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MAHATMA GANDHI

A BIOGRAPHY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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Also by Catherine Owens Peare

ALBERT EINSTEIN
A Biography for Young People

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MAHATMA GANDHI

A BIOGRAPHY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The hypocrite

BY CATHERINE OWENS PEARE

NEW YORK: HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

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FIRST PRINTING

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Dedicated to
The Young People of India and America

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FOREWORD

Mahatma Gandhi belongs not to India alone but to the whole world. He belongs not to our generation alone but to posterity as well. In life as in death Gandhi has been revered by millions of his compatriots in India. We of the present generation look upon him as a great political leader; future generations, however, will recognize in him one of the greatest spiritual forces of all times.

Gandhi may truly be said to be the prophetic voice of the twentieth century. Violence inflicts upon its practitioners physical and spiritual wounds; the way of nonviolence, said Gandhi, "blesses him who uses it and him against whom it is used." Again, "nonviolence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law — to the strength of the spirit."

Let us be sure we do not misunderstand the philosophy of nonviolence embodied in Gandhi's life and teachings. A practitioner of the nonviolent way of life, far from being passive, is the most active person in the world. He is ready to join the fray — nonviolently — wherever and whenever there is injustice or wrong. He neither tolerates nor compromises with injustice, wrong, tyranny, authoritarianism, totalitarianism, dictatorship. His task in life is not to destroy the evildoer but to redeem and to convert the evildoer by love. "With malice toward none, with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right," he is ever ready to "bind up" humanity's "wounds,"

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to minister to the underprivileged and to the misguided. The constant concern of the follower of nonviolence is, in the words of Lincoln, to "achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

The spirit of India's Gandhi as well as of America's Lincoln is today sorely needed by a generation madly dancing on a volcano. We have learned to fathom the secrets of the atom, we have learned to master nature, but alas! we have not yet learned to master our inner selves. Our scientists can predict with accuracy the long-range behavior and movements of stars and planets millions of miles away — but we are unable to foretell our next-door neighbor's behavior and movements the very next moment.

The world has become a small neighborhood. Therefore, we are called upon to understand and appreciate our neighbors across the Atlantic and the Pacific as well as across the Great Lakes and the Gulf. To understand other nations, we must know their values and their historical development. This requires a sympathetic approach to other nations, cultures, and religions.

Catherine Owens Peare, the author of this book, has approached her study of Gandhi and India with rare sympathy and, therefore, has achieved remarkable understanding of her subject. Addressed to young Americans, this book may be profitably read by adults as well. In the pages of this book Mahatma Gandhi comes alive; we are, so to say, witnesses to the growth of the personality of a rare soul, of a great soul. This book builds a bridge between two cultures, between two nations — and at the other side of the bridge we are privileged to come face to face with one of the greatest men of all times.

What is Gandhi's message for our small neighborhood world divided into two camps — democratic and totalitarian? First of all, Gandhi would have us hitch our wagon to the star of Truth and Nonviolence; which means, we

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must approach other people with charity and sympathy. Second, Gandhi would have us stand on a platform of values to which we must give our heart's allegiance unto death; which means, we must act in accordance with principles, not expediency — further, appeasement, even for the sake of peace, must be ruled out, because appeasement implies sacrifice of principles. Third, Gandhi would have us work ceaselessly for the realization of common-human values, for the triumph of the common-human way of life.

Gandhi did not believe in imposing his values or his way of life upon others; by the same token, he resisted unto death others' attempts to impose upon him or his people others' values and way of life. To be true to the Gandhi spirit, we may not, we cannot, think of imposing our democratic values and way of life upon the nations behind the iron curtain; nor would we permit those nations to impose their totalitarian values and way of life upon us.

According to Gandhi, there are three types of human beings: (1) the coward, (2) the brave, (3) the superior. The coward, in order to save his skin, supinely acquiesces in injustice and wrong. The brave hero, on the other hand, violently resists injustice and wrong in order to overcome injustice and wrong. The superior person is he who, in the fullness of his strength, forgives the wrongdoer and tries to redeem him and convert him to the ways of doing good.

Americans, precisely because they are Americans, will have nothing in common with the first type — the despicable, cowardly type. Our choice today and tomorrow must be between the second and third alternatives. Let each one decide, in the light of his conscience, in terms of his definition of the situation, which alternative he must adopt in the present crisis.

Our generation is doomed to live in a state of perpetual crisis. You and I are called upon to be on the alert every moment of our lives. Truly the price of liberty is eternal

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vigilance. But ceaseless effort and continuous vigilance, untempered by inner poise, are apt to lead to nervous prostration. Hence inner serenity in the midst of crisis must be cultivated if we are to safeguard our personal integrity, national freedom, and universal human values.

