to turn up?

MRS. LOMAX: Oh, Mr. Walsh, how *can* Harry come, with all this going on in the bazaar? I've hardly seen him all day long. *Up* and down, *up* and down (*she makes illustrative movements*), he's just on the rush *all* the time. And Mr. Banerjee's chaprasi has been coming with chits *all* the time—he's been simply living on our veranda. I got *so* tired of it, so after tea I thought I would give Mrs. Gregory a lift round here, and see if anyone was going to turn up.

MRS. GREGORY: Tom's away, but he'll be back on the four-forty. He promised to drop in here, and fetch me home after tennis. (*They all sit down.*)

MRS. LOMAX: Well, I can give you both a lift back. But then, he'll have his bike, won't he?

MRS. GREGORY: It's so good of you, Mrs. Lomax. But I'd love to walk home after tennis, and my husband would, too.

WALSH (*jumping up*): Here's my wife. We might be able to make up a four.

MRS. LOMAX (*giving a noisy, rattling laugh*): Walk, indeed! In this weather! You wouldn't catch *me* doing it!

MRS. WALSH (*dressed in the daintiest and lightest fashion, as always—seeming like twenty, so far as profile and figure and manner go. But her eyes are tired and hard. She glides in and speaks softly*): Ah, you feel the heat, do you? Some do feel it more than others.

MRS. LOMAX (*again with that laugh*): Feel it! (*She snorts.*) I should just think I do feel it. I seem to feel it more every year I'm out here. (*Plaintively.*) I wish Harry would take his pension and we could go home.

MRS. WALSH (*eyeing the almost manless company with disfavour*): Dreadful, isn't it? Victor, I don't know why on earth you ever took a job in a place like this. When I married him, he was billeted in Darjiling, and he made me suppose that I should always live near a club, with

dances and *tamashas** every night. Why don't they let a native run this court? Here we even have to send to the railway station for ice.

MRS. LOMAX: And half of it melts on the way up to your house. You can bet your life your coolie's been standing about in the bazaar, gaping at some show or other, or *bukking*† to some other native. Just worrying the life out of you *all* the time, *all* the time.

WALSH: Well, what about a spot of tennis? I'll play till another man comes.

MRS. LOMAX: Oh, Mr. Walsh, it's *too* hot. Let us wait a few more minutes. Besides, I wanted specially to ask Mrs. Walsh about her dirzi.‡

MRS. WALSH: My dear, I take no interest *whatever* in the servants. Victor pays them and runs them—that's all I know about them.

MRS. LOMAX (*unabashed*): My dirzi tells me you're paying yours eight annas a day. I told him I didn't believe such a yarn. *He's* asking for eight annas, too.

MRS. WALSH: Ask Victor, my dear. *I* know nothing about it.

MRS. LOMAX: Mr. Walsh!

WALSH (*reluctantly giving her his attention*): Yes, Mrs. Lomax.

* Shows, amusements. † Chattering ‡ Indian tailor.

MRS. LOMAX: You don't mean to say you're paying a dirzi eight annas a day!

WALSH: Well, I didn't mean to say it, but since you press for information on the point, I'm afraid I am. I understood it was the regular price. I know nothing about these things.

MRS. LOMAX: Oh, Mr. Walsh, you shouldn't go spoiling the rates in this way. No dirzi ever gets more than seven annas a day.

WALSH: But what's the difference? It's less than a couple of dibs* a month, isn't it? A couple of bob, say. In a month!

MRS. LOMAX (*who is a pertinacious person, much respected in the bazaar and avoided by the itinerant vendors of a whole province*): But that's a whole fortune to a native! If we keep on giving in to them like this, we spoil them. They'll be making trouble *all* the time.

[*A frosty silence falls on the company.* MRS. LOMAX, *however, is undaunted; the subject to her is engrossing above the fate of empires.*

I've been having a *dreadful* time with the servants. Do you know how many flower-pots my mali† has broken since last October? Just guess. (*No one responds.*)

(*Impressively.*) He's broken no less than seven.

* Rupees. † Gardener.

Seven! Seven pots in seven months—no, only six months!

MRS. WALSH: That must be nearly three annas' worth, isn't it? Or are they only a pice* each?

MRS. LOMAX (*whose mind is too serious to notice sarcasm. Again with that laugh*): A pice indeed! (*She laughs again, as the grim absurdity of the suggestion penetrates deeper.*) A pice! No, you won't get them anywhere now for less than three pice for two pots.

MRS. GREGORY (*anxious to close down the discussion*): Don't the pots get frightfully dry in this weather, and crack of themselves?

MRS. LOMAX (*turning on her indignantly*): Your mali no doubt tells you that! If you believe him, he'll be having you on *all* the time, *all* the time. If they do, it's his laziness. If he stood *every* pot in water overnight, they wouldn't crack. You make enquiries, and you'll find he hasn't been doing that. You just ask him. (*A pause.* MRS. WALSH *yawns, with her racquet before her face.*) It isn't only the mali who's been getting slack. My cook——

WALSH: What's *he* done? Been embezzling the vegetable-money? Send him up to my court, and I'll give him six months for every cauliflower whose price he's stolen. You're quite right, Mrs. Lomax. It's time we stood together,

* A farthing.

and put a stop to the way these servants behave. Low, downright cheating, I call it.

MRS. LOMAX (*mollified by this support*): Well, we all know what these natives are, don't we, Mr. Walsh? What can you expect of people who haven't had our advantages?

MRS. WALSH (*jumping up*): Victor, let's have a game of sorts.

WALSH (*also rising*): Quite so. They take it out of us by pinching our dusters and turning their goats into vegetable gardens. The heathen have some horrid ways. Right-o, my dear. How shall we play? You and I take these ladies on?

MRS. WALSH (*dismally*): I suppose so. (*Lingering—but no one seems in a hurry to move off to the court.*) I never saw such men as you have in this station. It's just *too* dull, having to play with your own husband for a partner. You can't even rely on him to pick up your balls for you. I *won't* go out. Where's that wretched boy Max? *He's* got nothing to keep him away.

MRS. LOMAX (*to whom the delay is welcome, as giving another chance to open up her favourite topic*): It all comes of educating these natives. Before we started educating them, they were happy and contented. Each one had his little house and his little garden, and his little cow, and his little goats——

WALSH: Bless my soul, they've still got those, curse the brutes! And they're not so little! *I* shan't forget the sight of that huge yellow cow that spent most of last cold weather pasturing in the peas I'd grown with such care. And as for goats! Goats galore! You don't mean to say, Mrs. Lomax, that you maintain *they've* disappeared owing to the wicked educational policy of Government! Shall I tell my servants to catch a couple of hundred and send them round to you?

MRS. LOMAX (*to whom the pathos of changed times appeals too poignantly for her to let her lyrical periods be broken up in this way*): Each house had its little bit of ground, and its little vegetable plot, and its mangoes and jack-trees, and its little fowl-run. And they were happy and loyal, and no one dreamed of passing a saheb or a memsaheb without salaaming. And then we spoilt them by educating them and making them like ourselves! Now every fat babu thinks he's as well educated as we are.

MRS. GREGORY (*who feels it up to her to be "pro-Indian"*): Well, you know they weren't exactly savages when the British came to India. They had schools and universities ages ago, when our ancestors were running about dressed in woad. (*This is a very shocking thing for* MRS. GREGORY *to say, and she feels pleasantly broad-minded and wicked in consequence.*)

MRS. LOMAX: Woad? What's woad?

WALSH (*soothingly*): A kind of very light flannel that the early Britons used to wear. Something like chiffon or cretonne or charmeuse—you know, the stuff that ladies wear for evening dresses nowadays.

MRS. LOMAX: If our ancestors wore things like that, I don't see how you can say they were uneducated. But there you go (*to* MRS. GREGORY), sticking up for these people *all* the time, and supporting them. (*Remembering a rankling grievance.*) How many really good Christian servants has your college turned out in all the years it's been running?

MRS. GREGORY (*getting roused*): How many Victor! We can't wait for that miserable boy! *we* turned out, in all the years that *we* have been running?

MRS. WALSH (*stamping her foot*): Oh, Victor! We can't wait for that miserable boy! I'll play, even with you!

MRS. GREGORY: I don't know why, I'm sure, but whenever I run across my own country-women, especially if it's in some hill-station boarding-house, the first thing they ask me, when they find I'm a missionary's wife, is how many good Christian servants my mission has produced? And then some planter's wife tells

me she once had a Christian servant, and she lost more dusters in the year than she'd ever lost in the same time before.

MRS. LOMAX (*triumphantly*): My husband's brother met a padre who said he would *never* employ a Christian servant himself—never! That was a *padre*. What do you say to that?

MRS. GREGORY: Where was it he met that padre?

MRS. LOMAX: It was in Bangalore—no, Hyderabad.

MRS. GREGORY (*venomously*): That padre must be on tour. The last time I heard of him, he'd been saying that in Peshawur; and the time before that he was in the Bombay-Nagpur mail, going to Jub.* Are you sure he wasn't out in India just for the cold weather?

MRS. WALSH: Victor! *Do* something, if you call yourself a man!

MRS. LOMAX: When my punkahwallah was down with fever, I sent to the college for someone to take his place till he could come back. And your husband said he had no one to send! No one to send! And how many years has the college been running?

MRS. GREGORY (*thoroughly exasperated*): Mrs. Lomax, how often must I explain that

* Jubalpur, in Central India.

we're not a Registry Office, and that the college curriculum is *not* meant to turn out bearers and punkahwallahs? We educate Indians of good family to take degrees in arts and science.

MRS. LOMAX (*with an air of finality*): That's what I say! You turn them all into babus, just educating them *all* the time!

WALSH (*desperately*): Spin for sides, Mrs. Lomax. Rough or smooth? (*He spins his racquet.*)

MRS. LOMAX: Rough. If you educate them, of course you won't get them to come and work for us. Anyone could tell you that. We'll take that side. You can change every three games, if you find the sun too much for you. They've gone and released Gandhi now, and we shall have more trouble with our servants, and they'll get slacker *all* the time, *all* the time.

WALSH: Come, come, Mrs. Lomax, you don't mean to say that you suspect Mr. Gandhi of putting your mali up to breaking your flower-pots or telling them to charge you over a farthing apiece for them in the bazaar? He's a bad hat, but I don't think he'd descend to such depths of utter depravity as all that!

MRS. LOMAX: I keep on telling Harry, I wish he'd take his pension, and then we could go home.

MRS. WALSH (*very sweetly*): But you could

do that without drawing his pension. The railway fare to Calcutta isn't more than twenty rupees, is it? And I believe it's less, if you go second class.

MRS. LOMAX (*who does not understand innuendo, even if blunt and heavy enough to stun an elephant*): I'm not thinking of the railway fare. There's the steamer fare—and then, the cost of living has gone up so at home, they say. (*With sudden suspicion.*) I don't understand what you mean by saying that the fare to Calcutta is only twenty rupees.

WALSH (*hastily—anxious that she should not understand*): Mrs. Lomax is quite right about Gandhi and his influence on our servants. I've noticed it myself. (*Speaking with solemn impressiveness.*) The very evening of the day he came here last cold weather, my bearer, who's usually so careful, broke my tobacco-jar. Now, if it wasn't Gandhi who put him up to that, who was it, I'd like to know?

[*Enter* MAX HORTON, *the labour* recruiting-agent—generally known, but not to his face, as the coolie-catcher; a boy of twenty-two, with the appearance and reputation of being a cheerful idiot. He always has a cigarette in his mouth, even after cycling, as now.*

* For the Himalayan and Assam tea-gardens.

My dear, you're saved from the horror of having to play with me. Step along, Max. You've been keeping all these ladies waiting.

HORTON (*mopping his brow*): No, have I really? My word, isn't it sweltering? I never thought anyone would stir out for anything so strenuous as tennis. Only dropped in on spec. I had a long snooze this afternoon.

MRS. WALSH: That's how you spend three-quarters of your life. You're playing with me now, so try to wake up. *Not* with a cigarette, please. I've seen you play with a cigarette in your mouth, and your performance is a shade worse than when you're without one—if that's possible. Besides, you're playing against ladies.

WALSH (*with simulated ferocity*): Get in, you idiot. You've only time for one set, as it is—for six short, quick games. It's a lucky thing that it's you who's turned up, and not Lomax or Gregory.

HORTON: What do you mean, Walsh?

WALSH: (*shouting in his ear*): I mean, there won't be time for *seven* games. Go on, get in. The balls are over there.

[*The players move off to the court,* WALSH *looking after them as they go.*

[*Enter* LOMAX, *the Police Superintendent —a man of about thirty-five, strongly built, with honest, dogged face.*

Hullo, Lomax. Thought we weren't going to see you. You're just too late for a set—afraid there won't be another. You'll have a peg, of course. Bearer! *Polis-sahebke peg do.**

[*Tennis begins as* WALSH *and* LOMAX *sit down; and from time to time their talk is punctuated with the sound of bouncing balls, calls of encouragement or advice, and the usual run of tennis witticisms. The Bearer brings a tray of drinks, and opens a bottle of soda-water.*

LOMAX (*gloomily*): I didn't come to play. I oughtn't to be here at all, with all this foolery on in the bazaar.

WALSH: Has my old school-chum Chatterjee rolled up?

LOMAX: Yes, damn him! They're processing him through the streets now. I'll have to be back in half a jiff to take in any reports that come. But I really *had* to get away for a breathing-space from those infernal idiots in my office. My sub-inspectors have all got the wind up. Worst of all, they've put the wind up that ass Banerjee. He's been chasing me with chits all the blessed day. (*Bitterly.*) As if I hadn't enough to worry me without having a damned fool for a Collector.

WALSH: Tut, tut, you mustn't talk like that of our dear Ganapati†—our Lord of Hosts!

* "Give the Police-Sahib a peg."
† A title of the elephant headed god of wisdom: "Lord of the Ganas" or "Hosts" of his father Siva. It is a common Indian name.

Lomax, my boy, you're letting this thing get on your *nerves*. Get that peg down, and have another. When you've had half a dozen, you'll find philosophy getting on top again. You'll feel better. You'll

"let the legions thunder past,
Then plunge in thought again."

LOMAX (*looking dismally into his half-empty glass*): Well, I must say it's a bit thick.

WALSH: What, that whisky! Then mix some more soda with it. Don't let a thing like that darken your life.

LOMAX (*startled*): This whisky! Good Lord. no! This is mild enough, in all conscience. I mean that prancing idiot Banerjee.

WALSH: So our dear Ganapati has been worrying you, has he? What's the matter with him? Does he see another chance of advertisement?

LOMAX: You bet he does. When the whole thing blows over, we shall read a long yarn in the *Politician* from "A Mofussil Correspondent," telling how a dangerous rising was settled at Durgapur by the wonderful tact and firmness of the popular——

WALSH: Yes, you mustn't leave out the *popular*. He's very keen on being loved by the people, is our Ganapati.

LOMAX (*growing cheerful*): by the popular magistrate here.

WALSH: One seems to expect to read something of the kind.

LOMAX: But just now he's panicking about in the bluest funk imaginable. I've told him the whole thing'll blow over if we just keep our heads.

[GREGORY, *the College Principal, enters, and leans his bike against a tree at the back of the stage. He is taller than* WALSH *or* LOMAX, *of more athletic build than either. Wears glasses. Like both the other men, he looks extremely tired and discouraged.*

GREGORY (*sitting down*): Do you honestly think it will?

LOMAX (*angrily*): It would if it weren't for your damned students.

GREGORY (*taking a "soft" drink from the Bearer*): It's a bit unfair, isn't it, holding a lot of excitable boys responsible for every row that happens?

LOMAX: Who provides the inflammable stuff these beastly agitators work upon?

GREGORY: Exactly. These students, naturally. And it's the keenest who blaze up most readily. Wouldn't *you* be a nationalist, in their place?

LOMAX (*disgustedly*): I've heard all that before. What beats me is how a decent chap can waste his time educating and missionising these folk? Doesn't it you, Walsh?

WALSH (*whose mind has been wandering, as he watches the tennis*): Haven't thought about it, I'm afraid. Been too busy lately. But I *will* think about it when I get time. Certainly a problem. Let's see—why does Gregory—quite a decent chap—educated, not altogether a fool either—could have earned a fairish living in some other way, probably with far less work—why does he waste his time educating the heathen? Are they grateful? No, they tear him to pieces when they get a chance. (*Leaning forward.*) Why is it, Greg, old boy? Tell us. There's only just us two. None of your missionary society's secretaries anywhere within hearing.

GREGORY (*grinning*): And why does Lomax —again, quite a decent chap—man of liberal instincts and unusually good at seeing another fellow's point of view—spend his time putting poor devils of cultivators into quod and repressing boys who are only doing what he'd do in their place? *And* buttressing up that monstrous system of petty thieving and by no means petty bullying that goes by the name of the Indian Police? *Very* decent fellow, Lomax, really. He's played a lot of football and cricket with my boys, and they like him uncommonly.

LOMAX: Tell me, how many Christians has your college made, in the dozen years or so in which you've been spending the widows' mites that your society has collected at home?

GREGORY: I don't mind telling you. One.

LOMAX: How many thousand pounds a head does that work out at?

GREGORY: That's the question the heathen are always asking. They all believe a missionary gets a *huge* sum per head, especially if he gets hold of a Brahmin. A Brahmin wrote the other day, offering to turn Christian if I'd pay all his exes to England and through four years at Oxford. He was quite sure I'd jump at the proposal, as it would have left me a handsome surplus for my own old age. I'm told they had a session at the Revolutionary headquarters last week, to decide how they were going to budget for the cost of running India when we clear out. It was carried that a hundred Brahmins should be told off yearly to turn Christian, and that the police service should be run out of the thank-offerings sent by the missionary societies.

LOMAX: Gregory's trying to be funny.

WALSH: Is he? He mustn't do that. But I'm interested in that bloke who wrote to you. That wasn't just a yarn, was it?

GREGORY: Not a bit of it. Honest fact.

WALSH: Why did he want to go to Oxford? Why do all these Hindus think so much more of Oxford than they do of Cambridge? As an Oxford man, of course I have my theories. But I'd like to know what a Cambridge man thinks.

GREGORY (*very solemnly*): Religion, Walsh. Don't you know that *everything* a Hindu does is from religious motives, just as all *we* do is from greed of money? Hasn't that been dinned into your head ever since you came out here?

WALSH: But what the devil has religion to do with Oxford?

GREGORY: Why, the very name. *Ox*-ford—isn't that enough to draw a Hindu by every fibre of his subconscious self, all throbbing with veneration for the cow!

WALSH: Gregory, you *are* trying to be funny! Drop it, for Lomax and I aren't going to stand for it!

LOMAX (*to* GREGORY): Did you notice the row in the bazaar when you were cycling from the station?

GREGORY: I don't see how even a giraffe could have overlooked it.

WALSH: Gregory, again, drop it! Were they friendly, Lomax wants to know.

GREGORY: Quite, on the whole. A lot of boys——

LOMAX: Your students.

GREGORY: A lot of boys shouted *Gandhike jai** and *Basantake jai*,† when they saw me. But they were too busy with their own show to bother about me. Brother Basanta is riding on an elephant; and they've got a *foo-foo*‡ band.

LOMAX: I know all that. They fetched them by the noon train.

GREGORY: Yes, but did you know that they've hauled Krishna out, and are having a sort of extra car-festival? I asked one of my students about it, and he said, "Oh, sir, we Hindus are bhery§ religious. We are always glad to see our Gods."

LOMAX (*perturbed*): Curse them, I didn't know that. These things begin to get serious the moment they swing off the usual track. Are you dead sure about it?

WALSH: Some brilliant lad's improvisation. Nothing like making sedition religious. A riot becomes a holy pilgrimage.

GREGORY (*joyously*): It was too funny for words! There was the elephant, and grim Basanta Babu on top of it. Then in front was Krishna being pulled along by a crowd of happy maniacs.

* "Victory to Gandhi!" † "Victory to Basanta!"

‡ A band, usually consisting of Portuguese half-castes who play what is understood to be European music.

§ Very.

And heading the whole procession the *foo-foo* band playing "Hold the fort, for I am coming."

WALSH (*delightedly*): No!

GREGORY: Yes.

WALSH: How damned funny! Krishna touring the bazaar to one of Sankey's tunes! And the *foo-foos*, of course, are Catholics. Lastly, Basanta Babu, in whose honour this exquisite blend of two religions has been placed on the market, was a particularly pugnacious kind of atheist when I knew him at Oxford. I hope he appreciates the thing! He wasn't very good at seeing a joke in his undergraduate days. On my soul, India'd be dull if the non-co-operationists shut down.

LOMAX (*growling*): Yes, damned funny! But the joke's been giving me too many sleepless nights for me to enjoy it as I ought.

WALSH: All mad, all mad together! Let's forget 'em for a bit. Steady on, Max! (*As a tennis ball hits him hard.*) Isn't the rest of the compound big enough for what you're pleased to call your play?

HORTON's voice (*from off the stage*): Sorry, Walsh! I was trying to smash one of Mrs. Gregory's returns.

WALSH: Well, leave me out of your strokes in future. (*As they all turn their attention to the*

tennis.) Remarkable game that boy's playing! He seems to think the thing is to collar every blessed ball you can and scoop it swiftly into the net. What's it remind you of?

LOMAX (*wearily*): Nothing on earth. Only Max.

GREGORY: *Lycidas.* The "two-handed engine that

Stands ready to strike once and strike no more.

He's going to serve now. He did four double faults running five minutes back.

WALSH: Isn't that about as many as you *can* get? World's record, is it? Held by our Max! Very steady player, Max—*remarkably* steady and reliable. Never wins a point. My wife seems to be saying something to him.

LOMAX: He looks a bit worried.

WALSH: Ah, modesty. Feels he's taking more than his fair share of the game.

GREGORY: That's probably what *she* thinks. Max always seems to be doing that when he's your partner.