In Mahatma Gandhi we have a sure guide to a happy, rich, and meaningful life. A self-disciplinarian, he embodied the Hindu concept of the superior man — of the Mahatma, the Great Soul. Any one of us can become a Mahatma if we make a vocation of living the good life — putting principle above expediency, duty above pleasure, service above profit, God above the world, conscience above fleeting rewards.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
April 27, 1950

HARIDAS T. MUZUMDAR
Lecturer in Sociology,
University of Wisconsin

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GLOSSARY

ahimsa	love of all living things
anna	an Indian coin of very small value
ashram	a place where disciples gather, a religious colony
ba	a term of endearment for Mrs. Gandhi
bapu	a term of endearment for Mahatma Gandhi, meaning that he is the father of his people
Bhagavad Gita	"Song of the Lord," a Hindu holy scripture
bhai	brother
Brahman	eternal life, knowledge of God
Brahmin	a member of the highest or priestly caste
charkha	the spinning wheel
dhoti	a garment of the Indian peasant, a single piece of cloth wrapped around the hips and pulled between the legs
hartal	stopping of all work and business as a protest against a government action
hind swaraj	Indian self-government
ji	a suffix used as a term of respect, e.g., Gandhiji or Bapuji
khadi	homespun and home-woven cloth
rupee	an Indian coin worth about thirty cents
sahib	title of respect
sari	a dress worn by Hindu women, a long piece of fabric wound around the body, beginning as a skirt, then around the shoulders and over the head
satyagraha	soul-force or truth-force
satyagrahi	a person who practices truth-force
swaraj	self-government
Vedas	the oldest scriptures of the Hindu religion

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No power on earth can stop the onward march of a peaceful, determined and godly people.

—MAHATMA GANDHI.

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1. *TWO CHILDREN ARE MARRIED*

"Only by fullest service, perfect faith . . ."
—GITA XI.

AN eleven-year-old girl dutifully placed her hand in that of a thirteen-year-old boy, and together they took the seven steps around the sacred fire of burning rice, twigs, and ghee. This was their wedding; they were bride and groom. In a few minutes they would be man and wife, and until this ceremony they had never been permitted to see each other.

As the two children clasped hands, they had no idea what it meant to be married. The boy, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, knew only that he was acquiring a playmate who must obey him in all things. The girl, Kasturba, knew that she must leave her own family and live in her husband's home from now on, obeying both her mother-in-law and her husband.

That was the custom in old India for those who believed in the Hindu religion. As soon as Mohandas and Kasturba were born their parents began to wonder about a wife for one and a husband for the other. The problem was talked over with the family priest and the town matchmaker, and these two children had been engaged when they were only five or six years old.

The wedding took place in the home of the bride in the city of Porbandar. Gandhi had been born in Porbandar,

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too, October 2, 1869, but his family had moved away to the town of Rajkot, some hundred and thirty miles inland, when he was only seven, and he didn't remember the city very well.

Porbandar is ancient, huddled close together, bristling with towers and pinnacles, surrounded by a great wall and heavy gates. It is on the west coast of India facing the Arabian Sea. Porbandar is in the same latitude as Key West, Florida, but it does not have the same climate. During the summer months, for almost half the year, a hot monsoon wind blows up from the south, driving the surf so high against the shore that small boats dare not approach or put to sea. In the winter months the wind dies down, the air becomes mild and pleasant, the sea grows calm, and trading ships can ply back and forth between India and Africa.

Back to the Arabian Nights city Mohandas and his family traveled for the wedding, bringing a crowd of relatives and guests with them.

The marriage had been arranged a long time in advance. The stars had been consulted to make sure they were favorable. The two family histories were checked and matched, and money matters were agreed upon. Preparations for the ceremony went on for months and months, because a Hindu wedding is an elaborate and costly affair, with long guest lists, fine clothes, musicians, decorations, feasting and celebrating for five days. Nothing dared be neglected. If either family could not afford everything that was required, the father went to the town moneylender and borrowed what he needed.

The bride and groom did not see each other until the last day of the festivities; a curtain had separated them until then. When the curtain was finally removed, Mohandas was allowed to look at his bride. She was beautiful! Just as he had hoped! Her heavy black hair was parted in the

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center and drawn tightly back, and her eyes were large and lovely. She wore a dress, called a sari, of bright colored silk.

Kasturba smiled at her bridegroom, and she must have been just as delighted with her good fortune. He was a little taller than she, also dressed in silks. He wore tight trousers, a long tunic coat that reached to his knees, and about his head was wound a many-colored turban.

Excited and nervous, they held hands, and the last and most important part of the ceremony began: the walk around the fire of rice, twigs, and melted butter that had burned in a brass urn in the center of the room for five days. Three times around the sacred fire, counting out seven steps each time, while the wedding guests chanted, and then they were married, and Mohandas could take his bride home to Rajkot.