LOMAX: Well, I really *must* clear. But it's been nice seeing you boys, for a change from that——

WALSH (*warningly*): Now, now, *now!*

Keep yourself from getting nervy. Have another peg—just one, before you go. Bearer!

LOMAX: No, I won't, really. (*As Bearer comes up to him with tray.*) All right, I will then. (*As Bearer pours out the whisky.*) Pretty mild whisky, this, isn't it?

WALSH: I don't know that it is. It's what I've got for years. Isn't it all right? Never touch it myself—prefer beer.

LOMAX: Ye-es. Well, I don't think a second peg of *this*'ll do me any harm.

[*A Constable enters, and salutes* LOMAX, *handing him a note.* LOMAX *reads it, and frowns.*]

Damn your students, Gregory. Damn them again, a million times. All this trouble is their work.

GREGORY: I don't see how you can make that out.

LOMAX: Didn't it start in the Calcutta colleges, as it always does? And then they send their emissaries down here, and to every mofussil college, and start a lot of fresh hells, like the one they've left. Wasn't Nagen one of your professors?

GREGORY: Yes; for two months, I suppose you think we imported him specially to start trouble for you here?

LOMAX: Anyway, he *did* start it. And he's kept it going.

GREGORY: You forget that Gandhi visited us. And Gandhi to Indians is what cocktails are to us—he goes to their heads at once.

LOMAX: Well, it may interest you to know that I've got the names of a couple of hundred of your students who've joined Nagen Babu. I warn you, I'm going to proceed against them. My patience is finished.

WALSH: What's happened now?

LOMAX: Nagen and a lot of Gregory's boys are proposing to lead the mob to the jail, to demand the release of that poisonous little ass of a pleader whom I got orders to arrest and send down to Alipore* to-night. That means bloodshed, if the crowd's really crazy with religion and patriotism, as it will be by this time. Then, when the Indian press shouts for my head, I'll be broken, I suppose.

[*Exit.*

GREGORY (*looking after him*): Lomax seems a bit short of his usual reasonableness.

WALSH: I'm not surprised. When you get a letter formally notifying you that your name's next but two on the Revolutionaries' official list for assassination, it doesn't give you quite that

* The principal Calcutta jail.

Kruschen feeling, does it? You don't exactly feel like leaping over a pillar-box before breakfast. Of course, one has always had these friendly little notices—but one can't regard them as mere badinage nowadays. Too many Brownings about.

GREGORY (*puzzled*): Brownings?

WALSH: I don't mean the poet's works. They're regarded as rather old-fashioned in the best circles, I believe. Even Indians don't read them. I mean pistols—little guns—lethal weapons—things that put holes in you. Wake up, Gregory!

GREGORY (*with a start*): Oh, of course. I was thinking of Lomax. I don't wonder he's worried. I'd like to know who's next for assassination.

WALSH: Can't tell you. But the same joke-merchants inform me I'm next but one.

GREGORY: *You've* had a chit telling you *that?*

WALSH: Yes. All in the day's work. My handling of that Jherria dacoity case seems to have given dissatisfaction. Lomax is really rather low down on the list, apparently. But he's too worried just now to take a light-hearted view of things.

The revellers are returning. Let us rise to greet them with congratulations and long drinks.

[WALSH *and* GREGORY *rise, as the tennis-players enter.*

MRS. LOMAX (*to* MRS. GREGORY): And what has your cook been charging you for chickens?

MRS. WALSH (*her voice throbbing with indignation*): Well, of all the hopeless rabbits! Max—you—you—you—you——

WALSH: Come, we'll have a meeting on his case when we've all got drinks, and we'll see if we can't find a word that fits him. Bearer!

BEARER (*hurrying up with a tray of drinks*): *Huzzoor!* (*He proceeds to serve out the drinks.*)

GREGORY (*politely asking the usual question*): What sort of a set did you have? How did the games go? (*All seat themselves, except* WALSH *and* HORTON.)

MRS. WALSH (*glaring at* HORTON): Go? Rapidly. They simply slumped. Like an avalanche. Or a cataract. Or anything that just collapses without any hesitation.

HORTON (*who, in the temporary absence of a second Bearer, now hurrying up, is helping by opening bottles of soda-water*): Mrs. Walsh, you're awfully hard on a fellow! Just look at my racquet! (*Holding it out.*) It's like a fish-

ing-net. How could any fellow play with a racquet like that?

WALSH: So it was your racquet, was it, Tilden? Why didn't you bring the one you used at Wimbledon—when you beat Alonzo in three straight sets? Then we could have seen your game at its *best*—we've always seen it at its worst hitherto.

GREGORY: Are we to gather that Max didn't put up his usual stiff fight?

MRS. WALSH (*witheringly*): Oh, yes. Very stiff fight—the kind of desperate resistance a sparrow would put up against a leopard. I don't want to talk about the wretch. I just want to forget him. (*To* HORTON, *as he offers her a soda.*) No, thank you. I'd rather the Bearer gave me my soda. (*She fans herself.*) They beat us six-love, of course.

MRS. GREGORY: Eight-love.

MRS. WALSH (*with a frigid look at* MRS. GREGORY): Six-love.

WALSH (*soothingly*): There seems some discrepancy here. But Mrs. Gregory must have counted wrong. You can't have eight-love.

MRS. WALSH: For that matter, you could have a hundred-love, if you cared to play against Max

long enough. But it was six-love. He served four double faults running twice over——

GREGORY: I saw him do it once.

MRS. WALSH: He did it *twice*. Of course, I refused to count those games, so we played them over again, and I took the serves.

HORTON: I was trying a new serve to-day.

MRS. WALSH (*drearily*): Were you? It seemed uncommonly like your old one. What do you consider was new about it?

HORTON: I was trying to put a break on it—this way. (*Illustrates.*)

GREGORY: Well, apparently it was the net that put the brake on.

HORTON: A fellow's bound to have his off days. You can't expect him to be always consistent.

WALSH: That's where you do yourself injustice, my boy. You're the one player I've met who always *is* consistent—the most reliable, absolutely *steady* player in India—probably in the world.

HORTON: What I mean is—you can't expect a fellow always to strike twelve.

WALSH: No. But when *you're* serving we expect you to strike *twice*—twice, and then move

across to the other half of the court. The rules of the game don't allow you more than *double* faults, you know.

HORTON (*resignedly throwing himself back in a chair*): Oh, well. I know I'm not a world's champion or anything of that sort. But anyway, Mrs. Walsh, I'm always trying.

MRS. WALSH: You are. More than trying—downright exasperating. I could have *screamed* when you poached that easy shot from my right hand, and scooped it past my face into the tree behind.

WALSH: Your play seems to have aroused deep feeling, Max. But don't let that put you off your drink.

MRS. WALSH: You won't catch him letting anything do *that*. (*Subsides.*)

MRS. LOMAX (*seizing the chance to return to serious business*): You haven't told me what you're paying for chickens.

MRS. GREGORY: I got the last lot six for the rupee. Those were for soup.

MRS. LOMAX (*horrified*): Soup-chickens six for the rupee! I'd jolly soon get rid of my cook if he did me like that! You ought always to get soup-chickens eight for the rupee. And big chickens six.

WALSH: What has Mr. Gandhi ordered the fowl-wallahs to sell their ducks at?

MRS. LOMAX (*reminded*): Yes, what are you paying for ducks?

MRS. GREGORY: I haven't bought any lately. I paid eight annas for the last.

WALSH (*in mock horror*): Good gracious, you paid eight annas for a duck! Why, you ought to have got an ostrich for the price! *Never* more than *seven* annas for a duck—or seven and a half, at the very outside. That's right, isn't it, Mrs. Lomax?

MRS. LOMAX: My dear, you hear what Mr. Walsh says. You'll spoil all the rates, if you go on paying these *huge* prices, *all* the time, *all* the time.

WALSH: It's sheer extortion. I must drop Gandhi a stiff chit about it. I'll threaten to run him in under Section 429. It's seven years for overcharging for chickens, and eight if you do it for ducks.

GREGORY: I'm told the Revolutionary Committee have put a tax on every fowl sold to Europeans. They call it the War Tax, on the lines of the War Tax they have in the U.S.A. and Canada.

MRS. LOMAX (*alarmed and indignant*): But they have no right to do *that*. They're not the

Government of this country, even if they think they are. What a shame! It ought to be stopped at once.

GREGORY: Get Walsh to put it up to headquarters for you, Mrs. Lomax. If they can't guarantee us chickens at twopence a head, they can't expect us to stop in this poisonous country. Why, I've eaten a chicken a day for thirteen years, to say nothing of the thousands I've drunk as soup.

HORTON (*who has been sipping at his peg fastidiously*): I say, Walsh, what's wrong with this whisky?

WALSH (*surprised*): I didn't know anything was wrong with it.

HORTON: I mean, where do you get it?

WALSH (*still more surprised*): Where do I get it? Where I generally get it—the Army and Navy Stores, Chowringhee, Calcutta, if you insist on precise information. Where do you get yours? Not that I particularly want to know.

HORTON: What do you pay for it?

WALSH: Well, really! I'm sure I don't remember exactly. But I always pay a good price for it. Isn't it good enough for your taste? Don't you find it strengthening enough, after a hard, stiff set at tennis.

HORTON (*holding out his glass*): You've been had. Smell it. Taste it. It's just water.

WALSH (*taking his glass*): Now I think of it, Lomax seemed rather to toy with his drink, instead of supping it down in his usual hearty fashion. Bearer, whisky! (*The Bearer, inscrutable in expression as ever, brings the whisky.* WALSH *pours a little into a glass, and holds it up.*) Looks a little pale, doesn't it? (*He smells it, then tastes it.*) You're right. There *is* something wrong with it.

HORTON: I'll tell you what's happened. Old Buddha (*indicating the Bearer*) has been putting it away, and filling up the wastage with water.

WALSH: That so? In that case, the best we can hope for is that it was fairly clean water. I fancy you've got it in one. I'll look into the matter afterwards. Bearer, nutun whisky do.* *Nutun.*

[*Bearer goes off towards the house.*]

HORTON: That's the same blighter who sold your tea and made your tea with bazaar tobacco, isn't it?

MRS. WALSH: When did that horror happen? Did *I* drink any of that tea?

WALSH: You were in the hills, my dear. He was certainly making some most abominable

* "Give new whisky."

stuff and calling it tea; and Max alleged it was made with bad tobacco.

HORTON: There was no doubt about it. You had that doctor fellow staying with you, and you gave his dog some in a saucer. The doctor said the poor brute showed all the symptoms of suffering from acute nicotine poisoning for days afterwards. It couldn't have got that from tea, could it?

MRS. GREGORY (*who has been brooding over the poultry question*): Well, my cook said he couldn't buy ducks anywhere for less than eight annas. I don't see how I could have helped paying it. He wouldn't have got the ducks at all, otherwise.

MRS. LOMAX: You could have let him get them, and at the end of the month, when you were paying him, have cut him for every duck on which he'd overcharged you.

MRS. GREGORY: And have lost my cook. (*Peevishly.*) Remember, *my* servants aren't under the impression that my husband can send them to jail if I complain to him about them.

MRS. WALSH: Thank goodness, I've had my last game of tennis here. This time to-morrow I'll be in the Club at Darjiling.

MRS. GREGORY: I wish *I* were getting away now. Is Mr. Walsh going, too?

MRS. WALSH: He's got a lot of stupid papers, judgments or something or other, that he says he's got to write. He could get away if he wanted.

WALSH: That's all you know, my dear. I can't stir out of my office for another couple of months that I can see. (*As Bearer returns, with new bottle of whisky.*) There, that looks all right.

HORTON (*as Bearer pours out peg*): This is first-rate, I can see.

WALSH: My dear, we're often very hard on Max. But he's proved his value to-day, as an absolutely expert whisky-taster. One sip—or a smell, even—and he can tell you year of vintage, district, light or heavy soil, proportion of alcohol and sugar—everything.

MRS. WALSH (*pettishly*): I've no doubt he's equally good with brandy or beer. But it doesn't make him of any more use to me. Let's get in for a game of three-handed bridge. I can just manage a rubber before I have to go for my train.

MRS. GREGORY (*taking the hint, rising*): I'm afraid I ought to go. I'll say good-night to everyone.

WALSH (*protestingly, as everyone rises*): I say, Mrs. Gregory, you're not going! I

haven't had a *buk* with your husband for days and days. Just wait a few minutes. I can send you both round in the car. He can leave his bike.

MRS. GREGORY: I'll wait indoors, then. It's too hot here, away from the punkahs.

MRS. LOMAX (*as the ladies and* MAX *move off*): You get on to your mali, first thing when you get home, and just see if what I told you about the flower-pots isn't right. And tell your cook that you won't pay him a pice more than seven annas for a duck! Tell him I told you—that'll put the wind up him! These natives all know that the police-memsaheb is up to their little tricks. They are trying to cheat us *all* the time, *all* the time.

[*As the others depart,* BANERJEE, *the Collector, is seen making his way towards* WALSH *and* GREGORY. *He is a lumpy, fussy Indian, in European dress. He enters.*]

BANERJEE (*excitedly*): Isn't Lomax here?

WALSH (*very coolly*). He looked in for a few minutes.

BANERJEE (*waving his arms helplessly*): I don't understand you Englishmen. You never take things seriously. You play tennis and drink and play bridge and joke, while everything's going wrong. You're like the ancient Romans.

WALSH: The ancient Romans? They were rather careful chaps, weren't they?

BANERJEE: Didn't they fiddle while Rome was burning?

WALSH: I'd forgotten that. Did it every week end, regularly.

BANERJEE: Don't you know there's a *hartal* on in the bazaar?

WALSH: You heard anything of that, Gregory?

GREGORY: I did seem to have heard something about it.

WALSH: Are the lads of the village doing anything fresh this time?

GREGORY: Don't we have a *hartal* once a month? Hasn't it become a sort of Indian bank holiday?

WALSH: What we mean is—are there any new performers? Or just the old favourites? Kshitish Babu's good old address on *The Greatness of Ancient Aryan Civilization?* Nagen Babu on *Ees the Eendian een any way eenferior to the European?* Abdul Qasim on *The Wrongs of Turkey?* Any *new* features?

BANERJEE: You Englishmen will never realise when a situation is serious. I've had to take

grave steps all day long. If it had not been for me, the whole town would have been in rebellion. Lomax wouldn't have lifted a little finger if I hadn't been at him all the time. Where is he now? That's what I came to find out.

WALSH: I fancy you'll find him in his office, if he isn't in the bazaar. Anyway, they can tell you there. *We* don't know.

BANERJEE (*still walking excitedly about*): He doesn't even know what is happening. And he comes round here to play tennis, with the whole place in an uproar.

WALSH: Look here, Banerjee, I'd clear my mind of some of the things that are worrying it, if I were you. First, about Lomax——

GREGORY: He's not been playing tennis.

WALSH: No, not by a long chalk. He dropped round for five minutes, to save himself from going crazy.

BANERJEE: Why should *he* go crazy? He hasn't the responsibility for the whole district on his shoulders. It's *I* who ought to go crazy. But you don't see me doing it. No, I keep my head, and *do* things. And here you sit and talk and pay no attention to what's happening.

WALSH: That's where you make a mistake, my friend. About Lomax—what was I saying? Oh, yes, you said he didn't know what was

happening. I'm prepared to bet that Lomax has a pretty fair notion of what has happened and of what is going to happen.

BANERJEE: Yes, because I've told him. But he'd never have known if I'd left him to himself, as any other Collector would have done. That's why these fellows have made a dead set at Durgapur. They know that if they can get me broken, they'll have things their own way in the rest of Bengal. (*Excitedly.*) None of you are helping me. I shall have to do it all myself again. Gregory, don't you know that your boys have all joined Nagen Babu? Don't you know they've all gone on strike?

GREGORY: Yes, I know. They have a habit of going on strike when a *hartal* comes during holidays. It's no concern of mine.

BANERJEE: What do you mean? They're your boys, aren't they?

GREGORY: They will be to-morrow, when the college reopens after the Easter vacation. To-day—I have no more jurisdiction in the bazaar than I have in Kamschatka.

WALSH (*showing signs of getting annoyed*): What can we *do*, man? Tell us, and we'll do it. We've no call to go blithering through the bazaar. The people are entitled to shut their shops, if they want. It's doing no one any harm.

GREGORY: Everyone knew it was coming off. You've got in all the stores you need, haven't you? If you haven't, let us help you out. Abdul Qasim sent me a special chit two days ago, that there was to be the usual *hartal* for Amritsar, and would I let him know what groceries we required.

WALSH: He sent me one, too. Very neighbourly of him, I'm sure. He said he had to be speaking about the Wrongs of Turkey, so couldn't be at his shop, in any case. But his son told me that, if we ran short of anything, even to-day, they'd serve us, if we'd send a man round the back way.

BANERJEE: But they're having *huge* meetings, enormous meetings. And processions.

WALSH: Of course. Why not? Fine day, sunny, bright, not too hot—just the day for a people's holiday. Let's have a good stroll through the town, with banners and drums! Nothing like walking exercise, if you can't afford horse-exercise. And when we're tired, let's listen to dear old Abdul Qasim on the Wrongs of Turkey, and why Hindus and Mohammadans should be united. We can heckle him afterwards, and ask him why he sells such shocking tea—and at such a price!

BANERJEE: You fellows drive me *wild*. I won't stop here. I must get on to Lomax, and make him *do* something.

WALSH: Take my advice, and leave Lomax to carry on as he is doing. If anything happens, he'll be on the spot before you can tell him. And if nothing happens, why, everyone'll feel all the better for their happy little outing to-day. I like the morning after a *hartal*; everyone's so cheerful. "Good morning, Suren Babu," I say to my Chief Typist. "You weren't here yesterday. We missed your smiling face. You've no idea what a gap you leave in the office. I hope you weren't out with any of these horrid non-co-operationists—you, an old Government servant!" "Oh, no, sir," he replies. "I had bhery bad phebers* yesterday." "I'm sorry to hear that," I tell him. "You all right to-day?" "Your Honour, I am now bhery well," he says. And he looks it, and is. Why? Because he's had a day in the country. *You* have one, Banerjee. Have several. Take a month off. We'll keep Durgapur here till you return.

BANERJEE: You don't realise things a bit. How could I go away for a month? I have to stay here, I have to watch everything, I have to keep Lomax up to his work——

WALSH: I've pointed out to you, Banerjee, that that's a delusion of yours. Try a peg. Try a dozen. They'll clear your brain.

BANERJEE: You don't know what Nagen Babu's been saying in the bazaar.

* Very bad fevers.

WALSH: In a public address?

BANERJEE: Yes. Before a couple of thousand people.

WALSH: Then I do know, very well. (*He proceeds to talk in a high-pitched nasal voice, very rapidly, as if talking by rote.*) Eendians have always been renowned all over the world for their speeritual qualities. Everything we Eendians do is releegious. We worship God all the time. Eu-ropeans (*pronouncing the word as if it were "You ropey 'uns"*) are materialistic. They worship brute force. They are superior to us in pheesical strength, but speeritually and mentally we Aryans—— There, Banerjee, isn't that the old boy's message?

GREGORY (*affectionately*): He's an *awfully* decent fellow really, is Nagen Babu. He honestly believes all that stuff.

WALSH: I know he does. So do millions of them. Banerjee here does, don't you?

BANERJEE: Well, of course we Indians *are* famous all over the world for our spiritual and mental qualities, while you Englishmen *do* worship money, don't you?

GREGORY: Quite so. As a student of mine put it in an essay the other day, "The English are drunk with blood and wine." He had no intention of being offensive or hurting my feel-

ings. Just thought he was stating an indubitable fact, as who should say, "It is a fine evening," when it *is* and everyone can *see* it is.

WALSH: I suppose it's no worse than the way our Calcutta papers are always bragging about the grand "British" qualities of justice and fair play and sportsmanship. We're all mad, Banerjee—you folk bragging of your spirituality and we of our general nobleness.

GREGORY: I knew an earnest Christian who was always boasting of his humility. Well, what else did Nagen Babu say?

BANERJEE: On Gandhi's birthday Swaraj is going to be established everywhere. Their administration's all ready, and they're just going to walk into our jobs. At five minutes to ten in the morning, Nagen is going to walk into your office, Gregory, and take over the College. So, you see, it isn't such a joke as you thought.

GREGORY: It's even better. I wish him joy of the job of running the College on five hundred rupees a month.

BANERJEE: What do you mean? Of course, he can't run it on that.

GREGORY: That's our Government grant. If we got our finances in some unholy mess, no doubt we'd get a lot more. Perhaps Nagen'll persuade the Swaraj Government to give him

more. But I doubt it. You see, Gandhi doesn't believe in modern education. That's where he and I agree, by the way. There are fees, of course. He *may* scoop those in. But I somehow don't see my Society sending out his salary and various other hefty benefactions, if I'm dismissed by local enthusiasts. I'm afraid his inaugural address will have to announce the annihilation of his professors' salaries.

WALSH: A fine, popular, patriotic start. A return to good old Aryan customs. All teachers to work for nixes, and go round after their lectures with a begging-bowl. You know, Greg, I've often thought that would be a good idea at home. I'd love to see our dons processing down the High, beating a gong and collecting any vegetables tossed to them by the well-disposed —or hanging outside the Cadena for stray buns. I don't know your Cambridge equivalents for these Oxford haunts of luxury. It'd liven a few of them up a bit.

BANERJEE: Go on, laugh. But Nirmal Singh is going to walk into your court, five minutes before you arrive; and you'll find him sitting in your chair.

WALSH (*sitting upright, as if surprised*): What, old Mossy-Face! But he's been to see me privately about getting a Kaisar-i-Hind, for long and loyal service to the British Raj!

GREGORY: What class? Second—the class they give to nurses and missionaries who've done forty years' work in colleges or leper asylums?