The house where the wedding had taken place was very much like the house where Mohandas had spent the first seven years of his life. It was made of brick, one story high, and stood on the main street of the town. The house where the Gandhis had lived was just opposite the temple, or church, where the Gandhi family worshiped.

To be a child in a Hindu home meant having a life of love and family devotion, of honor and integrity. Mohandas was the youngest of four children, and he and his two brothers and sister were close to their parents. Their entire lives were influenced by their fine home life and the training that was given to them in their youth.

It was the mother who arose first in the morning in an Indian home, before dawn, because India is a hot country and work must be done before the heat of the day; next she bathed, for Hindus are immaculately clean, and then she said her morning prayers. After that it was time for her to go to the kitchen, light a flickering oil lamp, and prepare breakfast. Flat millet cakes, called bajri, milk and

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curds, and perhaps some vegetables seasoned with curry were what she served her family.

Gandhi's mother was a deeply sympathetic and religious woman, who made daily trips to the temple. A favorite way for Hindus to pray is by fasting, going without food, until a prayer is granted. Mohandas' mother used to fast for the welfare of her family, or if the rainy season seemed to last too long she would fast until God allowed the sun to shine.

Gandhi knew that rain meant life in his land. Sometimes there was too much and gardens were spoiled. Sometimes there was no rain at all and the ground became dry and dusty. Since almost everyone in India must grow his own food, too much or too little rain could cause starvation.

Mohandas watched his mother pray and fast, and sometimes she would draw him to her and they would pray together. When he was close to her he could smell the sweet scent of the oil that she used to slick back her black hair, and he liked to hear the bracelets on her arm tinkle and jingle as she moved.

Mohandas' father, Kaba Gandhi, was a man of dignity and importance in his town, once Prime Minister of Rajkot State. His four children liked to sit about him on the floor as he read them stories or told them about his own youth.

When Mohandas brought his bride to his parents' home, he was still a foolish boy, married man though he might be. Since he was a typical Hindu of his times, he had no intention of making life easy for his new wife. He was insanely jealous of her and would not allow her to leave the house without his permission. If she so much as went to the temple to pray, he became angry and they quarreled.

Kasturba was a simple country girl who could not read and write, because girls were not sent to school in those days; but she was a properly brought up girl with a sound character. When she came to the Gandhi household she

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knew she had to obey; she also knew her husband's attitude was silly, and she had no intention of letting him have more authority than was necessary.

"Where are you going?" he would ask sternly.

"On an errand!" she would snap back and continue on her way.

Quarreling with his wife was not the only mischief that Mohandas became involved in.

His older brother and another companion drew him aside one day.

"We have an idea," they said.

"Have you ever thought of eating meat?" the companion ventured.

Mohandas shook his head in horror. Eating meat is a sin for a Hindu, because the Hindu religion teaches that it is wrong to kill. The boys had never seen meat served in their home. How had his brother come upon this wicked idea?

"Do you know what?" his brother boasted. "I have been eating meat on the sly and look at me. I am taller and stronger than you."

"You are weak and puny," the other boy taunted Mohandas.

Mohandas hung his head. He knew they were right. He was no good in athletics; he could not run and jump as well as the other boys. His friends were braver, too. Mohandas was secretly afraid of the dark, of ghosts, of serpents and shadows; his meat-eating friends were not, or claimed they were not.

"Look at the British! They are taller and stronger than we because they eat meat."

Mohandas felt confused. He had never thought about it before, and he wondered if they could be right. Perhaps, if he just tried a piece of meat once —

The three boys held their meeting the very next day.

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Down to the Aji River they ran, then along its banks, their feet kicking up clouds of dust, for it was the dry season and the Aji River, never more than a large brook, had shrunken to a trickle of water. This was India's winter: dry ground, dry river beds, parched grass, clear, warm air. The boys ran until they came to a clump of bushes that would hide them from view. Now to teach Mohandas to eat meat!

"Hurry up! Hurry up, Mohan!"

They squatted down in a circle.

"Here it is," said his brother. "Bite into it."

Mohandas looked at the piece of goat's meat. The stuff seemed loathsome and evil. He wasn't sure whether—

"Oh, go ahead!"

The boys did not know how to cook, and the meat was as tough as leather. With a queasy feeling in his stomach, Mohandas took a piece into his mouth and began to chew. Suddenly he felt so sick that he had to spit out the meat and turn away.

The other boys rolled about on the ground, convulsed with laughter; but Mohandas jumped up and ran home, leaving them to their fun.

Still he was not convinced. In his heart he pondered about meat. He was not at peace until he had given meat-eating a thorough test. For nearly a year after that he did eat meat every day, not tough goat's meat, but meat served at a hotel dining room in the town.