WALSH: Of course. There's no third class; and he knows we keep the first class for Civilians and Governors' wives. But you surprise and grieve me about Mossy-Face. I've always looked on him as my chief supporter. And who's going to have *your* job? And Lomax's?

BANERJEE: I'm going to find Lomax. I'm wasting time when I ought to be going out to Simulbund—when I ought to be in the bazaar —when I ought to be everywhere! I won't talk to you chaps any more. You think everything's a joke. [*Exit.*

WALSH: It is offended. See, it stalks away!
We do it wrong, being so majestical,
To offer it the show of violence;
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

GREGORY (*knocking the ashes out of his pipe, on his boot*): Ass! I hope he won't find Lomax. I say, you said you knew Basanta Chatterjee at Oxford, didn't you?

WALSH: A bit. As a matter of fact, we were at St. Peter's together.

GREGORY: What sort of a bloke was he in those days?

WALSH: Desperately solemn. A ghastly windbag, I believe. They pulled his leg rather, and he was understood to resent it uncommonly. I daresay he had a grievance, but you know what our fellows are—they make a joke of everything, and the Indians couldn't get that. They had been accustomed to taking everything seriously —even Schools.

GREGORY: When did he go to Berlin?

WALSH: Oh, some time before the War. He's certainly been about as poisonous and bitter as anyone could be.

[LOMAX *suddenly enters.*

Hullo, Lomax. Where've you sprung from? However did you manage to miss our Ganapati?

LOMAX: Have I missed him? Thank Heaven!

GREGORY: He's just this minute gone. He was crazy to find you. You'll catch him if you run.

[LOMAX *makes a gesture of derision, and sits down.*

LOMAX: I was round at Pratap Babu's. I make a point of looking him up when I'm in a hole. I know no one who can tell me more what's happening. I fancy I escaped Ganapati

because I cut across the fields and through your vegetable-garden. I hope you don't mind.

WALSH: Not a bit. Did you have any trouble at the jail?

LOMAX: No. Met a sub-inspector, as soon as I left your place, who told me Nagen had persuaded the crowd to call that part of their programme off.

GREGORY: I've a great respect for Nagen. He's one of the few who honestly believe in Gandhi's non-resistance stunt.

LOMAX: Look here, I want you chaps to know. That isn't an ordinary *hartal*. It's damned serious.

WALSH: So Brother Ganapati was assuring us.

LOMAX: Well, it is, in spite of that. I was worried when I heard they'd brought Krishna out. And they're keeping up that religious line—or what they choose to call religion. In this case, it's just plain incitement to murder.

GREGORY: The Krishna?

LOMAX: No. You've seen that Narasingha at Khantihar—you know, that huge figure they've stuck up in the bazaar there—of Vishnu lion-faced and with claws ripping a chap's bowels up. The man's in European kit, as you know. We knew that was meant to stir up hatred, but

we couldn't do anything, so long as he was brown —they said it was symbolical—Vishnu tearing up the traitors who imitate English dress, instead of wearing *khudder*.*

WALSH: Yes?

LOMAX: They've just substituted the figure of a white man. I've got to do something. It's a direct challenge. If we let it stop there——

GREGORY: Exactly. They'll say we *daren't* remove it! And, if we *do* remove it——

LOMAX: Then we're desecrating their religion. We've insulted their gods.

WALSH: Is this Chatterjee's work?

LOMAX: No. He's poisonous enough, in all conscience; but he only makes the pleaders and educated folk—Gregory's people—discontented and seditious.

WALSH: Which they all are already.

LOMAX: Yes. He daren't move them to open warfare, though he would if he dared. I could handle him. But Inayat Khan is here.

GREGORY, WALSH (*together*): Inayat Khan!

LOMAX: Inayat Khan. And you know what his coming means—bloodshed always. He was in that Chakrata business, when the mob butchered over a score of police. In the Bombay

* Country-spun cloth.

riots, when hundreds were killed and wounded. And we're dead sure he was behind that Moplah rising. But we never get anything we can handle. He hates us like fury, but he never commits himself. He drives other poor devils to massacre and to being massacred; but he keeps himself safe.

WALSH: What can he do at Khantihar?

LOMAX: Do? He can send the people crazy. They can murder *us*, they can cut the main line between Calcutta and up-country, if they come in here. And Khantihar's on the edge of the jungles. If he sends those silly fools of Santals* out of their minds, they'll start slaying Hindu moneylenders—that won't worry *him*; he's a Mohammadan. We'll have another Moplah affair, only among Santals this time. We shall put it down, without catching him. The revolt will be said to be due to "economic causes," the Santals' habit of getting into debt and losing their land. But there'll be a deal of shooting, and then all India will be savage about our measures of repression. Amritsar won't be in it, if you get a mob of Santals marching against our Volunteers.

GREGORY: What are you going to do?

LOMAX: Run over to Khantihar now, and arrest him.

* An aboriginal race.

WALSH: But *can* you?

LOMAX: I can. He's committed himself at last. (*Holding up papers.*) Here's my last *Confidential Report,* just come in; and my Chief's sent a covering letter with it to all of us, telling us we must arrest Inayat Khan if he comes into our territory. He lost his temper at Patna, and was fool enough publicly to urge all Mohammedan sepoys to mutiny. That's done it at last. He can be charged.

WALSH: You'll take us with you, of course. Max, Gregory, myself—you can call us out as Volunteers, you know.

LOMAX: Thanks, awfully. But I'm going with just a sub-inspector and half a dozen of my police.

WALSH: Don't do anything so crazy, man.

LOMAX: Yes, I will. I've thought it out, and it isn't crazy. If we make heavy weather about arresting one man, the people'll all think we've got the wind up. The quieter it's done, the better.

GREGORY: But, Lomax——

LOMAX: Look here, Gregory, I want to stop this thing as quickly as I can. The people round here are silly idiots, but I don't want to have to shoot them down presently. If I first arrest this blighter in a way that shows I'm not afraid

of them, and then get hold of a few of them quietly, I'll have that Narasingha matter set right by private arrangement. But I want you two to stand by me, all the same—just for advice, that is.

GREGORY: Rather. But why——

LOMAX: If I'm back from Khantihar at nine-thirty (say), where'll you both be?

WALSH: I'm seeing my memsaheb off to Darjiling on the eight-fifteen. I'll be back by eight-thirty. You'll have finished dinner then, Gregory?

GREGORY: I'll manage it. Come round to my place, Lomax. Walsh'll be there.

[*Enter a Constable. He salutes, and gives* LOMAX *a note.*

LOMAX (*reading note*): So that was why friend Ganapati was so keen to catch me! He's left this note at my office.

WALSH: All about things at Khantihar?

LOMAX: Not a word about them. Simply observes that he—*he,* mind you!—has quited things in the bazaar here, and that he finds he has urgent duty that makes it necessary for him to go to Simulbund at once—that's twenty miles away. Like to see the note? (WALSH *and* GREGORY *read the note.*)

GREGORY: What's it mean? Is the man an even bigger fool than we thought—or what?

LOMAX: No, he's not a fool, in this case—

simply a funk. It means that he knows there's likely to be trouble, and he's going to be off the premises temporarily.

WALSH: The note seems a bit shamefaced. So he's clearing off to the jungles of Simulbund —Jove goes to visit the blameless Ethiopians, while these Greeks and Trojans kill each other. Then, if Æneas gets done in, *he* isn't responsible.

LOMAX: That's it. If I do any shooting, it'll be because our wise and far-sighted Collector wasn't here to settle things peaceably. So *I* shall be broken, when the enquiry comes. *Your* service won't be in any danger of losing its brightest ornament, Walsh. You'll be glad to realise that. (*Wistfully.*) You haven't, by any chance, got a *new* bottle of whisky on the premises? One you haven't opened?

WALSH: Inside the house. Was anything wrong with what you had before?

LOMAX: Oh—er—no. That is—— I fancy it'd been kept a bit too long perhaps. Some of the strength seemed to have evaporated, or something. I shan't be going home before I run out to Khantihar. I want just one drink before I go.

WALSH (*affectionately*): Come along, old boy.

[*They all rise and go off towards the house.*

CURTAIN.

ACT II

ACT II

GREGORY'S *study—a large, bare room distempered in white. A table in centre, covered with papers, files, etc., all well weighted to withstand the breeze made by the large electric fan whirling above the table. Large doors centre back and in centre of walls to right and left—all open, with swaying purdahs hanging across them. The door to the right opens on the veranda—the other two into the bungalow. Plain furniture—straight chairs, a typewriting table, and large, ugly bookcases with glass doors.*

It is eight-thirty in the evening, immediately after dinner. The room is lighted by a large electric reading-lamp on the centre table. GREGORY, *in clerical white evening dress, is sitting behind the table, facing the audience. To his right, half facing him, sits* SARATCHANDRA DATTA, *history professor at the College—a man of about twenty-six but looking younger. He is in Indian dress. His face is eager, attractive, intellectual; his manner enthusiastic and simple, childlike, sometimes almost childish.*

GREGORY: How many students do you think will turn up to-morrow? Twenty?

SARAT: Not a dozen, now that Inayat Khan has come.

GREGORY (*frowning, troubled*): Are you sure it is as bad as all that? Can't we save even the two hostels?

SARAT: You may be able to save those who've already come back—with luck, and if you can keep them from going out to hear Inayat Khan to-night. If *you* will speak to them, you may be in time.

They will not listen to us; they say we are doing what we have been paid to do. But you are a foreigner.

GREGORY: They'll listen to me because I'm a foreigner?

SARAT: Yes. Their minds are disturbed and restless. All Indian minds are to-day. What are they to do? You may be sure that the non-co-operators have already been getting at them —they will have met even the trains at the station.

When the mind is wretched, it will not listen to itself. But another mind can sometimes speak to it. You are a foreigner.

GREGORY: I'll try. After all, it isn't fair to put the job on you.

SARAT: It would be no use, sir.

GREGORY: Anyway, you've done your share

in remaining loyal yourself. It isn't easy for me to say how grateful I feel to you and the rest of the staff. Without you, it would have been impossible to carry on. As it is—— (*He pauses.*)

SARAT: As it is?

GREGORY: Why, it will be as it has always been. The students will have their mass meetings, and unanimously vote to give up their college career for their country. But in three days they will be coming back, and beg to be forgiven. That is because they know that we are working for their real interests, and because they see that you have all stood by us—all except Nagen Babu.

SARAT: I wish I could think so, sir. But we have never had Inayat Khan before. He has never come anywhere without leaving hatred.

GREGORY: Sarat Babu, that's what puzzles me more than anything else. Why is it that Inayat Khan moves whole towns and sends the sanest people mad—for everyone says he does?

SARAT: He does. He makes the quietest simply drunk with hatred of the English. There is bloodshed, always bloodshed, where he comes. There will be bloodshed here. We shall have rioting; then people will be shot down.

GREGORY: Can you tell me why he has this power?

SARAT: Yes. But I do not think anyone but an Indian could understand.

GREGORY: What do you mean? I could understand. Don't you all recognise that I am sympathetic with Indian aspirations?

SARAT (*evasively*): Everyone likes and respects you very much—even the non-co-operators.

GREGORY: But?

SARAT: Well, at the time of the War I said something you didn't like, and you told me I didn't understand, that I couldn't understand. You said it was no use trying to explain to people who hadn't lost brothers and sons in the War.

GREGORY: That was quite true.

SARAT: You said that the real conflict between people was at the back of the brain, and that the trouble was, we never seemed to be able to get there. I thought that was very true.

GREGORY (*mortified*): But don't you think I understand the Indian point of view—well, better than other Englishmen?

SARAT (*unflinchingly*): No. What I mean is——

GREGORY: Go on.

SARAT: You understand the best *English*

view better than other Englishmen, and you really do stand for it. And because of that you do try to put yourself in our place and see with our eyes. We all like you because—oh, you'll think what I am going to say is very silly!

GREGORY: I promise you I won't. Sarat Babu, help me. I'm frankly puzzled. All these years I've been trying to get at what you people really do think and feel. I've read your literature, I've studied your religion——

SARAT (*warmly*): We know you have. There isn't an Indian who isn't grateful to you. Only half a dozen Englishmen have taken the trouble you have. It's because everyone knows this that the College has kept fairly quiet in all these strikes. That's partly why they're making a dead set at us now. Basanta Chatterjee said to-day, "The real enemy is men like Mr. Gregory, for they make us think that the English are just and kind and can be reasoned with."

GREGORY: He would say, of course, that my supposed sympathy was all humbug?

SARAT: But the rest of us know it isn't.

GREGORY: You haven't told me what you were going to say. Never mind how silly it seems. We can't help others if we keep worrying about our dignity. You said I didn't understand—that I couldn't understand. Show me that.

SARAT: I'll try. The reason why India has kept so loyal to England, and been—on the whole, whatever people like Basanta Babu now say—so happy under English rule is not that Englishmen understand us or we them—oh, I cannot say it!

GREGORY: Yes. Go on.

SARAT: Let me do it another way. We all know you are a religious man, although you are English. Yet you have told me that, while you could sympathise even with the worship of Kali and see sublimity in it, you could never feel anything but repelled by the story of the love of Krishna and Radha. Yet that moves us Bengalis more passionately than any other story. I myself, though I am an M.A. of Calcutta University, am melted to tears every time I hear it. I am ashamed to tell you this!

GREGORY (*generously*): But why? There is no need to be ashamed of a genuine emotion.

SARAT: Yes, there is, if its root is some weakness. I have been thinking it over, and it seems to me that it is because we Indians really *are* what you Westerners often sneeringly say we are—we *are* effeminate—yes, there *is* more of the woman than of the man in us. And so we put ourselves—we put the whole nation—in the place of Radha. We don't *mean* to do it, of course. But we do it.

GREGORY (*encouragingly*): Well?

SARAT (*bitterly*): We are fools, and we have fallen long ago in love with the English spirit, which is so hard and masculine and—so contemptuous of us. And if we like *you*—and there isn't a man who has met you or even heard of you who doesn't secretly like you—it isn't because you are more Indian than other Englishmen, as you think you are and have tried to be. It is because you are more English—more like our ideal of an Englishman.

GREGORY: I see. But I haven't got any nearer to what Indians are thinking than any other Englishman?

SARAT: No, we don't think you have. Of course, we are grateful for what you said about Amritsar. But——

GREGORY: But what?

SARAT: Well, you spoke then like a decent Englishman. And it was a time when we thought decent Englishmen were dead.

GREGORY: It's more puzzling than ever. It's more than puzzling—it's maddening. I really *have* thought sometimes that I've got through to what Indians were thinking—and then I've pushed hard, and it's been like going through a curtain, and finding a solid wall behind.

Even now you haven't told me why Inayat

Khan can do what he likes with Indians. (*After a pause.*) Yet you've helped me to guess part of the reason—or am I only stupid again? Sarat Babu, is it because he is one of the few Indians who really *hate* us?

SARAT: Yes. He hates you. The rest of us are often bitter, we are often exasperated. But we do not hate you, except when he makes us do it for the time being.

GREGORY (*leaning forward on the table*): Tell me how he does it.

SARAT (*evasively*): It is *because* he hates. His hatred is like a blazing torch, and it makes us see things that are in the back of our minds. He makes us remember things it would be better for us to forget.

GREGORY: Such as?

SARAT (*earnestly*): Do not ask me that. I do not want to hate you, even for a moment.

GREGORY (*smiling*): I'll risk it. I *must* get to the bottom of this.

SARAT: Then please find your own way. Think of Indians along the lines where you don't understand us, where you haven't any sympathy with us. (*Both are silent for a minute.*)

GREGORY: Have *you* ever heard Inayat Khan?

SARAT: I dare not. If I did, I should join the strikers immediately.

GREGORY: *You* would join the strikers! I don't believe it.

SARAT: I could not help myself.

GREGORY: *You*, the most level-headed Indian I have ever met! Why, you have often told me that you realised that all this non-co-operation was simply ruining the students, by filling their minds with restlessness. You know that it is no true patriotism to try to destroy this college. I have told everyone how grateful I am to you. If Nagen Babu had been as clear-sighted as you——

SARAT: Yes, I shut my eyes tight. He opened his, and he saw things I simply dare not let myself see. Don't you understand what I am, sir?

GREGORY (*warmly*): What I have just said —an Indian who is as clear and steady in brain and purpose as any Englishman.

SARAT (*almost shouting*): There is no such Indian! He simply does not exist!

GREGORY: But it is precisely on the fact that such Indians exist that I have based my support of your right to full self-government.

SARAT: Then you must change your grounds of argument. If *that* is what gives the right to self-government, then we shall never be entitled

to it. I begin to see that there is more justice in the world than I thought. We have always refused freedom to our women for the very reasons for which it is now being refused to us—because they are emotional, swayed by their passions and loyalties, and cannot be calm and collected.

GREGORY: *Tell* me then what you are.

SARAT: I *know* that we should make a mess of things, as you or any wise man would judge. I *know* we are not fit for self-government along the lines on which we are claiming it. But I tell you, Mr. Gregory, that I could break down like a woman when I think of my country and realise that she cannot speak for herself—that she goes to international conferences and assemblies like a child in the charge of its nurse—that——

GREGORY: No, no.

SARAT: Yes. You send what you call an Indian representative to Geneva—or London—or wherever else it is—but *you* have chosen him and not we, and you send him in charge of Lord Curzon! And then you say India has been represented! She has *not!* Even if she had, why *should* she be represented? Why should she not be there in person?

Oh, you don't understand! I cannot explain. But the very mention of the word *freedom* over-

comes us. We cease to reason; we just break down.

[*A Voice from the veranda.*

May I come in, sir?

GREGORY: Yes, come in.

[NAGENDRANATH SINGH *enters. He is a Bengali of about* SARAT'S *age, with lean, intellectual face and burning eyes. He is dressed in* khudder, *the grey homespun cloth which* MAHATMA GANDHI *has commanded all patriotic Indians to wear. He and* SARAT *look at each other with constraint; then he greets* GREGORY *with genuine respect and friendliness.*

NAGEN: You sent a message that you would like to see me?

GREGORY: Yes. I am so glad that you have managed to come. (*He points to a chair.* NAGEN *hesitates, then sits down.*)

NAGEN (*guardedly*): I am always glad to obey my old Principal.

GREGORY: I wanted a talk with you, to see if together we could save these boys of mine from making fools of themselves again to-morrow. These silly strikes can't go on indefinitely. I shall have to expel some of my best students.

NAGEN (*non-committal*): Yes, you must do what seems to you your duty.

GREGORY: It's awfully lucky that you should call while Sarat Babu is here.

NAGEN: No doubt he was helping you to find some way of stopping the strike. I am sorry I have interrupted your plan. I will go again.

SARAT (*rising*): No, *I* will go. Then you can talk to Nagen Babu alone.

GREGORY: Why should either of you go?

NAGEN: Why should either of us stay?

GREGORY: Because you can both help me—because we three together can prevent these boys from doing themselves a lot of harm. Nagen Babu, you know that *swaraj* is not going to be brought in by a lot of excited boys refusing to be educated.

NAGEN (*again non-committal*): We have learnt that nothing can be done without sacrifice.

GREGORY: But useless sacrifice! Foolish, pointless sacrifice!

NAGEN: You yourself, sir, have often told us that all sacrifice seems useless at the time and to those who do not believe in the cause, but that later times have seen that it helped.

GREGORY: But boys ought not to be wasting

their time in politics. They ought to be finishing their education.

NAGEN: It is always the young who are enthusiastic and capable of sacrifice.

GREGORY: Look here, Nagen Babu. Don't you believe in the supreme value of education?

NAGEN: Yes, of real education. But you have often said that the education we get is a sham.

GREGORY: But it will do Government no harm whatever if these boys refuse to attend their classes. Sarat Babu will tell you that.

NAGEN (*stiffening*): Sarat Babu *has* told me that. It is those who have been enslaved by this system of false education who are incapable of hearing when their country calls. That is why Mahatma Gandhi says we must break its chains. It imposes a slave mentality on us, and makes us forget our glorious Aryan heritage. It makes us unspiritual and cowardly and indolent.

WALSH (*from the veranda*): Gregory! (*He comes in, and sits down.*) All right. Don't pay any attention to me.

GREGORY (*to* NAGEN): Like the English, I suppose?

NAGEN: No. You are not cowardly or indo-. . lent.

GREGORY: But only Satanic and unspiritual?

NAGEN: Satanic is Mahatma Gandhi's adjective, not mine. And we do not say the English are Satanic—only the English Government.

GREGORY: Nagen Babu, once again I appeal to you. These continued strikes are making a farce of these boys' education. I'm not going to pretend I hold a brief for Calcutta University; but, at any rate, it isn't going to help India if all the present generation of her young men grow up utterly undisciplined.

NAGEN: The noblest discipline is forgetfulness of self in the service of others.

GREGORY (*getting impatient*): What service? I have here on my desk (*he turns over the papers*) over thirty telegrams, and I cannot tell you how many letters, from parents and guardians, all urging me at all costs not to let their boys go on strike. The whole business is wrong, morally wrong. Can you tell me of any great movement which began with disobedience of parents? Any, in the whole history of the world? (*He throws himself back in his chair, and looks at* NAGEN *triumphantly.*)

NAGEN: Yes.

GREGORY: What movement?

NAGEN: Christianity.

GREGORY: Christianity!

NAGEN: He that loveth father or mother

more than Me is not worthy of Me. That is what our country is saying to us to-day. Only some (*looking at* SARAT) are so deafened by self-interest that they cannot hear her.

GREGORY: But you are not going to pretend that this non-co-operation movement which has plunged all India into confusion and unrest is like Christianity!

NAGEN: Why not? Were not the earliest Christians called those who had turned the whole world upside down?

GREGORY: But think of the bitterness you have introduced!

NAGEN: Jesus Christ said He had come to set a son at variance with his parents, and that a man's foes should be those of his own household. Have you not yourself explained those words to your students, in years when no one dreamed of non-co-operation?

GREGORY (*dreamily*): Yes. And I remember wondering what on earth was the use of trying to preach a religion which to Hindus must sound so utterly and fundamentally immoral. I remember, I almost wished that Christ had never spoken those words.

NAGEN (*triumphantly*): And all the time they came to your hearers like a message of deliverance! You did not realise how spiritual

Indians are, and that they could understand Christianity better than you of the West do, because Jesus Christ was an Oriental. That is why to-day we regard Him as the world's greatest teacher. Mahatma Gandhi has said that he reads the New Testament every day. (*Exaltedly.*) Now at last, after centuries during which we had forgotten it, we are recovering our ancient Aryan greatness. Jesus Christ has called us back to our real spirituality.

WALSH: You are very sure of the spirituality, aren't you?

GREGORY: And I suppose the race which produced Abraham Lincoln and David Livingstone, and the men who went to certain death at Zeebrugge is hopelessly materialistic?

NAGEN: Yes, because they lived and fought for materialistic ends. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world."

You see, I was educated at a missionary college, and I learnt then to read the New Testament.

WALSH: I've often thought the New Testament was the most dangerous book in the world.

NAGEN: We now know the truth, and the truth is making us free.

GREGORY: Sarat Babu, won't you point out to Nagen Babu how unwise and wicked it is for these boys to go on strike?

NAGEN: It is no use for Sarat Babu to speak to me. He has made his choice.

GREGORY: But you two were the closest friends.

NAGEN: A man's foes shall be they of his own household.

GREGORY: You are surely not going to let political differences sever friendship!

NAGEN: That is what you English always say. I have read somewhere that your political differences are just the differences between black and very dark brown; and that is why you cannot understand why Indians and Irishmen hate and murder one another for what you call just political differences.

GREGORY: Nagen Babu, listen to me. I did all I could to keep you. I held your resignation back for nearly a month, and begged you to reconsider it. When you insisted on going, I thought you acted unwisely and excitedly, but I never had the slightest ill-feeling over the matter, for I know you did what you thought right. And, after all, we had been colleagues.

NAGEN: I believe we shall be colleagues again. I believe we shall work together again, when all this trouble is satisfactorily ended. We do not want to get rid of Englishmen, but only of the English Government. You are one of the Englishmen we want to keep.

GREGORY: Then you will work again with your old friend Sarat Babu?

NAGEN (*angrily*): No! Never!
Just for a handful of silver he left us,
Just for a ribbon to stick in his coat.

We have no ill-feeling against *you*. But no patriotic Indian will ever forgive Sarat Babu.

WALSH: I should like to hear Sarat Babu speak for himself. I'm afraid I don't accept Nagen Babu's very charitable construction of his action as the only possible one.

GREGORY: No, nor I. I shall never forget Sarat Babu's loyalty during a most trying time.

NAGEN: That is the only merit by which Englishmen judge us. Indians to them are of two classes—they are loyal or they are disloyal.

GREGORY: That, Nagen Babu, is not true. It is not true of me, at any rate.

SARAT (*as if waking from a dream*): What he says is true. And yet I don't think it is true. I don't know why I didn't go when he went. I argued with myself and persuaded myself that it was wrong and useless for the boys to go out on strike, and lose the best years of their life in just restlessness. And I persuaded myself that the non-co-operation movement was filling India with bitterness and would lead to hatred and violence and more misery.

NAGEN: And?

SARAT (*facing him*): Yes, I was afraid. I have a family to support, and I should be penniless if I gave up my work. And I thought of all that.

GREGORY (*approvingly*): You were quite right. You have a responsibility to your family.

NAGEN: *I* have a family, too. And my wife and my mother weep whenever I go home, because they know that I may be taken to prison any day.

WALSH: Your continual returns home must be a great disappointment to them; and to you, too. Accept my condolences, Nagen Babu. You've been doing your damnedest for eighteen months to get sent to jail, and can't bring it off.

GREGORY: Mr. Lomax gave me a message for you the other day: "If you run across Nagen Babu, tell him it's no earthly use his going on as he does, for I'm not going to arrest him. As long as he's at large, he's worth his weight in gold as a safety-valve."

WALSH: Hasn't it dawned on you yet, Nagen Babu, that the more heroically and often you talk of the martyrdom you're *going* to endure, without being able to persuade the Satanic Government to inflict it, the more your verbal currency gets depreciated? (*As* NAGEN *rises.*)

God bless my soul, I believe the man's going to weep!

GREGORY (*hastily*): Mr. Walsh is only joking, Nagen Babu.

SARAT (*rising*): Nagen Babu, if you are going now, may I come with you?

[NAGEN *goes out quickly.*

Mr. Gregory, I've got to go. Please accept my resignation. I thought I was going right, but I have been doing wrong all the time. (*Almost tearfully.*) Will you English never understand. It would not matter if you were not so strong; but, as it is, your joking makes every other nation hate you. You insult us with your good-nature and remind us how weak we are.

WALSH (*gazing at him in amazement*): Good Lord! It's another grievance against our Satanic tribe that we refuse to recognise there's a war on.

GREGORY: Sarat Babu, this is nonsense. You're just excited. Mr. Walsh never meant to hurt Nagen Babu's feelings.

SARAT: It isn't that. I suddenly saw something. I forgot to keep my eyes shut. Good-bye, sir. Good-bye, Mr. Walsh.

GREGORY (*good-humouredly*): All right, if

you want to go now. But all that about resignation is nonsense, of course.

SARAT: Of course. But I've got to act by it. Please accept my genuine thanks for all the kindness you have shown me, sir.

GREGORY: Rubbish, Sarat Babu. I've never shown you any kindness, as you call it.

WALSH: I'm sure I'm most awfully sorry if I hurt the feelings of either of you. I was merely trying, in the friendliest spirit possible, to cut Nagen Babu's heroics a bit short.

SARAT: That's the way you put it. You are like the typical Englishman, your dramatist Bernard Shaw. You are always trying to spoil other people's attitudes and bring them down to what you call common sense. I've been trying all these years to be like you, and I've nearly lost my soul by it. We are not meant to be like you.

GREGORY (*indulgently*): Well, think it over, Sarat Babu. It'll all come right if you do.

SARAT: I can't afford to think it over. You Englishmen act rightly when you act by thought and reason; but we Indians have to live by emotion. What we want to do is often right; but we think ourselves into wickedness. That is why we have made such a mess of the last thirty years. Good-bye, sir. [*Exit.*

GREGORY (*despairingly*): What is one to do with these people? They're like kids.

WALSH: It's no use trying to argue with them along our own lines, that's a dead cert.

GREGORY: You see how unstable and excitable they are. I'd have staked my life on Sarat's common sense.

WALSH: I'm afraid I feel a bit responsible for his outburst.

GREGORY: You precipitated things rather. Still, why should he have taken sides with Nagen over a thing that was said half as a joke? However, it'll all blow over in a day or two.

[*A Voice from the veranda.*

May I come in? Are you there, Gregory?

[*The curtain is lifted, and an Englishman enters. He holds out his hand to* GREGORY. *The newcomer is a tall, vigorous man, with large, grave face; his eyes have all the patience of the fanatic and the fire of the martyr. He is barefooted and dressed in Indian fashion, in plain, grey* khudder.

GREGORY: Hullo, Thorp! Where've you sprung from? You'll stay the night, of course.

THORP: Thanks. But I'm putting up with some Indian friends.

GREGORY (*pained*): With some Indian friends?

THORP: A great many of my old English friends are no longer friendly. And others whose feelings may still be unchanged might feel embarrased by my presence as their guest.

GREGORY: But you never thought that of *me!*

THORP: I wasn't sure. Honestly, Gregory, I didn't know. I just dropped in to see you, for old times' sake.

GREGORY: If you don't stay here next time you come, I'll feel hurt to the end of my days.

Walsh, our judge. Walsh, you haven't met Thorp?

[WALSH *and* THORP *shake hands, then both sit down.*]

WALSH: I've *heard* a lot about him, of course. You visiting this jolly little spot just for pleasure? Not many people do that.

THORP: I'm with Mr. Ranade. We were going to Ranigunj, to settle the coal-strike there.

WALSH: H—m. There's a strike *here* that Mr. Ranade might like to try his hand at.

THORPE: That's why we came here. We heard the people were a little excited, and Mr. Ranade insisted on breaking the journey here.

GREGORY: You think his presence will make them any less excited?

THORP: It has had a wonderfully quietening effect. We saw your magistrate, Mr. Banerjee. What a fine, sympathetic man he is! It is glorious to think that Indians are producing such rulers from among themselves!

WALSH: Yes, amazing bird, Banerjee!

THORP: Isn't he? An astonishing man. By his help we got the non-co-operation leaders together—he was just off to see about digging a tank for a poor village in the jungles, at a distance, but he very kindly waited to see things through here.

WALSH: Why not? What the devil do you suppose he's here for?

THORP: Mr. Ranade spoke about the processions in the bazaar, and told them this was unnecessary and gave annoyance to Europeans. I explained to them that anything that gave offence wasn't genuine non-violent non-co-operation. They quite agreed, and there will be no more trouble.

GREGORY: You quite sure of that?

THORP: Of course. The Mahatma explained that we have to apply soul-force only. We are going on to Ranigunj by the nine-fifty train to-night.

WALSH (*with polite interest*): How *is* Mr. Ranade? Getting quite well, I hope.

THORP: Ye-es, on the whole. But I'm anxious about him. He's very grateful for the care that was taken of him during his illness, and for the action of Government in releasing him unconditionally. But he's still very weak, and the people are everywhere pressing to see him. In fact, Basanta Chatterjee says that his release is just another example of Government's dishonesty and guile. They want him to be worked to death, so that they may be rid of him, but without the responsibility when he breaks down finally.

WALSH: That's just the sort of kind, charitable thing that Chatterjee *would* say. What would he have said if Government hadn't released the Mahatmajee or taken the risk of operating, but had let him die in jail?

GREGORY: You know Basanta Chatterjee, then? He's here now, you know.

THORP: He and I are very old friends.

WALSH: You must find him a singularly sunny and lovable nature.

THORP (*very simply*): I think he is, when you get to understand him. Those who judge him only by his public utterances sometimes think he is a little bitter.

GREGORY: Well, what are they to make of comments like the one you've just quoted? How do you bring *that* under the heading of soul-force?

THORP (*a lover who has long got past the stage of being able to criticise*): Don't you think it only natural? We have to make allowances. Government has done so many things to forfeit the confidence of the people.

WALSH: I'm not going to defend everything Government does. But what your friends don't seem to realise is that you can't afford to judge any nation by its official heads. They're usually damned silly, if not wicked.

THORP: But then——

WALSH: I know what you're going to say. But just let me say something first. Look here, Thorp, I know my countrymen out here, and I know their mistakes. But I've become rather proud of them. I don't know much about the Calcutta crowd—I've been a mofussilite, mostly. But I'm taking the Englishmen I know. Among them there's hardly a man who isn't an able fellow—*in his own line.*

THORP (*easily*): Don't you think that is explained by the fact that they are in positions of responsibility? Indians have never been given a chance. When, once in a while, you do get a man like Banerjee here——

WALSH: I'm prepared to give weight to that. But I haven't finished. I'm not thinking of ability, mainly. I'll keep to the class your pals chiefly attack—officials. They're my class, and I've known them and mixed with them for sixteen years. (*Impressively.*) Every man—no, that's too strong—I'll make you a present of Humphrey-Seymour, as an exception——

THORP (*enthusiastically*): Yes, we know how sympathetic he is. If all officials were like him, things would never have become so embittered.

WALSH: You misunderstand me. If your pals, the political Indians, would occasionally get in touch with their humbler brethren, the Indians who do the solid *work* of the country, they might revise some of their personal estimates. They think Humphrey-Seymour a grand fellow, because he's always gassing at football cup competitions and prize-givings and butters them up. But in the service he's got the reputation of having never done an honest day's work since he first landed in Calcutta. And he's been infesting Bengal for close on twenty years.

GREGORY: He's an absolutely first-class swab! And I wouldn't use him even to mop up a mess with.

WALSH: You hear what the Church thinks, Thorp. I see you're quite unconvinced.

THORP: I am. We have never found an official more sympathetic to Indian aspirations.

WALSH: Quite so. He would be. But have you ever tried giving him a job of work to do? Well, never mind about him.

What was I saying? Oh, yes. With this one exception, I hardly know a man who isn't honestly out to do the best he can for the people under his charge. Yet whatever we do is twisted against us. Absolutely every last thing. If I send a thief to quod, it's because I'm a brute of a Briton, who cares nothing about breaking up a simple peasant's happy home. If I let him off, it's because I'm cynically indifferent to my duty of protecting the community from lawlessness and depredation.

THORP: Well, Government has in so many ways forfeited——

GREGORY: Now, Thorp, you've already got that remark in.

THORP: I'll admit that individual officials have done much good. But it's been done too often in an arrogant, superior manner, and so has done more harm than good.

WALSH: What the devil does it matter *how* it's done, so long as it *is* done? No, I don't mean that, of course. I suppose we all of us sometimes drive Indians crazy, as they do us.

THORP: It wouldn't matter so much if we weren't so strong. But we're the top-dogs.

WALSH: All the same, don't you think your friends are sometimes in danger of committing the sin against the Holy Ghost, in continually calling all our good evil?

THORP: Mahatma Ranade has frequently remonstrated with them for their faults of exaggeration.

[WALSH *makes a movement of disgust.*]

GREGORY: Thorp, what's the root trouble? Has your fraternising with Indians taught you what it is? Can't you help us?

WALSH: What is it that makes them all—even the apparently sanest—into howling dervishes these days? Why do they slang every blessed thing we do, and reject every advance?

THORP: They feel that Government has never made atonement.

WALSH (*unable to believe he has heard aright*): Never—made—what?

THORP: And the British nation has never made atonement.

WALSH: What the devil *should* we make atonement for? For pulling them out of a hole and putting them on their own legs?

THORP: If that's all you can see, then you

haven't got within a hundred miles of guessing what Indians feel.

WALSH: You're not going to drag me back into some eighteenth-century nonsense, of what Clive or Hastings did, are you? Good Lord, are the Indians like the Irish, still blathering about some Battle of the Boyne or Cromwell business?

THORP: No. We needn't trouble about Clive. But you've got to go a bit farther back than you may think. Remember, *we've* written the histories—or what we choose to call histories. But the Indians have kept the memories. The minds will beat the books, when it comes to a question of longevity.

GREGORY: Come where we can get you. Keep to recent history—what we all know.

THORP: Then—there's Amritsar still unatoned for.

WALSH: They've had the Hunter Commission. That condemned Amritsar right enough, didn't it? What more do they want?

THORP: What more? What more? (*Indignantly.*) You have a tepid, watered-down *Report*——

WALSH: That's what they choose to call it.

THORP: A *Report* that faintly says that certain actions went a bit too far——

GREGORY: Come now, it did more than that.

WALSH: If you knew anything about these things, you'd realise it did about as much as *could* be done in the circumstances. (*Turning to* GREGORY.) A sight more than *I* ever expected it would do!

THORP: *I* do know that. It is that fact that seems to me to condemn the whole situation. If we had any moral sense as a nation, we'd refuse to let such a situation exist a day longer. (*He looks at* GREGORY.)

GREGORY (*defensively*): I don't pretend the *Report* was good enough. But it really was something.

THORP: Indians don't think so. They feel they have to supply the money for the pensions of men who've trampled on them. And they see that no one has been punished. No one ever does get punished. No one was punished for those Moplahs who were asphyxiated in a railway van. Indians say that, whatever is done to them, nothing will ever happen—so long as the offender is of a fairly high position.

Are they wrong?

GREGORY: Yes. I'm not going to accept *that* as a fair statement.

THORP: I appeal to Walsh. Walsh, are they wrong?

WALSH: I don't see how it can be helped. You can't let a man down when he's been in the devil of a hole and had to act anyhow with any weapon that came to hand. Thank God you'll never be in such a hole, Thorp.

THORP: Precisely. It can't be helped, so long as you have one race ruling another. You've got to uphold what you call the prestige of Government. And that means——

WALSH: Periodical orders for gallons of whitewash. *Of course.* Would you rather see India dyed red? It's the very best whitewash, as supplied to Governments everywhere.

THORP: Suppose there was a riot in some Indian village to-day, and the local official lost his head and hanged a lot of people, what would happen? Nothing.

WALSH: Yes, it would. He'd be broken. He'd have to retire.

THORP: On pension, of course.

WALSH: Of course. You can't take a man's legal rights from him.

THORP (*furious*): But he ought to be hanged! Not simply retired on pension!

WALSH: He couldn't be hanged.

THORP: They hanged a British Governor, a century ago, for giving a flogging order which

resulted in the death of a British soldier. But to-day—when an officer in Ireland executed people without trial, he was officially found mad. No one dreamed of questioning his sanity till it seemed as if his neck ought to be in danger.

And there'd be no real redress here. Even if he had to go, there'd be an agitation against the injustice of punishing or even censuring a man who had acted in perfect sincerity, and whose fine promptitude——

WALSH: Stern justice—that's the name the papers always give it.

THORP:—had saved India from another Mutiny. And our ladies would canvass the hill stations and picket the clubs, and make every man subscribe to a fund to show their gratitude.

GREGORY: All the same, it's no joke being the one man on the spot who's got the job of putting the first sparks out. Suppose that Amritsar mob——

THORP (*with contemptuous anger*): Suppose anything you like. We know what *did* happen.

You wouldn't trouble to suppose these things if it were a matter of Japanese killing Koreans —or Americans killing Haitians—or Germans killing Herreros.

GREGORY (*feebly*): I'm only trying to make you realise that we've got to see the other side's case.

THORP: Try to see the Indians' case, then.

GREGORY: Do you think I *don't* see it?

THORP: Yes. If you did, you wouldn't make a debating-club matter of it.

GREGORY: Thorp, don't you consider me pro-Indian?

THORP (*sadly*): We don't know what to make of you, Gregory. We used to hope at one time that you were going to be.

GREGORY: *We* means Indians, I suppose?

THORP: Yes. They used to look to you.

GREGORY: And now they've been rather disappointed in me?

THORP: Frankly, yes.

GREGORY: With regard to Amritsar——

THORP (*impatiently*): Oh, Amritsar's nothing. Merely the latest example of what's always been going on. I'm sick of Amritsar.

Of course, Indians recognise that you said some helpful things about it. But even then you seemed to be balancing things. You seemed to think it was just a question of which side had

taken more life, and, since it was the British, you decided to blame them.

GREGORY: Then I didn't maké myself clear. I was trying to look beyond these present troubles.

THORP: Of course. It's easy for an Englishman to do that. These present troubles are usually troubles that he manages to put on to other people. Like taking up "the white man's burden." The white man generally hands that job on to a coolie. *I've* never seen any white man take up a burden in this country.

WALSH: I didn't know Mr. Thorp had a gift of epigram. All this part of soul-force?

THORP: No. Forgive me, Gregory. But I lose my temper when I hear Englishmen advising Indians to have patience, as you do. You think I don't criticise their faults enough. But that's because I see their point of view. When you're wretched, the only thing to do is to concentrate on getting out of that state. Philosophise afterwards.

GREGORY: That's bad doctrine, my friend. It means you do a heap of things that you know aren't straight, simply because they embarrass what you choose to call the enemy. All's fair in war—even to the use of poison-gas and lying propaganda!

THORP: Both sides used them.

GREGORY: Yes; and I'm not sure that we haven't lost the War because we used them. And I'm not sure that you Indian extremists aren't losing *your* war in the same way. Gandhi would have won if he hadn't backed up all that Khilafat business. When you slang me, and others who think like me, because we don't support you, forget Amritsar and remember your side's campaign of lying and mean misrepresentation.

THORP: Are you fair? Has any nation ever fought for freedom with absolutely clean hands?

GREGORY (*ignoring his interruption*): It's all propaganda, propaganda. Just lies, lies, lies, all the way round and everywhere. Our histories of India are propaganda. Our histories of England are propaganda. The histories they read in France and America, that they read in every country, are propaganda. Lies, lies, I tell you, Thorp. (*He rises in his excitement.*) And you people are lying as hard as we are. No, harder. Much harder, because you can't afford to be just. And I'm sick of it all. I tell you, I won't join either party. I want truth, I want justice, I want the kind of impartial summation that——

WALSH: That you'll get at the Day of Judg-

ment, my boy, and not a day sooner. I've never seen old Greg so worked up before.

GREGORY: I'll die before I support a party when I think it in the wrong.

THORP: But we're right in the main. Isn't there something in your heart of hearts that tells you that?

GREGORY: You know there is. It's shouting, simply shouting, night and day. That's why I sometimes feel as if I almost hated you people. Why haven't you made it possible for me to fight on your side? Oh, *why* has one got to go into such squalid company if one takes the right side? I know now why decent people wouldn't join the Early Christians. Haven't I seen our own conscientious objectors? Don't I know our own Christian Indians out here? No wonder decent Hindus don't want to be mixed up with them!

WALSH: Gregory, Gregory! What have the Early Christians got to do——

GREGORY: How was the decent Roman—or Greek—or Jew—to get past the swarm of hysterical, defiant, cringing slaves, with their silly excitements and their "inferiority complexes," and see a St. Paul? Or how is one to get past your venomous, cowardly, lying journalists and your double-faced pleaders and your

babyish and treacherous students, and see a Gandhi?

THORP: Yet the slaves were right, and the decent, self-controlled Roman philosopher was wrong.

GREGORY: Yes. And your army of skunks and rabbits are right—in the main. And the decent, straight conscientious English official is wrong. I wish I could get it out of my heart that one ought to be a gentleman. Then I'd go where my instinct tells me the future is going to say the right lay—and it wouldn't worry me to know that the man on my right was a liar and the one on my left a coward.

(*More gently.*) Tell me, Thorp, how did *you* get over it? Was it hard?

THORP: Yes.