His dinners out, of course, involved telling lies at home in order to explain his absence from meals and his lack of appetite. His good conscience finally won the struggle. He was deeply devoted to his mother and father, and he could not go on lying to them and deceiving them. He knew how deeply they would be hurt when they learned that he had become a meat-eater. Then and there he made his resolve: no more meat-eating as long as his parents were alive.

Next came that standard temptation: cigarettes. The

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only member of the Gandhi family who smoked was an uncle of the boys, and they would follow him about the house carefully gathering the cigarette butts that he left behind. They didn't care about tobacco, and they didn't really know how to smoke, but what joy to puff on a lighted butt and blow out clouds of smoke!

Cigarette butts, however, are not as dignified as whole cigarettes. The boys took the next logical step: they pilfered copper coins from the household to buy cigarettes. What was the outcome? The novelty soon wore off, and the Gandhi boys went on to other mischief.

"I am really in trouble this time," said the same meat-eating brother one day. "But I know how to get out of it if you will help me."

"What have you done now?" asked Mohandas.

The brother owed a debt of some twenty-five rupees in Indian money, about eight dollars, and he didn't want to tell his father.

"Look at this heavy gold bracelet I'm wearing," he said to Mohandas. "Help me snip some gold from the inside of it and sell it. With that I can pay off the debt, and father will never know."

Mohandas loved his brother as much as he loved his father, and so he helped him sell the stolen gold.

A simple matter, a small deed, that no one would ever know about. Mohandas Gandhi knew about it. He realized that he had done something seriously wrong, and the sin weighed upon his conscience more heavily each day. At last, in desperation, he decided to have it out with his father. Rather than risk telling an incomplete story, he carefully composed a written confession and finished it off with a solemn promise never to steal again so long as he should live.

His father was sick at the time, and Mohandas had to go to his bedroom where he lay on a cot.

"Father?"

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The shy, self-conscious, and sensitive boy sometimes found himself in difficulty with the authorities as a result of his struggle for truth. One of his teachers in school once wanted him to cheat on an examination. The teacher pointed to a misspelled word on his paper and asked him to correct it so that he could receive a higher grade. Mohandas refused. If he had made an error it must remain.

When he was about fifteen an instructor called him aside and said, "You were marked absent on Saturday."

"It was a mistake," Mohandas tried to explain. "I didn't mean to be absent."

"I think you are lying," said the instructor. "You wiil have to pay a cash fine."

Mohandas was so hurt and distressed that he could not answer. His absence from school had been an accident, and he was not lying about it. His father was sick in bed, and he always went directly home from school to look after him. At four o'clock every afternoon the boys had gymnastics, but on Saturdays the school met only in the morning, and the students had to return at four in the afternoon. So when Mohandas went home early on Saturday to take care of his father, he had to watch the time. That Saturday it was cloudy, and he did not have the setting sun to remind him of the time. When he finally checked the hour it was too late to reach his class.

A letter from his father to the headmaster of the school cleared up the case, but Mohandas never forgot the episode. His distress at being accused of lying was almost more than he could bear.

That incident occurred during his father's last illness, and the older man never left his bed again.

In 1885 there was precious little known in India of modern medicine. Kaba Gandhi grew sicker and sicker. Native doctors came to the house with their salves, holy men c 'heir prayers, but to no avail.

other, and a servant took turns nursing

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The older man turned his head to see who had entered the room.

Without a word Mohandas handed him the written confession. His father lifted himself on one elbow with much difficulty and began to read.

The young man knew he would not be whipped or punished; there was never any violence in the Gandhi household. He knew, too, that his father loved him; but he did not realize how very much his father loved him.

Tears rolled down the older Gandhi's cheeks, and as soon as he had finished he tore the paper into small pieces. Without uttering a word he lay back on his bed with his eyes closed, and his son could see plainly how deep his father's grief must be. There was no anger, no word of rebuke, only a silent and loving forgiveness.

Father and son had always been close to each other; now they felt closer than ever before.

This was only one episode in which his father shaped and directed Mohandas' life. Young Gandhi could recall the years during his early childhood when religious readers came to the house to read from the Hindu scriptures, sitting cross-legged on cushions on the floor, since chairs were not a fashion in India. The small boy would sit fascinated by the musical chanting, although he could hardly have understood the meaning of the words.

To their home came Jain monks, or priests, to visit with his father and talk with him of religious and worldly matters. Jainism is a separate religion, although very similar to Hinduism. Jains feel most strongly on the subject of killing, or rather, non-killing. A Jain may kill no living thing, not even an insect that lights upon his arm. The deadly cobra is safe from a Jain. The Jain religion influenced Gandhi deeply.

No wonder that young Mohandas, with all this fine home life, suffered deeply whenever he told a lie. No wonder he struggled so hard all of his life for truth.

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The shy, self-conscious, and sensitive boy sometimes found himself in difficulty with the authorities as a result of his struggle for truth. One of his teachers in school once wanted him to cheat on an examination. The teacher pointed to a misspelled word on his paper and asked him to correct it so that he could receive a higher grade. Mohandas refused. If he had made an error it must remain.

When he was about fifteen an instructor called him aside and said, "You were marked absent on Saturday."

"It was a mistake," Mohandas tried to explain. "I didn't mean to be absent."

"I think you are lying," said the instructor. "You will have to pay a cash fine."

Mohandas was so hurt and distressed that he could not answer. His absence from school had been an accident, and he was not lying about it. His father was sick in bed, and he always went directly home from school to look after him. At four o'clock every afternoon the boys had gymnastics, but on Saturdays the school met only in the morning, and the students had to return at four in the afternoon. So when Mohandas went home early on Saturday to take care of his father, he had to watch the time. That Saturday it was cloudy, and he did not have the setting sun to remind him of the time. When he finally checked the hour it was too late to reach his class.

A letter from his father to the headmaster of the school cleared up the case, but Mohandas never forgot the episode. His distress at being accused of lying was almost more than he could bear.

That incident occurred during his father's last illness, and the older man never left his bed again.

In 1885 there was precious little known in India of modern medicine. Kaba Gandhi grew sicker and sicker. Native doctors came to the house with their salves, holy men came with their prayers, but to no avail.

Mohandas, his mother, and a servant took turns nursing

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Kaba Gandhi. Each evening Mohandas prepared his father for sleep by massaging his legs and making him comfortable, sitting by his bed until the sick man fell asleep.

Young Gandhi's uncle came to the house to help. He sat by Kaba Gandhi's bed during the day, and Mohandas attended him at night. One night Mohandas was massaging his father's legs and trying to help him relax when his uncle came in and offered to take his place.

"Get some rest," he said to the boy.

Young Gandhi was desperately tired, and he went straight to his room. But no sooner had he lain down than a servant knocked at the door.

"Get up," he said. "Your father is very ill."

In panic Mohandas leaped out of bed and hurried to his father's room.

"What is the matter? Do tell me!"

"Father is no more."

Embarrassed and ashamed at not having been with his father in his last moments, Gandhi never forgot his own carelessness. He considered his act unforgivable, and he never made allowances for the fact that he was only sixteen years old.

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2. *IN FAR–OFF ENGLAND*

"Do thy part!
Be mindful of thy name, and tremble not!"
—GITA II.

KABA GANDHI had been the head of the family, and his death changed everyone's life. Mohandas' mother was so grief-stricken that she was hardly able to look after her household. Her three daughters-in-law, wives of her three sons, hurried about the house to help her. Kasturba, although she was the youngest, was the greatest comfort to the older woman. She watched over her, made her lie down and rest when she was tired; sometimes she brushed her hair until her mother-in-law would doze off from the soothing strokes of the brush.

Mohandas' older brothers now had to look after the family finances, and Mohandas himself could no longer turn to his father for guidance and advice. He felt lost with no one to depend upon.

He was attending the Alfred High School in Rajkot by now, one of the oldest schools in Kathiawar Province and one of the many schools founded by the British.

School was for boys in those days, and Mohandas and his companions had been sent to the primary school in Rajkot when they were about seven. There they sat in rows on low benches, listening to their teacher as he walked about the room talking to them.

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British rule changed the schools of India, too, and while the students learned in their own language in primary school, they had to learn English as well. Just one lesson a day in English, at first, in the seventh, eighth, and ninth years, until the boys reached what would compare to about sophomore year in high school, and then all of their subjects were in English. When the boys reached "fourth standard" at about the age of sixteen, they were expected to read and speak English.

There were some two hundred young men attending the high school when Mohandas was there. They were sons of well-to-do families, since the poor people in the villages outside of the city did not receive much education. Wealthy Indians were most influenced by British ideas and Western ways, and the young people frequently wore Western dress: trousers, shirts, ties, jackets.

Mohandas was a serious young man, and although he was not a brilliant student his studies in high school were making him think more and more about his own land. He wondered why the British were in India. Why must he learn English? Why must he wear Western clothing? He began to want to learn more about his own country.

India is huge, he discovered from his books. It is sixteen times larger than the British Isles. On the map it is shaped like a triangle with the wide part at the top and the point reaching down almost to the equator. In the northernmost part are the Himalayan Mountains, the tallest mountains in the world. In the northwest is another range of mountains called the Hindu Kush. South of these mountains, stretching across the middle of India, are the great plains where most of the people live because these plains are fertile, and the great rivers of India flow down from the Himalayan Mountains and the Hindu Kush and water the plains. The Indus River flows down through western India into the Arabian Sea. The Ganges River flows down from

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the Himalayan Mountains and then turns east, past the cities of Benares and Calcutta, into the Bay of Bengal. In the southern part of India are the high plateaus.