GREGORY: But you did it. You had farther to go than I should have, too. I can remember when you wouldn't have touched me, a Baptist, with a ten-yard pole. You thought all my crowd were illiterate and envious—wanted to lay hands on Holy Church's possessions, and objected to singing *God Save the King.* And now you travel in the same compartment with sweepers; and you think idolatry's quite a respectable sort of soul-expression. Tell us how it happened.

THORP: I can't. You'd both think me a fool —as you do now. Only more so. The worst kind of fool—a sentimental fool.

GREGORY: Take the risk.

THORP: I'm not sure that I know. It was a slow business. But I can remember one or two things that helped it along.

(*Smiling.*) Gregory's told you that I used to be a very different fellow. I suppose I *was* what he would call a bit spiky.

GREGORY: A bit? You were a bristling hedgehog. When we were both chaplains to that Dacca Concentration Camp, you used to address all your chits to me to *Mr.* Thomas Gregory. Never *Reverend,* mind you—I was a Baptist, you see. And not *Esquire,* even, because a Baptist couldn't be considered a gentleman.

THORP (*with conviction*): I was a narrow-minded ass, with the manners of a swine. You were very decent about things, Gregory.

GREGORY (*complacently*): I think I was, on the whole.

THORP: I was pretty well pleased with myself, in those days. I was proud of my 'Varsity record. I was proud of my old school—I am now. (*Almost to himself.*) I wish I could think they were proud of me. They had a reunion at Simla last month. I didn't go. I was

notified that most of the fellows would rather that I didn't.

I was proud that I was a missionary, and didn't belong to the Ecclesiastical Establishment. I really was keen on mediating between my own race and Indians—I thought of that as a missionary's job and privilege.

WALSH: There was nothing wrong in that. I don't pretend to be a religious fellow myself, but I've met missionaries I thought were jolly useful.

THORP: Well, that's how it began. As Gregory's hinted, I was a lot friendlier with the heathen than with my brother Christians. I tried living as an Indian—but it didn't work.

WALSH: You mean you couldn't stand it? Knocked you up?

THORP: Oh, not as badly as all that. I do it always now, and I'm better than I ever was. No, it was my character that got knocked up.

GREGORY: I remember telling Williamson how fine we all thought it. "Do you?" he said. "Try living with him after he comes back after a bout of being Indian. He picks up all sorts of beastly scabs and itches, and gets his digestion messed up with their foods, and he's as savage as a wolf for weeks at a time. I've known several saints like that. I hope we get no more in our Mission."

THORP (*smiling*): It *was* hard on Williamson. It's no use wearing Indian dress, if you haven't got the Indian spirit. I was very much of the saheb in those days.

It didn't impress the heathen, either. Though I gave myself acute discomfort, they beat me easily when I played the ascetic. There was a holy man at Gaya who'd been lying on six-inch nails for a dozen years. I went to talk to him, as one sadhu to another. But he simply spat, and told a disciple to warn me not to come any nearer, lest my shadow pollute him. I was sick about that.

WALSH: His behaviour seems to have been a bit discourteous.

THORP: Still, I made friendships with leading Indians. They used to flatter me a lot, and tell me I was the only European who really understood them.

GREGORY: I know. They've told me the same. I used to believe them.

WALSH: Flattery's their way of bribing us. There are Englishmen who'd knock you down if you offered them a king's ransom, however tactfully and privately you did it; but they'll eat out of your hand if you'll listen in an awed, impressed manner to their yarns about their shooting or their golf. My office know that I secretly fancy my tennis a bit; and a request for

leave always starts with a deeply respectful inquiry about my opinion as to net-play.

THORP: I made rather a reputation as a man who had influence with Indians and who knew the Indian view. High officials used to consult me. When I went to Simla, I always stayed at Viceregal Lodge—I was at school with the Viceroy, you know. I was proud to think that I had a foot in each camp.

WALSH: I'm beginning to understand. You had to choose between them in the end.

THORP: One always has to. Why isn't life easier? Why isn't it honester? If rebellion came here, you might have to arrest me—shoot me, perhaps. Yet a big part of your sympathy is in my camp, just as a part of mine still is in yours.

GREGORY (*anxiously*): But you haven't gone clean over, Thorp. You're still a Christian, for example.

THORP: Of course I'm a Christian. Christianity is the only teaching so absolutely confused and contradictory that it fits life.

GREGORY: Confused and contradictory?

THORP: Haven't your own words shown that, just now? Doubles back on itself and contradicts itself. So does life. "He that is not against us is for us." The time has been when that was true—when we could reckon such a

man as you, Gregory, with your cautious anxiety always to be sure that your big right didn't anywhere involve any small wrong—yes, we could reckon you as a friend, even an ally. That time may come again, but it's gone for the present. It's now, "He that is not for us is against us."

(*Almost despairingly.*) In the old days, everything was so simple. There were the Church's sacraments and means of grace—the ordained clergy—straightforward commandments which only needed to be expressed in up-to-date slang and dressed up with a bit of second-hand psychologising. Just a good, straight-ahead motor-road. I was on that road.

WALSH (*sympathetically — nodding his head*): No one but a mental deficient or a moral pervert would have chosen a jungly side-track, as old Greg seemingly did.

THORP (*smiling*): That's what I felt. But I'm pretty sure that *I* shan't see any sort of high road again, for this incarnation. (*To himself.*) I fancy Christ picked His way through swamps and jungles often enough, in Galilee.

GREGORY: How long did it take you to find all this out?

THORP: Years. No, it didn't. Do you remember my little book on *The Permanent Value of Aryan Culture?*

GREGORY (*with enthusiasm*): Rather. A ripping little thing. If you'd only kept to that tack now! They use it in Mission Study circles all over the world.

THORP (*smiling wanly*): Do they? With Slack's *Challenge of the Age* and Hewitt's *Passion for Souls*, I suppose. Spiritual massage for flaccid limbs. (*Ferociously.*) What a treble-damned fool I was in those days, Gregory! Excuse my swearing, Walsh. I never do it about anything but myself.

WALSH: That's quite all right. It's the next best thing to kicking oneself, which one can't do adequately. I'm going to finish by liking you, Thorp.

GREGORY (*protestingly*): But it's a grand little book. It's broad-minded—but not *too* broad-minded. It's really and deeply sympathetic with Indians, yet on the whole sees their faults very clearly.

THORP: So Indians seem to think. Prakash Singh, to whom I dedicated it, was the man I regarded as about my best friend. I thought my relations with him were as safe as with anyone on the planet.

GREGORY: He ought to have been jolly bucked over the Dedication.

THORP: He refused to acknowledge it. When

I realised something was wrong, I called on him. I had a job even to get to see him. When I did, I found him white with fury. He said I seemed to take it for granted that I was entitled to talk to Indians as if they were a class I was instructing for confirmation. I don't know where he got hold of the idea of using that comparison. But it hurt. (*Smiling.*) There seemed to me something wrong, at that time, in an Indian being contemptuous of a saheb—especially a saheb who was well-meaning and thought he had been generous and helpful.

WALSH: I'd like to have known Brother Prakash. I've felt the same, when I've read a kindly book by an American lady, rebuking England for her sins and begging her to be more worthy of working, under America's supervision, for the moral uplift of the world.

GREGORY: Yes, we religious and moral folk are a pretty trying lot. Manners and a sense of humour aren't our long suits. I must look into your book again, Thorp. Evidently my own sense of decency needs a bit of refurbishing.

THORP: There was another thing that happened, too. You know, when one reads of patriots, one always thinks of men—oh, you know—very unlike those we meet every day. *All* the right is on their side—and they're so free from meanness and cowardice and self-seeking.

WALSH: Whereas, when you come close to them, you find them singularly like brigands and mendicants.

THORP (*startled*): How did you know?

WALSH: Used to mix with them myself. When I was in Calcutta, my first two years, I joined a sort of East and West Club. I was very keen on bridging the gulf in those days. Used to read Laurence Hope and Edwin Arnold—corresponded with Mrs. Besant, at one time. But somehow I didn't seem to meet the best Indians. At least, it's to be hoped they weren't the best. I've got some clerks in my office who are a sight better chaps, though of course I wouldn't dream of asking them to tea or dinner, even if they were willing to come. We just take the gulf for granted—we gaze at each other across it, and rather like each other.

Go on about your brigands and mendicants. You can't tell us anything about them that will surprise us.

THORP: Do you know Lady Milligan? A charming woman, one of the most charming women in India, but—*hard.*

WALSH: Many of our women get like that, Thorp. India's a devilish life for them. We may have to clear out to save *their* souls, if not our own. She *was* hard—but as pretty as a picture.

THORP: I was riding with her at Darjiling once, on the Chowrasta, when we went by a whole gang of Indians I knew—briefless pleaders and ex-students, loafers who pretended to be patriots. No, I'm ungenerous—they *did* care, of course. We've come to a time when practically every Indian is secretly crazy for *swaraj*.

WALSH: Afraid so. The Devil knows there are precious few genuine loyalists. You can hear this particular bee humming in pretty well every bonnet, if you listen for it.

THORP: Anyway, these fellows were—well, what we have made Indians. You can see for yourself every day.

GREGORY: Why *we?*

THORP: Well, centuries of servitude—in Bengal, at least. I'll admit we're responsible for only the last century and a half. But this lot were a pretty depressing set.

WALSH: Don't describe them. We know. They opened their betel-stained jaws, and gave you a great, ghastly, crimson leer of recognition.

THORP: They did. They hailed me with needless vociferousness. "Mr. Thorp, how are *you?* When shall we see you again, for a long talk?" They were only too pleased to show that they were friendly with a saheb who was

riding with a Member of Council's lady. And she was just mad. She turned and gave me a freezing look. "You pick up strange friends, Mr. Thorp." And I was mad, too; and I said, "Oh, they've heard my name somewhere." "Evidently," she said; "fairly often, I should say." At breakfast afterwards she said: "We met some of Mr. Thorp's queer friends on the Chowrasta." And I said, "They weren't my friends. I don't know who they were."

WALSH: Well, I don't know that *I* should consider folk friends who showed their affection in that fashion.

THORP: That doesn't let me off. I've done atonement for that lie many a time. Whenever I get impatient over the way some Indians are led occasionally into exaggeration, I think of their centuries of serfdom and fear; and I remember *my* lie because of my fear. Fear of what? Of a pretty woman's annoyance! Merely that!

WALSH: Merely that! My friend, that's a fear which causes more lying and prevarication than any other fear, since the Holy Inquisition gave up practice.

THORP: What Gregory said just now reminded me of it; and I came nearer forgiving him for what I've always thought his disloyalty to the cause of freedom, than I ever did before.

WALSH: What Gregory said?

THORP: He was speaking of the excuse the Roman official had for despising the Early Christians. There always *is* an excuse—but that doesn't excuse us. "He that denieth Me before men, him will I deny before My Father which is in heaven."

WALSH: That's rather a far-fetched inference, isn't it? You're overstrained, Thorp. You've been worrying over political matters too much and too long. Laugh at them, as I do.

THORP: Why not speak out what you think? Say that I'm mad.

WALSH (*evasively*): Every man over thirty-five who's worth anything is mad. All I should say is that your madness has taken a morbid, unfortunate turn.

GREGORY: Why not come and live with your own countrymen again for a bit, Thorp? You've got everything out of perspective. It isn't natural. You were born an Englishman, and were meant to live with Englishmen. You can go back to Indians again. Only rest your mind for a while.

THORP: I can't. This is my way now—to the end. You think I'm making a fuss about very little. People have always thought that about every fuss. Gregory got it just now, when he

spoke of the difficulty of getting past the mass of followers—who, after all, are just common clay like ourselves, and can't be expected to be saints or heroes—and seeing a St. Paul or a Gandhi.

WALSH: Thorp, Thorp, Thorp! Now why on earth——

THORP (*in a lower tone*): We never think those words apply to us—"He that denieth Me." We imagine a grand, brave figure facing his enemies—a man with the double fire of genius and of saintliness in his eyes—and then we imagine ourselves springing forward, and defying anyone to say a word against him. But it doesn't happen so—at least, not once in ten thousand times. Usually it's negroes singing hymns and chicken-stealing—or it's illiterate and bigoted village Nonconformists—or rabbit-brained High Church idiots—or envious, half-educated Bengali oafs. These keep the *idea*, which is what matters—the bread by which the generations live. But the treasure's in earthen vessels, truly; and the vessels are rarely decently clean.

WALSH: Thorp, now I *know* you're mad. Dangerously mad. Or else drunk.

THORP: No, I'm not. "Not many wise, not many mighty——"

WALSH: Yes, but it's nowhere said, "Blessed

are the skunks, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

THORP (*very earnestly*): It's only our fine gentlemanliness that thinks they are skunks. I've been telling you how I used to feel. God forgive me! for a moment I almost thought I felt that way still. But it was all a hideous mistake. I've got to know them now, and I can see how utterly I used to misunderstand Indians. I've been doing atonement daily for my cruel injustice to them.

WALSH (*half impatiently*): Atonement be damned! Why are you havering about atonement all the time?

THORP: Because England hasn't ever done it to India; and she has got to do it. That's what they all feel. England has got to repent for all her injustice. Then there will be peace.

[*Footsteps and voices are heard inside the house. The purdah at the back is suddenly pushed aside, and* MRS. GREGORY *enters with an Indian Sub-Inspector of Police, who salutes* WALSH *and* GREGORY.

MRS. GREGORY: Tom! Mr. Lomax——

WALSH, GREGORY (*together*): Lomax? Lomax? What's the news from Lomax?

MRS. GREGORY: He has been murdered at Khantihar!

WALSH, GREGORY (*together*): Lomax murdered!

SUB-INSPECTOR: They have burnt down the dispensary and police-station, sir. The mob is in possession of Khantihar.

WALSH: Where is Mr. Lomax's body?

SUB-INSPECTOR: They poured kerosene oil on it, and burnt it with the chairs and the benches of the dispensary.

WALSH: I take executive charge. Sub-Inspector, let the armed police assemble here, in front of this house—as quickly as you can. Leave a guard with Mrs. Gregory; or send one, if you have no police here.

MRS. GREGORY (*she is very quiet and self-possessed*): There is no need. I am going round to spend the night with Mrs. Lomax. She is alone.

WALSH: Send the guard round there, then.

SUB-INSPECTOR (*saluting*): Yes, sir.

[*Exit.*

THORP: One moment. Before there is any more bloodshed, would it not be well for me to speak to the people?

WALSH (*with cold fury*): Take my advice, and just drop out of this picture. Why the devil did you ever come here—you and your Mahat-

majee, crazing a mob who were blood-mad already?

I'll see that someone swings for killing Lomax, if I have to do it with my own hands.

THORP (*persistent*): If I can get Mr. Ranade to use his influence with the people——

WALSH (*by a tremendous effort controlling himself—ignoring* THORP): Gregory, you and Max are the only volunteers in this station. Send Max a chit, that's a good fellow. You know the signwords—*Verb sap.* Or *sap.* by itself is enough. "*Sap.* College House." Then we'll have him round here, with his rifle, in twenty minutes.

MRS. GREGORY: *I'll* send, Mr. Walsh.

WALSH: Will you, really? Thanks awfully, Mrs. Gregory.

[MRS. GREGORY *goes out.*

I'll go and get my gun, and see that the car's all right. [*Exit.*

[*There is the sound of a car being started outside.* GREGORY *goes over to a corner, and takes up a rifle. He begins to clean it with a pull-through.* THORP *is standing about aimlessly, miserable.*

GREGORY (*looking down the muzzle of his rifle*): I can't help it, Thorp, honestly. We're just Englishmen now, and we've got to do our job.

CURTAIN.

ACT III

ACT III

The bazaar at Khantihar; a side street. At the back of the stage, a Narasingha—"Man-Lion" —incarnation of VISHNU, *in plaster; a seated figure twenty feet high, with hideous open jaws, lined with huge teeth. The figure of an Englishman lies across its knees; its claws are ripping up his bowels. At the base of the image are conventional figures grouped about it: a cow and a Hindu peasant with palms together in adoration of it, a woman representing India, and figures of* MAHATMA GANDHI *and the* ALI BROTHERS *signifying the Hindu-Mohammadan rapprochement.*

It is night, and very dark; after ten o'clock. Before the Narasingha are standing WALSH, GREGORY, HORTON, *the* SUB-INSPECTOR *and half a dozen police. All have rifles; several of the police have lanterns.* WALSH *and* GREGORY *are in the evening dress they were wearing in Act II. The police have charge of an Indian whose hands are chained.*

WALSH: No need for any more firing, I think, Sub-Inspector. The mob seems pretty well dispersed. Only keep an eye open.

GREGORY: I think we've settled the matter.

It's a ghastly business, at best. It's been done as cheaply as we could hope.

WALSH (*dazed—rests his head on his hand*): Anyway, they asked for trouble. Any of our men hurt, Sub-Inspector?

SUB-INSPECTOR: Constable Hiralal Singh has been severely wounded by a large stone, sir. A woman dropped it on his head, from a house in the bazaar.

WALSH: What have you done with him?

SUB-INSPECTOR: He is over there, sir. (*Indicates recumbent figure.*)

WALSH (*going over to him and examining him*): He'll get all right. Bad luck, though. Why can't the women keep out of these messes?

BASANTA CHATTERJEE (*the Indian prisoner*): Do *your* women keep out of them?

WALSH: Eh, what? I'd forgotten about you, my friend.

[*He turns to the Indian, and opens his electric torch on him.* CHATTERJEE *is a Bengali of about* WALSH'S *age; about* WALSH'S *height, too, spare and slender. He has dark, glittering eyes.*

CHATTERJEE: Who writes the bitterest letters in your papers? Who collected the Amritsar blood-money?

WALSH: Who collects the money for missions, the pictures to sell at church bazaars, the old clothes for jumble sales? Bless me, you don't suppose our men have time for this kind of work, do you?

Sub-Inspector, what do you reckon the total casualties at? What would *you* say, Gregory?

GREGORY: Eight or nine killed—perhaps a dozen. Six times as many wounded?

SUB-INSPECTOR: I think Mr. Gregory is right, sir.

WALSH (*almost as if talking to himself*): I don't see how we could help it. They'd have swept us down if we'd hesitated. And then it would have been just a deluge of murder slopping over the whole province. And, if once the European community had got out of hand——

(*Almost appealingly.*) Sub-Inspector, don't you see I was really holding my own people back as much as yours? It had to be done.

SUB-INSPECTOR: Yes, sir.

WALSH: Two tides of savagery rushing up, and I had to hold the only gate. I couldn't help it.

Did you see whom we killed?

SUB-INSPECTOR: They were mostly men, sir.

WALSH: Mostly men! But not all!

SUB-INSPECTOR: You could not help it, sir.

WALSH: Any children?

GREGORY: Chuck it, Walsh, that's a good fellow. We've done it now, and it had to be done. *Of course* there were children. You don't send bullets ricochetting down narrow lanes without a few spraying into places where there are children. There were kiddies with the mob, too. I want to forget it.

(*Putting a hand on* WALSH's *shoulder.*) You had to do it, old man; and you did it well. I'll take over now. You rest a bit. Here, sit down. (*He indicates the coping of a well.*)

WALSH (*sitting down*): Thanks. (*He rests his head in his hands.*) Just for five minutes.

HORTON: I say, Gregory.

GREGORY: Hullo, Max!

HORTON: Do you think it's quite safe here? Right in the midst of the bazaar? Couldn't they rush us from the side streets?

WALSH (*thickly*): We're not going to kill any more, even if it isn't. Anyone can have *my* blood, who wants it.

GREGORY (*to* HORTON): Don't worry, old boy. Safe as houses.

HORTON: But these side streets?

GREGORY: Empty; and will remain empty. Once it's dispersed, an Indian mob doesn't reassemble.

WALSH: We'll have no more killing.

HORTON: There'll be no need for any more killing, if we go where they'll leave us alone.

GREGORY: They'll leave us alone, Max. By now the whole countryside is convinced that we're demons in human form. This time tomorrow we'll have killed a couple of thousand people, according to the Indian press. And they'll believe it.

WALSH (*rising*): Greg, I'm taking over again.

GREGORY: There's no need, Walsh. There's nothing doing. Just take it easy while we think out the next move.

WALSH: No, I must. We haven't finished our job yet. My head was a bit dizzy—smell of blood, I suppose. I often feel like that at a shoot. I'm all right again.

HORTON: I say, if we're really safe, oughtn't we to see to the poor devils who've been wounded? (*He looks to the* SUB-INSPECTOR *inquiringly.*)

SUB-INSPECTOR: That is not our work, sir.

WALSH: Yes, it is, Babu. An Englishman said that once before, and we can't afford to have it said again. But there's something else first. What's happened to Inayat Khan?

SUB-INSPECTOR: He is in that house over there, sir. Some of my constables are guarding it. He has no arms with him.

WALSH: Tell him to give himself up at once.

SUB-INSPECTOR (*saluting*): Yes, sir. Sir.

WALSH: What is it, Sub-Inspector?

SUB-INSPECTOR: Are we to arrest Nagen Babu too, sir? He is in the same house.

WALSH: Of course. Why the devil not?

SUB-INSPECTOR: He has always practised strictly non-violent non-co-operation, sir.

WALSH: If any man's in the picture, he is. He's founded and kept going a whole college of sedition.

[SUB-INSPECTOR *salutes, and goes out.* (*To* CHATTERJEE.) You've burnt your fingers at last, haven't you? What made *you* play the fool in this way? I suppose you couldn't manage to get a job?

HORTON: Chuck it, Walsh. It's all very well for you fellows with brains and a chance at the 'Varsity——

WALSH: What d'you mean, Max? He had those, right enough.

HORTON: Yes, but you had heaps of other pull, which he hadn't. I've been an under-dog, and I *know*. It's no joke finding that people don't think your brains are worth paying for.

It's a bit thick, insulting a man whose hands are tied.

WALSH: You're right, Max. I'm sorry, Chatterjee. But, you know, you *did* belong to my college, didn't you? It's hard to forgive a fellow who's disgraced your college.

CHATTERJEE: You choose to call it disgrace. Others call it honour.

WALSH: Yes, your own gang. Not decent people.

CHATTERJEE: That is, not your friends. But you English are not in God's judgment-seat, although you always assume that you are.

WALSH: Anyway, you've broken the law. You'll stand your trial for that.

CHATTERJEE: A law I had no share in making. A law I never accepted.

GREGORY: Then you don't accept the law that there is everywhere, against violence and murder.

CHATTERJEE: Who are you that speak to me?

GREGORY: My name's Gregory.

CHATTERJEE: The Principal of the Baptist Missionary College.

GREGORY: Yes.

CHATTERJEE: You are a padre, are you not? (GREGORY *nods.*) Have *you* not a law against violence and murder? Is *that* (*indicating* GREGORY's *rifle*) what you brought to preach to us with?

GREGORY: You do not understand. I was called out, being a volunteer, to help in suppressing disorder.

CHATTERJEE: Ah, then you were a volunteer? All these years you have been ready to shoot Indians down, as well as preach to them.

HORTON: I must say, Gregory, I had been wondering a bit about it myself.

WALSH: Practically every white man out here is a volunteer, Max. It may not be logical, but old Greg's been jolly useful to-day. This isn't a time when we can afford to split hairs.

CHATTERJEE: No. But only to shed blood.

WALSH (*turning on him fiercely*): Who started the blood-shedding?

CHATTERJEE: The English, long ago, when they forced their rule upon a country not theirs,

a country that never wanted them. How much blood has your Empire in India cost?

WALSH: Tens of thousands of our best lives, freely given.

CHATTERJEE: And millions of Indian lives. For every one of yours you have exacted a hundred from us.

[*Enter* SUB-INSPECTOR.

SUB-INSPECTOR: Sir, Inayat Khan says he will surrender if his life is guaranteed to him.

WALSH (*savagely*): Stands on terms, does he? Starts hell in a town where he has no earthly business; and then, when one of the best fellows that ever walked has his skull battered in, he wants to insist that he gets off scot-free himself! Tell him you'll hack his door down, and shoot him like a mad dog, if he doesn't come in without any more nonsense.

SUB-INSPECTOR: Yes, sir. And Nagen Babu, sir?

WALSH: Tell him the same. I can guarantee nothing. The matter won't be in my hands. They'll be sent up to sessions, of course. Thank God we haven't got martial law here!

[*Exit* SUB-INSPECTOR.

CHATTERJEE: Martial law or civil law, it is all the same. Tiger and tigress both drink blood.

WALSH: You think so, do you? Wait till martial law's proclaimed in some district where you are, and you have some damned fool of a brigadier and some equally damned fools of all ranks, from subaltern upwards, who all think that martial law's just a Heaven-sent device to enable them to string people up without trial.

CHATTERJEE: The trial merely legalises the murder. It does not make it not murder.

WALSH: No. It delays things. And it isn't easy to kill a man when you take time to think about it.

GREGORY (*who has been brooding*): I say, Chatterjee. About this rifle. I want to explain. When I came out here, I joined the Light Horse. I never thought about it. It was what everyone did, and it simply meant exercise and training, when otherwise you'd have been too slack to give it to yourself. I swear to you, I never dreamed it would come to being called out to shoot down Indians. Honestly, I didn't.

CHATTERJEE: I suppose you shoot in the jungles? Birds? Animals?

GREGORY: Yes, of course. I do a bit of that. But that's sport.

CHATTERJEE: I understand. You English cannot do without blood, even in peace time.

WALSH: Some of us manage to get along on precious little. I've hardly ever seen old Greg hit a thing. His shooting's like your cricket used

to be, Chatterjee. Both cases of strictly non-violent non-co-operation.

CHATTERJEE (*smiling unwillingly*): And *your* cricket?

WALSH: Not much better, I confess. (*To* GREGORY *and* HORTON.) We both used to turn out occasionally for the College second. Only when they were *very* hard-up. Used to be ferreted out at the last moment, when all hope had been abandoned.

CHATTERJEE (*smiling*): You do me an injustice. I was once included in the first draft.

WALSH: Ah, you had the advantage of being a dark horse when you came. But *my* form was rigidly assessed from the first. You see, the St. Peter's skipper came from my old school. It used to be a case of "Walsh, old man, I'm hoping for better things, of course, but—if the worst comes to the worst—you'll turn out this afternoon, won't you? We've got a game of sorts on, against the Littlemore Nonesuches or the Keble Unbelievables." And I'd say, "Hang it all, Billy, can't you get old Jabberjee?" And he'd say, "He's roped in already, and told off to run after the wicket-keeper's misses. So we'll probably need you to chase the balls at square-leg."

But I seem to remember you once hitting a four, Chatterjee?

CHATTERJEE (*brightening*): I did, against Teddy Hall. It was this way. They had quite a fast bowler—a *very* fast bowler—and I took my bat——(*Making to illustrate, he realises that his hands are chained together, and turns his face away, silent with mortification.*)

HORTON (*going up to him quickly*:) Don't take on about it, Chatterjee. Damn it all, Walsh, take these things off him!

WALSH: I can't, I'm afraid. But I'm sick about it, Chatterjee, really.

Oh, Gregory, I wish we could chuck this governing trade. Why is it you can't stay a gentleman, if you once start standing over other people?

[*Enter the* SUB-INSPECTOR *with* NAGEN, SARAT, *and* INAYAT KHAN, *guarded, the last handcuffed.*

GREGORY (*startled*): Halt! Who goes there?

SUB-INSPECTOR: Friend.

INAYAT KHAN: It should be *friends*. Plural.

WALSH: Ah, a pleasing sense of humour, even in misfortune. A merry heart doeth good like a medicine. Glad to find you cheerful, Mr. Khan.

[INAYAT KHAN *is led forward—a Mohammadan, bearded and fezzed. He is an old man, but vigorous and stalwart in the extreme.*

INAYAT KHAN: Oh, yes. Dogs pick up some of their master's merits, you know. Only some, of course. In this case, the Englishman's well-known cheerfulness in face of danger.

GREGORY (*borrowing a lantern from a constable, and swinging it round*): But what's this? What's Sarat Babu doing here? You've had nothing to do with this, Sarat Babu. Send him home, Walsh.

WALSH: Yes, get away home, Sarat Babu. How did you get here at all? I saw you in Mr. Gregory's study not an hour ago. Why, the man's been running!

SUB-INSPECTOR: He rushed up when I was arresting Nagen Babu, sir, and insisted on being arrested also. He is not a non-co-operator, sir. We know him. Mr. Gregory knows him. He is a very loyal servant of the Government.

WALSH: And I'm damned if I know how even Nagen Babu got here.

NAGEN (*triumphantly*): I cycled.

SARAT: And I ran all the way.

WALSH: Well, I wish you'd run all the way back. We don't want Sarat Babu, Sub-Inspector.

SARAT: But I am not going. I am now a non-co-operator.

WALSH: That doesn't in itself make you a

criminal, though it may show you're a fool. Get away home, man.

NAGEN (*exultantly*): He wishes to make atonement for his disloyalty to his country. Let him go to prison. It is right that we should all go to prison.

GREGORY: Go home, Sarat Babu. There's been rebellion and murder, and there's no call for decent citizens to be mixed up with it.

SARAT: Mr. Gregory, I refuse to go.

WALSH: Very well, then, damn you. Stay.

NAGEN: If Sarat Babu——

WALSH: Shut up, Nagen Babu. I want a few words with these learned Thebans here. If either you or Sarat Babu say another word, on my soul I'll—I'll—(*smiling grimly*)—release you both.

NAGEN (*earnestly*): Oh, sir, please do not.

WALSH: All right, you two be quiet then, and behave yourselves, if you want me to send you to jail.

GREGORY (*smiling sadly*): You've managed to get arrested at last, Nagen Babu. Now don't go and spoil a good chance!

SUB-INSPECTOR: Shall I march the prisoners in to Durgapur, sir?

GREGORY: Yes, hadn't we better be getting a move on?

HORTON: Walsh, we've got to do something for the wounded.

WALSH (*reminded*): Sub-Inspector! Take your men, and see that all the badly wounded are collected. Get the people to take them in, and tell them to send all expenses in to me.

SARAT: Never. No Indian grudges expense for the sick or unfortunate.

WALSH: You haven't seen bullets at work. I'm afraid some of the expenses will run high —I don't doubt people's willingness to give food and nursing.

INAYAT KHAN (*angrily*): You shall not insult us with your help! You murder us, and then offer money! No one will let you pollute our misery with your touch!

WALSH: Sub-Inspector, let it be known also that the Civil Surgeon will be here early tomorrow, for all wounded who cannot walk in to Durgapur.

SUB-INSPECTOR: Yes, sir. Sir!

WALSH: What is it, Sub-Inspector?

SUB-INSPECTOR: The people will not dare to come. They will think that, when he takes down their names, it is as evidence against them.

WALSH (*wearily*): Tell them Walsh Saheb is not a fool. I know that, when you fire down a street, you hit a lot of folk who simply happen to be there—or are there because they saw other people there. Tell them that the mere fact of his being wounded shall not be brought in as evidence against any single person. Haven't enough died already? Are others to die from lack of decent treatment?

They'll take my word, won't they, if you tell them *on the honour of Walsh Saheb?* (*As* SUB-INSPECTOR *seems to waver.*) All right, then. Tell them *on the honour of Gregory Saheb.*

SUB-INSPECTOR: Your name will be sufficient, sir. I will give Mr. Gregory's as well. Shall I not leave a guard with the prisoners?

WALSH: Their hands are tied, and we have guns. Isn't that humiliation enough for us?

SUB-INSPECTOR: But if they try to escape? Shall I fetter them?

WALSH: Not if they'll give me their word. Nagen Babu and Sarat Babu, you don't want to escape?

NAGEN (*beaming*): No, sir.

WALSH: And I don't care two pins if you do. Chatterjee? Inayat Khan?

INAYAT KHAN (*sullenly*): I will never give my word to an Englishman.

CHATTERJEE: Nor I.

WALSH: Then give it for old times' sake, Chatterjee. You see, if you should suddenly want to get away, I'd have no choice but to shoot you down.

INAYAT KHAN: We are prepared to die. Now or on the gallows, what odds? No one looks for mercy from the English.

WALSH: You may think you are prepared to die. But I'm not prepared to kill you—not now. I was half an hour ago.

Chatterjee, think for me a bit, as one gentleman for another.

CHATTERJEE (*in a low voice*): I give my word, Walsh.

WALSH: Thank you. (*He looks inquiringly at* INAYAT KHAN.)

INAYAT KHAN (*ferociously*): Never. Do what you like.

WALSH: Your own choice, then. Sub-Inspector! (*He points to* INAYAT KHAN, *whom a constable fetters.*) You can leave the keys with me, Sub-Inspector. And a lantern or two.

[SUB-INSPECTOR *salutes, gives up the keys, and goes out with his constables.*

Chatterjee, why on earth did you come messing yourself up with rebellion and murder?

INAYAT KHAN (*scornfully*): Rebellion! Murder!

WALSH: Yes, of as fine a fellow as ever worked for ungrateful curs and slaves. The reckoning for his death isn't done with. You'll stand your trial on a double capital charge—waging war against the King-Emperor and murder.

CHATTERJEE: It is not we who are guilty for the murder—as you call it—or what you choose to call rebellion. It is the English who created the situation which makes all normal existence one continued state of violence. Out of the passive violence the active violence is bound to spring sooner or later.

WALSH: You are too subtle for me. All I know is, you folk started the killing here.

INAYAT KHAN: You have taken lives for your one life, as you always do.

It is an act approved of God to kill His enemies. The English are the enemies of the whole human race. Let the English go. Then the violence that they have brought will go with them.

WALSH: We brought you the peace which you are now daily breaking.

NAGEN (*excitedly*): You offer us peace, to buy our souls with!

GREGORY (*impressively*): We offer you partnership in the Empire. India, before the non-co-operators came, was marching under Britain's guidance to prosperity. Peace, abundance, the world's markets—all this is yours with us. You are too weak to stand alone.

NAGEN: The kingdoms of the world and their lordship. Only fall down and worship me.

GREGORY: Nagen Babu——

NAGEN (*in an ecstatic chant*): If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat of the fat of the land. But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword. (*With surprising ferocity.*) For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

GREGORY (*surprised*): The Reforms were a genuine measure of self-government. You can't expect in a day what it took us centuries of slow evolution to get.

INAYAT KHAN: It took you only a day to take it from us. Then you can give it back in a day.

GREGORY (*persistent*): They were expressly stated to be only an instalment, to be followed by others.

CHATTERJEE (*in an ecstasy of rage*): Yes! And England was to be the judge, at each stage, if further self-government was due! India was to be a child with its kind, good nurse! India

—that was great and wise and civilised millenniums before your savage race was even heard of!

You bring us what you call a boon in your left hand and an insult in your right! Take your boon and insult back together!

WALSH (*angrily*): We're not going to enter upon a political wrangle with you. I remember your gift of argufying from of old. It's that that's led you into this mess.

(*Reminiscently.*) You made yourself rather notorious at the Union, didn't you?

CHATTERJEE (*furious*): I've done with you, Walsh.

WALSH (*with cold, restrained anger*): I remember now. A somewhat florid, flamboyant gift of speech. What was it the *Thames* said? "Mr Jabberjee—we beg his pardon, Mr. Chatterjee—but, after all, jabber and chatter are sufficiently alike to excuse our slip—enlivened the evening with the most unintentionally humorous speech of the session."

CHATTERJEE (*shouting*): You wrote that vile notice yourself!

HORTON: Chuck it, Walsh. It isn't playing the game. And it isn't funny.

WALSH: I won't chuck it. It's always been this people's particular way of making idiots

of themselves, and someone ought to point it out to them.

GREGORY: Stacks of people have pointed it out to them. Better drop it, Walsh.

INAYAT KHAN: Do not speak to him. We are prisoners and helpless, and he insults us.

CHATTERJEE: How was I to know that your wretched Union was just a sham and a joke and a humbug? I had read about England being the home of oratory, about Burke and Pitt and Sheridan and Gladstone—and I had read that many of your best speakers in the House of Commons first made their reputations at the Union——

WALSH: Yes, but not by your style of oratory. By airy persiflage.

CHATTERJEE: Airy persiflage, indeed! You laughed at us Indians for our seriousness. But let me tell you, you seemed to us like children, with your schoolboy style of wit—always trying to be funny! Raise a laugh, if you do nothing else! Show how smart you are! Why, the children in our primary schools are above that sort of thing!

WALSH (*reddening*): Come, you're too heavy about it. If you come to our schools and colleges, you must expect to be chaffed a bit.

CHATTERJEE: Yes! And all your jokes hurt. All your English jokes always have hurt. Your Norse ancestors used to throw the bones about when they'd finished feasting; and the flagons. And if they hurt a man, it was a great jest. And if his skull was cracked and he died, everyone swore it was the best thing they'd seen that year.

And you're still the same. Your bigger boys at what you call your public schools boast of tanning the little boys. Corporal punishment is your greatest jest.

Will you *never* understand why we hate you?

INAYAT KHAN: We are not being tried in your court. You have no right to question us and harass us.

GREGORY: You must drop it, Walsh. We'll march them in to Durgapur, as soon as the Sub-Inspector comes back.

WALSH: I'm sorry. I don't know what's happened to me. Something's snapped in my brain. It's a dark, miserable night. Gregory, what are we doing here?

GREGORY: We're waiting for the Sub-Inspector to come back. He's collecting the wounded.

HORTON: Just let Gregory take over, Walsh. You're beat to the wide, old man. You're done up.

WALSH: No, I remember now. There's a man here, Chatterjee, who was at St. Peter's with me. They ragged him a bit because his name sounded funny.

CHATTERJEE: Was it any funnier than Clutterbuck? Or Higginbotham? Both names sound funny to Indians.

HORTON: They *are* funny.

CHATTERJEE: When I rowed in our second boat one year, everyone thought it very witty to ask about our first boat, "Is that the St. Peter's boat that has a *white* man in it?"

WALSH: I know. It *was* pretty shabby. I can see that now, though I thought it a good joke at the time—I'm hanged if I know why.

GREGORY: I was looking through some old *Grantas* the other day, and yawning over things I once thought shriekingly funny and no end smart. Articles by men who've since made a big name—some of them.

WALSH: We've grown into old buffers, Greg. I don't even think it funny now if a chap calls an egg an albuminiferous oval destined to a gallinaceous future.

Look here, Chatterjee. I want to get to the bottom of this. I didn't write that notice in the *Thames*. Honour bright, I didn't. I don't know who did, and I don't know why I suddenly remembered it so well.

CHATTERJEE: You did not write it, though you remember it?

WALSH: No, I didn't. Now help me. You didn't hate England when you first came to Oxford?

CHATTERJEE: Hate it? I worshipped its name. I was prepared to find Paradise at Oxford.

WALSH: I'm sorry, Chatterjee.

NAGEN: Better to keep to your own country. Earthen pots should not go near iron pots.

INAYAT KHAN. Speak for yourself, Bengali. India has her own iron pots, as the English will find out.

CHATTERJEE: My people starved and scraped to pay my bills. I lived in the meanest lodgings I could find, with landladies who stole my tea and sugar, and who quarrelled with me over the amount of electric light they said I used. But nothing would have mattered if—— (*He hesitates.*)

WALSH: If what, Chatterjee?

CHATTERJEE: I thought I should find Oxford the home of universal culture, and meet people who were proud of our ancient Aryan culture, because England and India were so closely connected.

GREGORY: You didn't, of course. You wouldn't have succeeded at Cambridge, even.

CHATTERJEE: There was a society who called themselves the Eclectics. Their idea was to get all the world's poetry together, to see how it compared, and if there really were any universal standards. *You* came sometimes, Walsh!

WALSH (*evasively*): Oh, only very occasionally. I heard that you read to them once.

CHATTERJEE: It was after they'd read a lot of Richard le Gallienne and Swinburne. I recited a few *slokas* from the *Meghaduta*. I was going to translate them, and compare them with the English poetry, but I never had the chance, for everyone was doubled up with laughter. Then some idiots started to rag. A couple of fellows went over to the piano, and sang *The Massacre of Phairson*. After every stanza they made a noise like two badly hurt hyenas, and then assured the audience that "that's the Sanskrit chorus," instead of "that's the Gaelic chorus." (*Seeing* WALSH *and* GREGORY *smile.*) You men seem to think it all very amusing.

GREGORY: We're beginning to diagnose your case more accurately, Chatterjee, and it's not so bad as it seemed. You took things too seriously, you know. I'm not going to pretend that our public schools and 'Varsities are all right; but

you mustn't believe everything you hear against them. Just as there are boys—very decent chaps, many of them—who ought never to be sent away to school, so there are men who never ought to go to a 'Varsity. You had an unfortunate experience; but, you know, you *did* take things a bit hardly.

WALSH: All the same, that doesn't acquit us of damned bad manners.

HORTON: There's something wrong, too, if a lot of these chaps really start enthusiastic about the Empire and England, and we can't keep them so.

CHATTERJEE: That wasn't all. I thought I should find in Oxford sympathy with Indian aspirations.

WALSH: And, instead, you found it the most conservative hole in the three worlds.

GREGORY (*grinning*): You should have tried Cambridge.

CHATTERJEE: You Englishmen are never serious.

GREGORY: Oh, yes, we are. But we're not going to make heavy weather over the antics of a few boys. All the same, we're sorry you got the impression that your country wasn't taken seriously.

CHATTERJEE: Was it a wrong impression?

GREGORY (*uneasily*): Why, of course.

CHATTERJEE (*indignantly*): It was not. Walsh, you read poetry?

WALSH: Used to—a lot of it. Can't stick it now, at any price. Get the *London Mercury* regularly, but I don't pretend to understand the stuff they put in or why they put it in.

GREGORY: Walsh is a Philistine, Chatterjee. Ask Max here.

CHATTERJEE (*ignoring him*): Walsh, what's your impression of Indian poetry?

WALSH: Twaddle about cows and lotuses, mostly. I'm sorry, Chatterjee, but you asked for it.

CHATTERJEE: What have you read?

WALSH: Oh, Edwin Arnold. The usual stuff. You know.

CHATTERJEE (*with fervour*): I *do* know. Damn Edwin Arnold. Damn Lawrence Hope. Damn Rabindranath Tagore.

WALSH: Amen, amen, amen. Gregory, there's a commination service on. Give it your blessing. Chatterjee bids thee stand on a high mountain, and curse the tents of Midian.

HORTON: But Indian plays have often had a very good run in London.

CHATTERJEE (*derisively*): Yes! *Chu-chin-chow* plays. *Green Goddess* plays. Or plays with a young Englishman hero and harem scenes with a lot of girls singing love-songs and practising high-kicking.

GREGORY (*suddenly jovial*): Chatterjee's right. My hat! but we *are* asses, for a people who've had a huge Empire all these years!

[*To the amazement of the company, he suddenly throws his legs heavily round, and sings.*

I *do* love this English lad, I love and adore!
Dinky winky, yes, I do!
Seeing him, I love him more and more!
So—would—*yew!*

HORTON (*impressed*): By Jove, that *is* about it. Why don't you go in for writing revue, Gregory? You'd make a fortune at it.

WALSH (*judicially*): Yes, he's got quite a good hand at light verse, has old Greg. But *those* lines want a bit more snap, to make them really *go*. Or a very pretty girl to sing them.

Chatterjee looks quite cheered.

CHATTERJEE: I didn't know Englishmen could laugh at themselves.

GREGORY: Oh, yes, we can whiles. But, you know, Chatterjee, I've seen some of your own so-called comic plays in Calcutta, with their Englishman who does nothing but keep on saying, "Damn it! Damn it!"

WALSH: Honours even, gentlemen. Begin the next round.