He learned that not all of India was hot like his own province. India has many different kinds of climate. It has the gigantic, snow-covered mountains in the north, hot, dry plains, rich river valleys, and humid jungles. It has many different kinds of people living there. The people from northern India are light of skin, some with blond hair and blue eyes; people in the south are dark-skinned.

While the language in his home province was called Gujarati, people in other parts of India spoke fourteen different languages and more than two hundred dialects.

The history of his own country thrilled him. It went back beyond recorded time. Old India had given the world Aesop's fables, the Arabian Nights stories, and other legends that are sometimes thought to be Western. They were Indian folklore. Fifteen hundred years before Christ the Hindus were ahead of the rest of the world in mathematics, religion, medicine, and art. Hindu scholars invented the numeral system, discovered the zero sign, and created the method of using algebraic letters for unknowns. The game of chess originated in India. However, in those ancient times paper had not been invented, and the students wrote on palm leaves. The palm leaves dried out and turned to dust, and so many old records are lost.

As Mohandas approached his last term in high school, he had to answer the question that young men and women do everywhere: Where shall I go to college?

"Where will you send Mohandas to college?" was the question put to his mother one day by Mohandas' uncle.

She didn't quite know. Since Kaba Gandhi's death they did not have as much money.

"He wants to go to Bombay," said his mother. "But I don't see how that is possible."

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"You must explain to him that Bombay is too far away and too expensive. He must learn to face facts. He will have to go to the local college. I think it is called Samaldas College."

Mohandas had never been away from his home province, and he dreamed of seeing the big, wonderful city of Bombay. Would it be as he had always imagined it? How marvelous to go that far away to college! He had no choice, though. Samaldas, only a few miles away, was all his family would allow. So when he finished his high school studies, he journeyed to the college and entered as a student.

He didn't stay long. His head was too full of dreams of Bombay and the world beyond, and he was not a good student. Further, he had not done enough studying in high school to be properly prepared for college. His flunking grades at the end of the first term sent him home to his family once more.

"What shall we do with young Mohandas? He isn't bright enough for college."

Mohandas was not a promising young man. He was not even attractive looking. He was skinny, not as tall as his brothers; his ears were large and stuck straight out from his little round head; his nose was too large and his chin too short. If he wasn't a good scholar, and if he didn't cut a striking appearance, how could he ever earn a living?

But into his life came a new and exciting event that turned the dreaming young man's attention away from the problem of school. Kasturba, his child bride, the young girl with whom he used to quarrel, gave him a son. A new baby always puts a household into a turmoil, and while Mohandas sat at his wife's side or waited patiently for a chance to hold his new son, others rushed from room to room attending to things. Mohandas' mother, too, felt happy for the first time since Kaba Gandhi's death.

Kasturba looked at her young husband. He was growing

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kinder in his attitude toward her. They were learning to understand each other and to get along better. She held out her hand, and he took it in both of his.

"What shall we name the baby?"

"I should like to call him Harilal," said Mohandas.

"Harilal? Yes, that's a nice name. Let's call him Harilal."

"Now I must work harder, and try to amount to something," he promised her.

"Perhaps they will let you go to Bombay after all," she tried to encourage him.

"I'd like to go to work and not bother with college."

"Oh, no!" Kasturba objected. "You can't find any kind of worth-while work without a college education."

Under British rule the only prospect for an educated young man in India was some sort of white-collar position in the government, and that was to be achieved, like most political jobs, through connections. There were dozens of candidates for each job. Even one of the poor-paying clerkships required a college degree. Mohandas might study law. There again the competition for any kind of position would be overwhelming. The future did not look bright.

"Why don't you send him to England to study law?" suggested a family friend.

The indifferent young man came to life. England? The idea of going to England had never occurred to him before. His excitement grew, and his imagination raced ahead of him. England was so far away that he wasn't quite sure just where it was. A strange land with strange customs! He knew English. He had seen English soldiers in India, but what was England like?

"Can I go to England? Can I? Can I?"

"Where will the money come from?" his older brother asked him. "We aren't poor, but sending you to England and maintaining you there for two or three years would cost a great deal."

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His mother objected, too. "You are a caste Hindu. You cannot travel in foreign lands and expose yourself to the sins and influences of non-Hindus. It isn't done."

But fires had been kindled within the young man. He wanted to go to England. He argued and pleaded with his family. His uncle was really head of the family now that his father was dead, and Mohandas argued with his uncle. Again the same objections, because his uncle disapproved heartily of the idea of schooling in England. Young Indians of his acquaintance who had been to school in London came home different men, his uncle explained. They no longer lived up to their religion; they ate any sort of food, even meat; they smoked; they wore foreign clothing. Mohandas badgered the older man until his uncle agreed not to say "no" provided the rest of the family would consent.