CHATTERJEE: I never finished my Oxford course. I went to Germany. They took our Aryan culture seriously there. The professors, when they met me, would recite passages from the *Rig-Veda*——

WALSH: Ah, they'd get the gutturals better than we can.

CHATTERJEE (*smiling*): No. Worse, if anything. But I got my self-respect back. I felt I was treated as an equal. Even the students would ask me eagerly about Kalidasa and the Sanskrit drama and the court of Vikramaditya.

HORTON: You liked the Germans better, then?

CHATTERJEE: No. I mean, yes, of course I did.

INAYAT KHAN (*who has been listening in contemptuous silence—with a voice of thunder*): You mean *no*, my friend. You are false and a slave, as all Bengalis are. You would serve

the English if they would only give you a few flattering words.

CHATTERJEE: I hate the English as much as you do.

INAYAT KHAN: What does a child like you know of hating? In your secret heart of hearts you bow down before them.

GREGORY (*hastily—trying to bring the conversation back to less troubled waters*): You misunderstand things, Chatterjee. It isn't good form with us to be enthusiastic openly. But English scholars have given Indian culture a great deal of praise.

CHATTERJEE: Yes—as one praises a child. Praise; and slaps. That's how you treat India. Never as an equal. When people wanted to be generous to us at Oxford, it was always "How well you Indians learn to speak English!" It was never "How strong and deep the mind that produced your poetry and your philosophy and your polity!" It was always "How cleverly they pick up our ways!"

It's all because we are a "subject race"—"subject" in your histories, "subject" in your fiction, "subject" everywhere in your thought.

INAYAT KHAN: History or fiction, why distinguish? Both are the same when an Englishman writes of India.

CHATTERJEE: "Subject" even in the boys' stories that you read at school. You don't regard the Chinese so! Or the Japanese!

HORTON (*who has been thinking deeply*): Then you want self-government?

SARAT (*shouting*): *No!* Our self-respect back! Give it to us!

INAYAT KHAN: No! We will take it, and you shall pay the price. You have humiliated us, and we will humiliate you. India shall be saved by blood, as she has been subjugated by blood!

HORTON: You seem to have blood on the brain.

INAYAT KHAN: A blood-spot that can never be washed out but by English blood!

[*A new-comer has joined the circle, unobserved. He is a little man, in grey* khudder, *with collarless shirt open at the neck, and wearing a grey cap such as is usually worn only by Mohammadans. His face is pinched and thin, pale as after recent illness; his eyes seem all things at once—sad and burning, fanatical and dreamingly aloof. This is the world-famous* "MAHATMA" RANADE, *"the spinner of a nation's destiny." He comes forward, and speaks.*

MAHATMA RANADE: How can blood ever wash out blood?

NAGEN, SARAT (*together*): Mahatmajee! (*They make gestures of profound adoration.*)

WALSH (*startled*): How did *he* slip in?

SARAT (*ecstatically*): The Mahatmajee comes and goes at his will. No one can hinder.

WALSH: Mr. Ranade, you've come in time to see another mess made by your non-violent non-co-operation! (*Bitterly.*) But not in time to prevent it.

RANADE (*coming into the centre of the group*): An Englishman has been killed?

INAYAT KHAN (*contemptuously—he spits*): The foreign policeman.

WALSH: The man who was everyone's friend. Even the non-co-operators trusted him. He was gentle and patient and just.

NAGEN: Mr. Lomax was a very good man.

GREGORY: We never had serious trouble here —till these people came.

RANADE (*very sternly—to* CHATTERJEE): Why did you bring hatred here?

CHATTERJEE (*sullenly*): I did not bring hatred.

INAYAT KHAN: Stand aside, Mahatma Ranade. You have kept us from freedom too long, with your milk-and-water methods. Let the Indian lion rouse himself, and do battle with these demons for the mastery.

RANADE (*to* INAYAT KHAN): *You* brought hatred, too.

INAYAT KHAN (*facing him with a scowl*): Yes, I brought hatred. I set this country of cows and patient, burden-bearing bullocks in a blaze. They became tigers.

RANADE: You bring hatred wherever you come. Will you ever overcome sin by fighting it with its own weapons?

INAYAT KHAN: The hatred was here already. It is everywhere—waiting for a man's voice to awaken it.

CHATTERJEE: We did not bring the hatred.

RANADE: You brought pride—you brought vainglory and boasting. And where pride has first come, hatred follows. I have heard of your doings. You rode through the bazaar on an elephant, as if you were a conqueror; and you had musicians braying your praise before you. Were you a raja—or an official— that you should behave so?

INAYAT KHAN: He did it because he is a

Bengali. Flattery and praise are his grandfather and grandmother.

RANADE: Be silent. It is you who divide us —then the English rule. You are as deadly a traitor as he is.

Thus the people's minds were maddened. You should have prepared them for our way of purification by non-violent acceptance of suffering. Instead, you made them drunk with their own praise and their praise of you. (*To* INAYAT KHAN.) And into this seething wickedness you flung the torch of your hatred. An Englishman has been killed—and blood has followed blood. There is wailing in every hut of this poor village to-night. Upon whose head is the guilt of all this misery?

INAYAT KHAN (*pointing to* WALSH *and* GREGORY *and* HORTON): It is on his—and his —and his.

RANADE: Yes. But it is on yours also.

INAYAT KHAN (*shouting*): I can bear it. It is what I came for.

RANADE (*as if speaking to himself*): It is most of all on mine. Why did I not know that the minds of the people were not ready for this non-violent way of warfare? Always they will fail—and it will be blood, blood, blood, to the end. We should fast and pray and meditate—

perhaps for a whole generation, as the Israelites when they died in the wilderness, to get the marks of servitude out of their souls. Only then shall we be ready for a warfare so difficult as this.

Jesus Christ was wiser when He said, "*My kingdom is not of this world, else would My servants fight.*" They always will fight, if the kingdom is of this world.

THORP (*from without—calling*): Hul-lo! Gregory! Walsh!

GREGORY: Hullo, there! Who is it?

[THORP *enters, with a lantern.*

THORP: You here, then? I heard you were. (*Pointing to* RANADE.) It was this fellow I was looking for. He gave me the slip. It's lucky I had the lantern. (*His face darkens as he looks at* GREGORY.) How will you answer for this night's work? They tell me hundreds have been killed.

GREGORY: To-morrow they will tell you that it is thousands.

THORP: This is the end of your temporising and cowardice. You have filled an innocent village with death and maiming.

WALSH (*who has been as if stupefied—now coming forward, and addressing himself to* RANADE): I could do nothing else. Mr. Ranade,

listen to me. I am not a tyrant. Ask my clerks. Ask anyone in the district.

NAGEN: Mr. Walsh has always respected our customs and our feelings.

INAYAT KHAN: So long as they salaamed His Honour duly and paid in the taxes which provided for his greed, His Honour graciously returned the salaams.

WALSH: (*still to* RANADE): I was born an Englishman, as you were born an Indian. I did not start this business of ruling other people. I found the British Empire here when I was born. My people have always worked for it. It has been their life, their religion almost. My father, my grandfather, as far back as we know, we have been the Empire's servants.

NAGEN: My father loved Mr. Walsh's father.

INAYAT KHAN: Your father was a slave, as you are.

RANADE: No, he was a faithful son of his age. There was no talk of non-co-operation then. Evil had not shown its full face of hideousness, as it has done to us.

WALSH: Yes, and I loved your people. It was in my blood to love them—it is in my blood still. The Empire——

INAYAT KHAN: It squats in our holy land like a blood-drinking demon!

RANADE: Let the Englishman speak. An Englishman has died to-day.

INAYAT KHAN (*almost beside himself with indignation*): One Englishman! And scores of Indians!

GREGORY: Mr. Ranade, they have burnt to the ground the police-station here. They have burnt the dispensary where their own people were helped. If there had been Englishwomen, they would have murdered them. If there had been Christians, they would have murdered them, though their own flesh and blood.

RANADE: Tell me, did your friend die first? Who was it first flung the torch of anger into this village to-day? Was it he?

WALSH: No, no. Had he fired he would not have lost his own life. He tried to quiet matters without violence, as he always has done.

INAYAT KHAN: He lies to you.

RANADE (*turning on him sternly*): He does not. I know that an Englishman of his class speaks truth. It has happened again then, as it always does. Violence has stalked into the midst of peace, and has carried off a friend. Will you ever bring in freedom by your way of hatred? Now the souls of the people of this village are

enslaved by hatred till the generations which remember the slain have all passed away.

Mr. Walsh, I am weary of our men of war, of both sides. If you could set your wild men and our men together in an island, to exterminate each other, then I would say that violence for once was better than non-violence.

GREGORY: Let the editors fight, too. And the people who write to the papers. I'd mobilise the lot. Conscription for *Britisher, Old Soldier, One Who Did His Bit, One Who Has Served the Empire, Fair Play, Justice, Disgusted, Mother of a Soldier.* And no restrictions against their using any sort of poison-gas they chose. I'd beat up all the writers of stirring boys' yarns about war, and everyone who thinks a bayonet-charge must be rather jolly. What would be *your* contribution, Mr. Ranade?

RANADE (*smiling*): I'd send along a terribly fierce battalion of lawyers and schoolmasters and orators who are always talking in terms of warfare without having the slightest notion of what warfare really is.

GREGORY: People who, if an Englishman accidentally pushes against them in a football crowd, write to the papers that they were "most brutally assaulted" and "struck with the clenched fist repeatedly."

THORP (*rebukingly*): I think we are for-

getting that this village is full of dead and wounded.

RANADE: I wish it were possible to forget it for a few moments. It is because Englishmen and Indians never forget that we never make peace with each other.

INAYAT KHAN: Our sufferings are nothing to you! You are a dreamer! India to you is a game that is being played out on a chessboard, and the pieces are wood and cannot feel! Your ideas—you live for those! But they are not flesh and blood.

RANADE: Who are you that suddenly show such care for the wounded. They are but the small coins with which you pay for your gamble of hatred. So long as you could set this small place seething, you were willing that they should die.

(*More gently.*) They are being cared for by those who love them. I shall go to them when these Englishmen have gone.

CHATTERJEE: There would be no wounded, if the English had never come here.

GREGORY: I'm not so sure of that.

RANADE: You will never drive the English out with swords and guns. They are here, and it was God who sent them here; and they will be heard before they go.

Mr. Walsh, my friends have interrupted you. You are a gentleman, and will not misjudge an impatience which has such bitter reason. You have not said what was in your mind.

WALSH (*dejectedly*): Let it go, Mahatmajee. I think I had no choice but to act as I did. But I have shot down women and little children. I have no heart to defend myself.

CHATTERJEE: You hear, Mahatmajee. He admits he is blood-guilty.

(*To* WALSH.) Let Inayat Khan go, then.

WALSH: He is the man who brought murder here. If the law so decides, he shall hang.

INAYAT KHAN: And on the scaffold I will shout, "I killed an Englishman." And, as I enter Paradise, Gabriel and the Host will shout, "He killed an Englishman."

WALSH (*rushing forward*): You utter devil!

GREGORY: (*restraining him*) No, Walsh. Besides, he is fettered and chained.

WALSH (*to himself*): And an old man.

Mr. Ranade, judge for yourself who are the murderers in India to-day.

RANADE: Listen to him, then. Inayat Khan, tell him your story.

INAYAT KHAN: I will not speak before demons of that which is holy.

GREGORY: Is your hatred so holy, then?

INAYAT KHAN (*passionately*): It is my God. This, and not Allah, I have served and worshipped all my life.

RANADE (*authoritatively*): Nevertheless, tell him.

INAYAT KHAN (*after hesitation*): My father was a free man in Oudh. He had land, people loved him and served him. Your Lord Dalhousie stole all that land of Oudh.

WALSH: We know. He did not understand your customs.

INAYAT KHAN: Did not understand our customs! If a thief were brought before you, would you let the excuse pass that he did not understand the customs of the house he had robbed?

RANADE: Better hear him out, Mr. Walsh.

INAYAT KHAN: He stole Oudh. Then came our War of Independence—the Mutiny, as you call it. My father had been a havildar in your service; now he took his discharge and went home. A band of his own people who were fighting you settled on his fields and ate up his corn. (*He falters; then goes on with difficulty.*) A party of Englishmen came to his village on a *dour*.

HORTON: A what?

GREGORY: A raid.

INAYAT KHAN: The sepoys had fled. So they burnt the village, after shooting all they caught in the fields. They hanged others, and were going to hang my father when their leader stopped them. He said my father was the headman, and must be made an example; also that he was a deserter. So they took him back with them. (*He is silent.*)

RANADE (*very gently*): Go on. Let these Englishmen hear what is never told them in their books.

INAYAT KHAN: They killed him.

HORTON: After trial, of course.

INAYAT KHAN: What trial? Trial! Who had trial in those days? There were two boys who held a civilian commission with powers of life and death, and they were hanging all who were brought before them—no one escaped. And there was a military court. It was all the same, whichever you were sent before. It was the military court that condemned my father, and he was blown from a gun. There was an artillery officer who had nothing else to do but blow flesh and blood to pieces; and before what they called my father's trial one of the court told him: "Don't go off snipe-shooting to-day. We're

going to give you a bigger bird." It was just a jest to them, this matter of an innocent man's life! (*He is silent again.*)

RANADE (*in a low voice*): And the trial?

INAYAT KHAN: There was nothing to try. They simply said: "The rebels stayed on your land. You gave them hospitality. You have eaten our salt and served us. The court's sentence is that you be blown from a gun."

HORTON (*miserably*): Walsh! Gregory! It isn't true!

INAYAT KHAN: It *is* true. It was true thousands of times. You hanged and blew to pieces and burnt, and you called it righteous vengeance. Your books still call it righteous vengeance. They will lie about it till the Day of Judgment, when God puts you to shame.

HORTON: Gregory! Did those things happen?

GREGORY: Yes, Max.

HORTON: Why aren't they in our history books?

INAYAT KHAN: Where do you expect to find them? In *Deeds that Won the Empire?* Or *Britain's Fight for Justice?* Or in your *Boy's Own Paper* stories? *When Nicholson Kept the Border?* Who is going to tell these things?

HORTON: Indian writers?

INAYAT KHAN (*with a gesture of impatience and disgust*): Indian writers! (*Pointing to* WALSH.) Ask *him.*

WALSH: I'm afraid not, Max. We don't encourage Indians to tell these things.

GREGORY: They would be liable to lead to disaffection.

HORTON: Walsh! You must let that man go free.

WALSH: I wish to God I could, Max. But I can't.

INAYAT KHAN: I was a child at the time. We hid in the jungles because our home had been burnt to the ground. My mother died. Many of us died. (*He is silent.*)

I have lived and worked for the day when we shall see this whole land of India rise as one man, and shed your blood, as you have shed ours.

THORP: Blood, always blood. Each deed of murder becomes a devil that walks the world till it has drunk fresh blood. That deed of seventy years ago has drunk blood to-day.

GREGORY: To-day's deed will drink it again.

THORP: It has drunk it already, in the blood-spattered lanes of this miserable little village.

GREGORY (*as if to himself*): That man whom we wronged as a child will die on the gallows.

And then some company of devil-possessed fools will pass a resolution glorifying him as a martyr. Some boy will do again the deed that has been praised. And then——

WALSH (*breaking fiercely from his silence—to* INAYAT KHAN): Why did you come here, bringing your anger of seventy years? Half a dozen deeds such as to-day's, and we shall have it all over again—murder, and murder in return, hangings, shootings, blowings from guns.

GREGORY: Mahatmajee, is it never to end?

SARAT (*excitedly*): I warned you that Inayat Khan had a tale we dared not let ourselves hear. He has lit a fire in every Indian heart that is here—a fire of hatred and loathing.

NAGEN: A fire leaps in my veins. It is the dance of the dreadful goddess Kali, and she is crying out for blood.

GREGORY: Is there no way out, Mahatmajee?

RANADE: You should know. Are you not a Christian?

GREGORY: (*as he flings his rifle down*): With *that* in my hands!

RANADE: Yes, it will finish. For my own people I have another message. But to you, the Christian, I say this—it will finish when there are a thousand Christians in India.

GREGORY: You are mocking me! There are a thousand Christians many times over. In Tinevelli alone the C.M.S. have a communion of over two hundred thousand. In Hyderabad——

CHATTERJEE: Rice-Christians! Slaves, bought by their bellies' need.

HORTON: The Mahatmajee is laughing at you, Gregory.

RANADE: Then I must put it another way, Mr. Gregory. It will finish when atonement has been made.

GREGORY (*despairingly*): Atonement! When death has been exacted for death!

RANADE: No! Not that way. Murder's audit is never settled. *This* is atonement—when an Indian—or an Englishman—says: "I will *not.* Blood is due to me, but I will not exact it. I will pay the price myself." God is listening for that voice.

[*Enter the* SUB-INSPECTOR.

SUB-INSPECTOR (*to* WALSH—saluting): Sir, it is known that the Mahatmajee is in the village. The wounded beg that he may bless them, then they will recover.

RANADE: Friend, tell them I will come.

WALSH: Sub-Inspector, there is no real charge against Nagen Babu and Sarat Babu for this day's happenings.

SUB-INSPECTOR: None, sir.

WALSH (*pointing to* CHATTERJEE): How much money will you need to get witnesses to prove an alibi for him?

SUB-INSPECTOR: I do not understand, sir.

WALSH: I tell you, he shall not go to trial, if I can buy men to swear he was not here. A thousand rupees?

SUB-INSPECTOR (*speaking very slowly*): If Your Honour will pledge your word that there shall be no prosecutions for perjury, one hundred will suffice. With one hundred rupees I can get a dozen witnesses who will swear anything Your Honour commands.

WALSH: Only a hundred rupees?

SUB-INSPECTOR: The village is very poor, sir. There are men here who would sell their grandmothers for five rupees.

GREGORY: Walsh, you are fooling. You must not dream of such a thing.

CHATTERJEE: I will not have a false case got up about me.

NAGEN: We will all swear that he was here.

WALSH (*to* NAGEN): Fool! this is no child's play martyrdom, such as you dream of. War has been waged against the King-Emperor, a

Government servant has been murdered, Government buildings have been gutted.

Gregory, what was it that juries used to do in the last days of hanging for sheep-stealing? Against all evidence they used to bring the accused in *Not Guilty*—preferring perjury to murder.

GREGORY: You must not do it, Walsh.

RANADE: This is no way out, Mr. Walsh.

WALSH: Sub-Inspector, leave the matter till you return. Tell the wounded the Mahatma will come and bless them.

SUB-INSPECTOR (*saluting*): Yes, sir. [*Exit.*

WALSH (*flashing his electric torch full in the face of the Narasingha*): Mahatmajee, this thing has been standing over our lives for all this year! Is this the demon that has drunk blood to-day?

INAYAT KHAN: It is like the Image of your John Nicholson standing over Indian lives.

WALSH (*desperately—as if his thought were wings dashing against a wall*): Why did you begin with murder—to-day, or seventy years ago, it is no matter? We shall always beat you when it comes to massacre, as you should know by now.

SARAT (*hotly—pointing to the Narasingha*): Sir, you insult us. You do not understand. That is an allegory.

NAGEN: It is our religion.

RANADE (*sharply*): Do not use that word.

NAGEN (*unable to believe that he has heard aright*): That—word—re-li-gion?

RANADE: I hate it. Yes, I hate it. We set up in our midst an idol of racial hatred, and we call it religion. A mob goes mad and murders a helpless Englishman, and we call it patriotism. In war, they shoot a wretched boy at dawn, and call it military necessity. Men are hanged in hundreds, and it is called retribution. We have drugged ourselves into every kind of cruelty by giving it abstract names. Let us be awake at last. It is flesh and blood that suffer, it is men and women whose hearts are broken.

Mr. Walsh, this is not our religion. This shrine is the devil's, not God's.

WALSH (*like a man in a dream*): Mahatmajee! Tell me what to do.

RANADE: No man can tell another that.

WALSH: If I had been another half-hour late——

RANADE: A fire would have been lighted in this village which would have burnt throughout India. A fire that a hundred years would not have quenched. Is that what you would say?

WALSH: Yes. There would have been war. You have seen war?

RANADE: Yes, I have seen that kind of war. I saw it in Africa, in what your people called the Zulu Rebellion. My Indians there—— (*He is suddenly silent.*)

WALSH (*still like one talking in his sleep*): I am going to end the walking of one demon that has been drinking blood—drinking, and seeking blood, for seventy years. It has been incarnate in an old man who must go to the gallows.

(*To* INAYAT KHAN.) Tell me, is the blood-lust living in you still?

INAYAT KHAN (*in a low voice*): No. It has died.

WALSH: But, if we kill you, it will waken again. You killed Lomax?

INAYAT KHAN: I did. All my life, something within me has been seeking for blood. Yet, when I had killed him——

WALSH: Yes?

INAYAT KHAN: I wished him alive again. He pushed towards me angrily, and ordered me to give myself up. Then—I do not know what happened, but—I saw him lying at my feet.

CHATTERJEE (*in answer to* WALSH'S *look of inquiry*): You stunned him with your *lathi*.* Then the crowd stoned him to death.

* Club.

WALSH: And your hatred?

INAYAT KHAN: It is dead. I am an old man. Let me die; my work is finished.

WALSH: Old man, if I give you twenty-four hours, can you escape to some place where you can hide? Do not tell me where.

INAYAT KHAN (*startled—looking up*): I can go where no man will find me. Or, if he finds, he will not know me.

WALSH (*unlocking his chain and fetters*): Then—go! Chatterjee, you also. Twenty-four hours.

CHATTERJEE: What!

WALSH: There are cycles in the village; and carts. And midnight trains run from Gomoh, in either direction. Lomax's death shall not be reported till to-morrow night.
Shake hands, Chatterjee. Now go.

[INAYAT KHAN *and* CHATTERJEE *pass out into the darkness.*

THORP: And you, Walsh?

WALSH: I shall be broken, of course. I shall see my chief in Calcutta, and explain that I let these men go.