"You had better give up the idea, Mohan. Stop dreaming of going to England and settle down to something serious here."

The young man may as well have been deaf. All he thought about was that he must convince his mother and brother. As for the cost, maybe he could raise some money on his wife's jewelry.

"You must say you approve," he told his brother. "If you and uncle both approve, I'm sure I can win Mother over."

"You're not even a good student," his brother reminded him. "If you couldn't stay in a local college, how can you hold your own in England?"

"I'll work hard and study," Mohandas promised. "You'll see. If I go to England, I'll work hard and deserve it."

His brother was young enough to understand how Mohandas felt, and at last he agreed to help him.

Mohandas' mother still shook her head. "England," she said, "is a land of sin where young men drink, smoke, eat meat, call brazenly at the homes of unmarried women."

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He gave her no peace. He argued with her at meal tables; he followed her about the house and pleaded with her.

"Mother, everyone has agreed to let me go to England except you."

At last, realizing how unhappy he would be if he didn't go to England, she gave in.

"You may go if you will give me your solemn oath, or promise, on three things," she told him.

Suddenly realizing that he would get to England after all, Mohandas gladly took the oath she required: not to drink wine, eat meat, or consort with women while he was away. To a Hindu an oath is binding unto death. His mother knew that once he had given that kind of promise she could trust him to live up to it.

From then on the house was in a turmoil of packing, preparing, planning, advising, running about, and confusion. Mohandas was going to England!

On his way at last! Young Gandhi started out from Rajkot to Bombay, the longest journey of his life so far, traveling part of the way in a two-wheeled cart pulled by a plodding bullock, jolting and creaking over the dusty roadway.

He saw parts of India that he had never seen before. He passed village after village, each one small, because India is a land of small villages. Only a few of India's millions of people live in the cities; most of them are country folk.

The villages that Gandhi saw were clusters of houses and huts, some with grass roofs, some roofed with tile, with one or two rooms inside. He could see that several families must have lived in each one, crowded together with the ground for a floor. Could people really be so poor?

Now and then he saw a village that was lucky enough to have a water tank, shaped something like a large swimming pool, to catch the water during the rainy season, so that the villagers would have something to drink during the dry season. They bathed in the tank; they watered their

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cattle in the tank; they drank the water from the tank. Some villages were too poor even to have a tank and had to haul their water from a neighboring village. A family that had a well of its own was indeed fortunate.

Mohandas traveled on until he reached the city of Bombay where he would go aboard a ship bound for England.

What a contrast between the poverty-stricken villages and the big, fashionable city! The city was noisy and bustling and the streets were full of horses and carriages, two-wheeled carts, and bicycles. Here and there he saw a big-wheeled automobile. He had to be careful crossing the street. He had to ask directions.

He was amazed by the huge buildings, turreted and domed, and everywhere throughout the city stood tall palm trees with their bare shanks and bushy tops. The sun glared hot on the white pavement, and men wore white suits with long tunic coats. Wealthy ladies went about in silk, the Moslems in bright trousers and blouses and veiled faces, the Hindus wrapped in red or green saris. The poor always went barefoot with a single piece of cloth wrapped around their hips to hide their nakedness. He hadn't realized there were so many different kinds of dress in India. Nearly everyone in his province was Hindu and wore about the same kind of dress.

He gazed at the long sweep of Malabar Hill in Bombay where the wealthy homes were located, set in rich flower gardens. At the first opportunity he wandered down into the crowded section of the city to the bazaar that he had heard about where the shoe-repair man squatted on the pavement waiting for work. Not far from him was the vendor of sugar-cane juice. There were fruit stands and flower stalls along the pavements and stands selling live creatures, everything from goldfish to monkeys.

It was spring when Gandhi arrived in Bombay, and his first crushing piece of news was to learn that he could not

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leave until fall. The Indian Ocean in the summer is extremely rough, churned up with gales and storms, too rough for a sea voyage. He would probably be in Bombay for three months.

He stood looking out of his hotel window at the city that stretched for miles around. How big it was! And he had been told that London was even bigger!

His second piece of crushing news was a message from the members of his caste. They were holding a special meeting on his account, and they wished him to be present. Would he please come to such and such an office building at an early hour the next day? Gandhi knew what it meant. His caste did not want him to go to England, and the officials of his caste would have some severe words for him.

What is caste? It is a custom as old as India, an important part of the Hindu religion.

The majority of the people of India believe in the Hindu religion, and every Hindu is a member of a certain caste, or class. He belongs to whatever caste his parents and grandparents belonged. He can never change his caste, and when Gandhi was young caste rules were more strictly enforced than they are now. Sometimes a Hindu painted on his forehead a little picture indicating to which caste he belonged.