RANADE: What will that mean, Mr. Walsh?

GREGORY: You will read a notification in the papers, from the *Gazette*, that Mr. Victor Walsh, I.C.S., Sessions and District Judge, Durgapur, has resigned the service.

[*Enter* SUB-INSPECTOR.

SUB-INSPECTOR (*saluting*): The wounded are all gathered together in Chandra Babu's court-yard, and are being cared for. They are waiting for the Mahatmajee to come and bless them.

WALSH: Thank you, Sub-Inspector. You and your men have done very well. I will see that Government hears of your good work to-night.

SUB-INSPECTOR: Thank you, sir. Shall we march the prisoners into Durgapur now?

WALSH: There are no prisoners, Sub-Inspector.

SUB-INSPECTOR (*surprised*): No prisoners, sir?

WALSH: See, there is no one here but Mr. Ranade and Mr. Thorp and ourselves; and Nagen Babu and Sarat Babu, whom you know.

SUB-INSPECTOR (*looking round*): I see that that is so, sir.

WALSH: You will leave your Report with me to-morrow, and I will see to sending it on. Now you may go. Thank you very much.

SUB-INSPECTOR: May I ask one thing, sir?

WALSH: Of course, Sub-Inspector.

SUB-INSPECTOR: Then—will Your Honour consider it an act of disloyalty if I beg permission to touch the Mahatmajee's feet and ask his blessing? You see—I am loyal servant of Government, but I am also an Indian.

WALSH: Not at all, Sub-Inspector.

[SUB-INSPECTOR, *having done obeisance humbly to the Mahatmajee, salutes, and goes out.*

Then you will be going to the wounded, Mahatmajee. Take Nagen and Sarat with you. They will be useful. Good-night.

(*As if awaking out of his dream.*) Gregory! Max! Come along, boys! (*They turn to go.*)

RANADE (*coming forward*): Mr. Walsh! Mr. Gregory! Mr. Max! Will you not let me shake hands with you all?

CURTAIN.

ACT IV

ACT IV

(WHICH IS BY WAY OF EPILOGUE ONLY)

Three months later. Night. The veranda of GREGORY'S *house.* MRS. GREGORY *and* MRS. WALSH, *in evening dress, are sitting in easy-chairs. There are other easy-chairs unoccupied. The veranda is dimly lit by one electric light. The heavy moisture of the rains is in the air.* MRS. WALSH *is smoking a cigarette.*

MRS. GREGORY: I told Tom the men weren't to take more than ten minutes. I think I'd better call him.

MRS. WALSH (*sarcastically*): No, pray don't. I wouldn't have them disturbed for our sake. Their conversation is far more enthralling than merely talking to a couple of ladies. They are *men*, remember.

MRS. GREGORY: I wonder what they are talking about that keeps them so long?

MRS. WALSH: What *do* men talk about over their cigars after dinner?

MRS. GREGORY (*doubtfully*): Politics?

MRS. WALSH (*with great scorn*): Politics! What, waste the best time of the day on politics! No, my dear—there's only *one* thing that holds the masculine mind in India—killing. That's what they are discussing.

MRS. GREGORY: Killing?

MRS. WALSH: Yes, killing. No doubt your husband is telling again of the bear he shot last Christmas—how the servants came and told him that they knew where the poor brute was sleeping. Then he went—you see, I know the whole story by heart—and he looked about, and he said, "Good Lord! where *is* it? I can't see it." And they all said, "Look, saheb! See, there! there!" And at last he thought he saw a black patch, so he fired.

MRS. GREGORY (*showing unexpected vivacity*): Then there was a *huge* roar, and the bear jumped up and ran, and he followed it, and——

MRS. WALSH (*making smoke-rings with her cigarette*): And there were streaks of blood all the way.

MRS. GREGORY: And, as he found out afterwards, he had shot it through the foot——

MRS. WALSH (*continuing the antiphony*): And about two hundred yards farther on he saw

it suddenly standing up in a field of sugar-cane; so he fired a second shot, and missed it.

MRS. GREGORY (*her voice is now almost a solemn chant*): Then the bear ran on till it reached the edge of the sugar-cane, and there——

MRS. WALSH: He fired again, and broke its jaw. In this way he chased it for two miles, chipping little bits off it every few hundred yards; and finally lost it in some very thick young *sal*-jungle. But it was found dead next day, and he can show you its skin in his drawing-room. And he daren't stop for a second in his narrative, because he knows the other two are both bursting to tell yarns of their own, and will be through any gap like a pack of hounds. *My* husband's simply wild to tell of the leopard he battered to pieces on Easter Sunday. And Max, who hasn't been in the country long enough to collect many yarns, wants to tell how he once went snipe-shooting from Calcutta.

(*Shuddering.*) My dear, what ghastly things one gets used to out here! At home one wouldn't talk twice to men who entertained ladies with the sort of stories they regale us with in India.

MRS. GREGORY: And then they talk of the way we waste our time discussing nothing but servants!

But, you know, my husband says he's going to give up shooting.

MRS. WALSH: Really? But what a distinction! I mean, he'll be the only reasonably able-bodied Englishman in India who doesn't spend his spare time killing things. Won't he be too bored for words? Aren't you afraid he'll take to drink?

(*As a great burst of laughter comes from within, in which* GREGORY'S *tones can be distinguished as loudest.*) Your husband seems very happy. He must have got to the place where he breaks the bear's jaw. (*Pettishly.*) But I *wish* those gentlemen would remember there are ladies here. Who started this system of herding us off by ourselves? And what's the idea behind it, now that practically every woman smokes?

MRS. GREGORY: I fancy the idea is that we can exchange notes about our dirzis, while the men make arrangements for the next shoot. But they seem to be coming at last.

GREGORY (*as he enters with* WALSH *and* HORTON): And I said to him, "Good Lord! If you think you can fool me by coming in an old pair of trousers like that, you *must* be a juggins." Then he smiled a queer sort of smile, and cleared off.

WALSH: Did you ever see him again?

GREGORY: Yes, once. At Mussoorie. But I'll tell you about it afterwards.

MRS. WALSH: Who was Mr. Gregory's exciting friend?

WALSH: Oh, Greg's been telling us about an old pal of his who went and joined Thorp.

MRS. WALSH (*virulently*): Then I hope he's in prison.

WALSH: Who? Old Greg? Why, he's here, so you can see he's not in prison. You don't call being married to Mrs. Gregory being in prison, do you?

MRS. WALSH: My dear, your facetiousness is not always in the best taste, especially after dinner. You know very well whom I mean. Why hasn't the Government put Mr. Thorp in prison?

WALSH: That's a question they once asked in Parliament, my dear. I fancy the reply is, because he hasn't broken the law.

MRS. WALSH: Isn't he the traitor Englishman who goes about telling the natives to start another Indian Mutiny?

GREGORY: Who on earth told you that, Mrs. Walsh.

MRS. WALSH: Everyone knows it. I heard Lady Tomlinson say it in the Club at Khassoorie last year. She said she'd have him put against a wall and shot, if she had her way.

GREGORY: That's the way a good many ladies talk in the Club at Khassoorie. If they had their way, we'd have as many military executions in India as the Bolshevists have in Russia.

MRS. WALSH: Well, we *are* getting too soft and sentimental nowadays. Look at the rising we had here, when poor Mr. Lomax was killed. If they shot a few people sometimes, we shouldn't have all this sedition.

WALSH: That's all right, my dear. We all of us believe the world would be a better place for a few summary executions. But who's to make the selection?

MRS. WALSH: You are very stupid to-night, Victor. You know very well that the Government should decide.

HORTON: It usually does, doesn't it?

WALSH: Ah, now it's clearer! That would be *quite* all right—unless we had a change of Government.

GREGORY: A sort of second New Year's and Birthday Honours' list. You could raise money for the Party chests by charging for letting the other side's leaders off execution. I believe something of the sort was in vogue in Henry the Eighth's time.

HORTON (*with conviction*): It'd put some vim into our elections.

WALSH: I remember another matter on which Lady Tomlinson felt rather strongly—that was the wickedness of educating what she called the English lower classes. She said it was a great mistake, and gave them ideas, and that Government ought to stop it. She met Ramsay MacDonald when he was out in India, and he annoyed her frightfully.

GREGORY: What did he do? Come to dinner in golfing kit?

WALSH: Much worse than that. He contradicted her, I understand. She said Ben Nevis was in Ireland.

GREGORY: Or was it that Snowdon was in Scotland—whereas Ramsay knew he was in London all the time?

HORTON (*solemnly*): I believe it was something about Ben Tillett—not Ben Nevis.

WALSH: Gregory, you're trying to be funny again. And you're leading that boy astray also. Don't do it.

MRS. WALSH (*bad-temperedly*): You men spend your time trying to be funny, all of you. You're never serious.

WALSH: My dear, *I'm* serious, if Gregory isn't. All I'm saying is, we have a Labour Government now. Suppose *they* start putting

their foot down, and saying people like Lady Tomlinson oughtn't to be educated?

GREGORY: Would it make any difference to people like Lady Tomlinson?

MRS. WALSH: Well, everyone knows we're heading straight towards another Mutiny, and it's just because Government's afraid of the seditionists.

I'm not going to argue about it.

MRS. GREGORY: Aren't you men *ever* going to sit down?

MRS. WALSH (*to* MRS. GREGORY—*as the men find themselves chairs*): Just fancy, my dear, I'd settled down to a perfectly topping time at Darjiling—all my old pals there—when suddenly who should turn up but Victor! And he tells me we're sailing in less than three months, and that he's given up the service.

MRS. GREGORY (*feebly*): It must have been a great surprise.

MRS. WALSH: I wasn't over-pleased—why couldn't he wait till the cold weather? But he pointed out that, if we got away quickly, we could get in the autumn in Italy.

HORTON: Well, you're lucky to get away from Durgapur.

MRS. WALSH: You silly boy, Max, I shouldn't

have stayed in Durgapur. Do you think *your* presence was sufficient attraction to bring me back here? Still, I'm not sorry to be getting away altogether. But (*suspiciously*) I've never fathomed you, Victor. You've always sworn that you'd drop dead before you'd chuck your job out here. Then you change your mind all in one night!

GREGORY (*hastily*): Heaps of officials are clearing out now. They think India's not going to be any country for a white man much longer.

MRS. WALSH (*wrinkling her brows*): I daresay that's true. But I never thought that Victor would have the sense to see it.

WALSH (*shamefacedly*): My dear, you've been at me for years to clear out and take my pension. I realised that you didn't care for India.

MRS. WALSH (*pleased*): I always seemed to be preaching to a brick wall.

GREGORY (*jumping up*): What's that light coming through my compound at this time of night?

WALSH: I hope it's my chaprasi with the mail.

GREGORY: What mail?

WALSH: It's come in half a day before time. The post-office babu notified me, because he knew I was going to-morrow, so I sent my

chaprasi round to fetch the whole shoot of our letters round here. I thought you'd like yours as well.

GREGORY (*receiving the letters from* WALSH'S *chaprasi, at the top of the steps*): Thanks, awfully, Walsh. (*The letters are distributed.*)

HORTON: *You've* got a good mail, Walsh.

WALSH: Always *looks* like it. (*To his chaprasi.*) Here, don't take that lantern away. (*He takes it from him.*) And always the same pile of disappointing tripe. Do I want any cheap Trichinopoly cheroots for the voyage? No, I do *not* want any cheap cheroots when I'm on the high seas, thanks very much. Jewellery for my wife—imitation pearls that you can't distinguish from the real things. Recently a London burglar carried off a lot by mistake. His firm ought to sack him—or degrade him to work in the mofussil. (*He hands his pile over to* MRS. WALSH.) Here, my dear, you take the lot over. You any luck, Gregory?

GREGORY: Not much. A wine-list. *The Baptist Times.* An Insurance Company has just started—offers special terms to planters and missionaries. Why do planters and missionaries always go together?

WALSH: I thought they parted company at death. Make much of Max—you won't see him after this life, you know.

(*To* MRS. WALSH.) What have *you* got hold of, my dear? What's making you frown?

MRS. WALSH: Your father's just savage about your coming home.

WALSH (*ruefully*): Isn't he pleased at the prospect of seeing his boy again?

MRS. WALSH: He says you're the first Walsh in four generations who's chucked his job and spoilt the family record. The first one who didn't get to the top of the service, and bring home a knighthood. (*Frowning again.*) Yes, why didn't you do that?

WALSH: You want to stay out here another twenty years, my dear? You'd have to, to get a title.

MRS. WALSH: It seems a big price to pay. But couldn't I have stopped at home? I don't understand these things—they bore me. Your father goes on to say he's not altogether surprised —says you always did care more about your own comfort than anything else.

MRS. GREGORY (*waving a letter*): Mrs. Lomax has got to Kenya.

WALSH: What does she say? She getting on all right?

MRS. GREGORY: Quite. She and her brother have bought a farm up in the highlands. She's very cross about the Indians trying to get up

there, and says she hopes Government will be firm and keep them for educated people.

WALSH: How does she find missionary work in those parts? Quite satisfactory, I trust. Better than it is here?

MRS. GREGORY: I'm afraid not. She got in touch with a mission as soon as she landed, and was delighted to find that they had a right notion of their duty and provided trained servants. But the servants wanted scandalously high wages, and she had difficulty in beating them down. Two of them have been un-Christian enough to run away, and Government has done nothing about it.

(*Turning her letter over.*) She complains further that the natives are as bad as they are in India, and that, if one isn't up to their tricks, they'll be cheating you all the time.

HORTON (*very loudly*): *All* the time.

WALSH (*severely*): Max!

HORTON: I'm sorry. I apologise, Mrs. Gregory. I only thought that you hadn't read the whole sentence.

WALSH: Is there anything about the price of ducks in Kenya?

MRS. GREGORY: Yes, in a postscript she says she finds the ladies have been paying a lot too much for their poultry, just as I used to do.

That's about all. From the triumphant note

on which her letter closes, I gather that she's not without hopes of circumventing the heathen, for all their dark wiles.

WALSH: She'll do that, I think. *She'll* uphold the honour of the white race. Anyone here prepared to back the heathen against Mrs. Lomax?

ALL: No!

WALSH: Anyway, I'm jolly glad Government came down handsomely in the matter of compensation for poor old Lomax. Her brother's a decent chap, too. I know him a bit.

HORTON: I say, everybody! I met Wilson at Burdwan yesterday. He's heard—it's pukka, he says—that Ganapati is going to get a job at Delhi.

WALSH: Our Ganapati! That *is* jolly!

HORTON: Yes. He's got no end of kudos over the way he put down our little rising here. (*Giggles delightedly.*)

The Politician was very enthusiastic over his C.S.I., wasn't it?

GREGORY: I've kept it by me all day, to cheer me. (*Goes over to a small table, picks up a paper, and reads.*) "But no award will give more universal satisfaction, to right-minded Indians and Europeans alike, than the very well-deserved honour that has fallen to Mr. G. P. Banerjee, the energetic and popular magistrate of Durgapur. It is generally thought that a district

official's work is one in which his reputation is buried. But Mr. Banerjee, by his ability and far-sightedness, his vigour in decision and his tireless industry, has attracted the notice of a whole province to himself." (*Stops, and looks up and laughs.*)

HORTON: He's done that, right enough.

GREGORY (*reading on*): "The way in which he handled the ugly situation which recently developed in his district is fresh in all men's memories. Indeed, it is safe to say that, but for his unfortunate absence on the day of the actual outbreak, we should never have had the deplorable escape of the two miscreants who incited the murder of Mr. Lomax. Mr. Banerjee has gone far in a short time; and he will go yet farther."

HORTON: Hurrah! Three cheers for old Ganapati! Some say *Rotten old Ganapati,* some say, *Scheming old Ganapati,* but *we* say——

WALSH: Max, you're behaving very badly tonight.

GREGORY (*taking up another paper*): *The Britisher* says, "It is an open secret that Mr. Banerjee has been designated for the succession to a very high post indeed. When that appointment is made, everyone will congratulate this plucky and zealous official."

MRS. WALSH (*rising*): I'll be getting home now, Mrs. Gregory.

GREGORY (*protestingly—as they all rise*): You're not going yet, Mrs. Walsh! It hasn't gone nine.

MRS. WALSH: I'm going to turn in early, and read my mail. I've still got a lot of frocks to get packed to-morrow.

HORTON: Can't you let your Bearer do it?

[MRS. WALSH *vouchsafes him no reply but a look of scorn.*]

MRS. WALSH: Victor needn't come, though. I'll send the car back for him.

WALSH: I *will* stay a bit longer, then, if you don't mind, my dear. But don't bother about the car. Greg'll lend me his bike.

(*Stepping to the front of the veranda, and shouting.*) Ram Buksh!

A VOICE: *Huzzoor!*

[RAM BUKSH, WALSH'S *chauffeur, comes forward with a lantern.*

MRS. WALSH: Good night, everyone. Good night, Mrs. Gregory. I'm glad you've heard from Mrs. Lomax. Remember me to her when you write. (*With a smile.*) Tell her that we are thinking of her *all* the time, *all* the time.

[MRS. WALSH *goes down the veranda steps.*

MRS. GREGORY (*gathering up her papers*): I'll follow Mrs. Walsh's example, if you gentlemen will excuse me, and take my letters off to read them elsewhere.

HORTON (*handing it to her*): Don't forget the *Baptist Times*, Mrs. Gregory.

MRS. GREGORY: I shall *not* forget the *Baptist Times*, Mr. Horton. I need it for my store-cupboard's shelves. You'll excuse me, Mr. Walsh? Mr. Horton? I know you'll all have a better time if I leave you.

WALSH: No, no, Mrs. Gregory.

MRS. GREGORY: Yes, yes, Mr. Walsh. Good night, all.

ALL: Good night.

[*Exit* MRS. GREGORY.

GREGORY (*as they sit down again*): Have another cheroot, Max.

HORTON: No, thanks. I'll take a cigarette instead, if I may. (*He helps himself from a box on a table.*)

GREGORY: Put your feet up. (*He puts his own up, on a vacant chair.*)

A VOICE (*off the stage*): Gregory! You there?

[THORP *comes up the veranda steps. They all spring to their feet.*

GREGORY: Hul-*lo*, Thorp. Come in, old boy.

WALSH: Come along. We're all glad to see you.

HORTON: Ra-*ther*.

GREGORY (*as* THORP *sits down*): Walsh is going home on Saturday, you know.

THORP: I saw the notice, and showed it to the Mahatma.

HORTON: Where's he now?

THORP: I left him in Bombay. I was running over to Calcutta to see an old friend who was coming from Rangoon.

WALSH: And you stopped off here?

THORP (*smiling*): Mahatmajee's orders. He said, "Don't forget there are three Englishmen in Durgapur who are our friends, and one of them is going away." He sent a letter for you, Walsh.

WALSH: I haven't had it.

THORP (*rummaging in the folds of his* khudder, *and producing it*): It's here. If he'd sent it through the post, the police might have held it up, you know. He doesn't write to his friends through the post.

(*As* WALSH *takes the letter.*) You're not to read it now—when you've left India.

HORTON (*anxiously*): He'll be coming this way again, won't he?

THORP: No one can say.

He asked me to tell you, Gregory, that things are more hopeful than he once thought. (*Smiling.*) He asked me to be sure to look up three of those thousand Christians that we need —and I have done, as you see.

WALSH: I a Christian! I haven't been inside a Church since I was married!

HORTON: Nor I since I left England.

(*Reaching for the cheroots.*) If Thorp is going to be with us, I'll have a cheroot, after all. I thought our meeting was about to break up.

(*Offering the box.*) You, Thorp?

GREGORY: Thorp doesn't smoke.

THORP (*to* WALSH): You're leaving Durgapur to-morrow, they tell me.

WALSH: That's right. Sail Saturday.

THORP: You'll come back some day?

WALSH: May—for some cold weather. I shall be wretched away from India. You'll still be wandering, I suppose.

THORP: Yes. Always, now.

GREGORY: You're no longer mad with me because I don't join you?

THORP: No, Gregory. I know you've got your job, as I mine.

GREGORY: Then you won't take up a rational way of life again?

THORP: I can't. I've got to go this way to the end.

(*After a pause.*) You remember what we said about the spirit of hatred that was walking through India. But there is another spirit, that seeks reconciliation. (*Shamefacedly.*) It's taken possession of me.

WALSH: But, if you go on as you are doing, you'll have no end of trouble.

HORTON: You've no idea how most of us hate your very name. And we think you a fool, Thorp. Most of us, that is.

THORP (*reddening*): I know. That's my punishment, for having cared so much about men's opinion.

GREGORY (*anxiously*): Weren't you assaulted at Nagpur the other day?

THORP: The man didn't know what he was doing. He was an ex-soldier who'd lost his job. I believe he had been most shabbily treated.

HORTON: I'd have given the cad in charge.

WALSH: No, you wouldn't, Max.

HORTON: He tried to kill Thorp.

THORP: He thought in some vague way that I was stirring up people to give all the jobs to Indians. He had a half-caste family, and was stranded out here. (*He pauses.*)

Suppose he *had* killed me, Max—suppose someone some day does kill me?

WALSH: Yes?

THORP: Just as the spirit of murder gets new strength with each satisfaction, and stalks from its victim and finds a new embodiment, so, I believe, this spirit of reconciliation does the same. If I am killed, it will not die. It will simply take possession of another man for its service.

HORTON (*leaning forward*): I say, Thorp!

THORP: What is it, Max?

HORTON: I've got a lot of things I want to ask you. You're not going to clear off in a hurry, are you?

THORP: Rather not. Not unless Gregory's going to prove inhospitable.

GREGORY (*startled out of a reverie*): Eh, what? What's that you say?

HORTON (*shouting*): Thorp is wondering if you aren't going to offer him a bed for the night. For, if you won't, *I* will, by Jove!

[GREGORY, WALSH *and* THORP *all laugh.*

CURTAIN.