There are four main castes: the Brahmins are the priests and scholars; the Kshatriyas are the rulers; the Vaisyas are the traders and farmers; and the Sudras are the laborers. Rules of caste decide what a person may do for a living, whom he may marry, what he may eat, even the design of his house. Mohandas and Kasturba, for instance, could not have married if their families had not belonged to the same caste, the Vaisyas or traders.

Below the four castes are the Untouchables, or outcastes, who have to do the meanest work of all.

Untouchability and the caste system grew up together

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from ancient times. Society was divided into layers of people, each layer with its own work to do. The bottom layer had no caste; its members were Untouchables. The Untouchables were the menials who did the dirtiest tasks. They carried out the waste and the garbage and were forced to be scavengers, just about as the Negro was enslaved in America.

Mohandas Gandhi hurried to the meeting of his caste the next morning, and as soon as they were all gathered together the head man said:

"We forbid you to go to England!"

"But my plans are all made — "

Gandhi was warned about the sins and vices he would find abroad. He stood his ground. The mischievous boy had grown up into a determined young man. This trip to England meant more even than his caste.

"I am going to England."

"We will expel you from the caste!"

To be expelled from the caste would mean losing everything he held dear. It would cut him off from his friends and family, from his entire community.

Mohandas was only eighteen. He stood before the officials of his caste — on trial. This was the first great decision of his life, and he made it bravely.

"I think the caste should not interfere in the matter. I am going to England."

The leader of the caste grew furious with this brazen boy. No one dared violate the laws of caste.

"This boy shall be treated as an outcaste from today. Whoever helps him or goes to see him off at the dock shall be punishable with a fine."

Mohandas was unshaken by the order. He said good-by to his friends, and on September 4, 1887, he boarded a steamer and sailed out of the harbor of Bombay bound for England.

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New difficulties aboard ship started almost immediately. He found himself surrounded by strange people, and he felt painfully shy. When he went into the ship's dining room, he found the menu full of meat items. He had never used a knife and fork before. To solve both problems he ate most of his meals in his cabin or went hungry. He really hid in his cabin during most of the voyage and came out for walks on deck when others were resting.

On a raw, damp September day, when the steamer docked at Southampton, England, Mohandas K. Gandhi appeared dressed in his best, a white flannel suit which he had been saving for the occasion. A rural boy from a tropical country, he had not known that it would be wrong to wear a white suit.

Southampton is about eighty miles south of London, and Gandhi had to travel by train to London. But before he did so, the self-conscious boy changed from his white suit into darker clothes.

London! It was even larger than his own Bombay. He had read that it was the largest city in the world, and now he could believe it. How different the buildings were from those in India. In the Far East the domes on public buildings were shaped something like an onion, curving gracefully up into a spire. In England they were squared with pointed spires rising from the corners. Out in the suburbs the houses in England had high pointed gables instead of thatch or tile.

Gandhi was able to walk through the streets of this great city at last, past Westminster Abbey, or the Houses of Parliament a few blocks from the Abbey, or he could watch the changing of the guard before Buckingham Palace, home of the King and Queen of England. How people rushed about the streets! And the traffic! He had to be more careful than ever crossing the street. And what dull dark-colored clothing everyone wore — none of the bright colors of India.

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Only a stripling of a boy, confused and thrilled by all that he saw, he felt proud to belong to the British Empire. How could he make friends with these people who were so different? There was the famous Thames River winding slowly through the heart of London. He wandered out onto London Bridge and stared down at the gray-brown water.

England may have been thrilling but it was also a difficult place for an Indian boy. It was stranger even than he had expected. Food was the biggest problem because he could not forget his promise to his mother that he would not touch meat or wine. What meat-eaters the English were!

Gandhi did not know where to live. First he stayed at a boarding house in London, paying a fixed fee for room and meals, a place where he had to eat what was served or go hungry. He filled up on cereal at breakfast, and on spinach and bread at dinner. After each meal he would leave the table famished, much too shy and self-conscious to say anything about it.

He read his first newspaper in England and developed a taste for reading history as quickly as it happens. Newspapers published in the big cities in India seldom reached the outlying provinces. More often news came to them by word of mouth or from an occasional traveler.

His admiration for the English and their ways increased, and at the same time his consciousness of being different grew more painful. He tried to make himself into an Englishman. He bought expensive clothes in Bond Street, had his hair cut English style, learned to tie a necktie. He would spend long sessions in front of a mirror vainly grooming himself. He even took speech lessons, French lessons, dancing lessons, violin lessons, in his effort to become a "gentleman."

He was suited to none of it. The dancing lessons were

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the biggest failure because he had no sense of rhythm and no ear for Western music. His violin cost him nearly fifteen dollars, in addition to all the expensive lessons in language, speech, and dancing, while his brother was struggling in India to raise enough money to support Mohandas in England.

"Oh, come to your senses, Gandhi!" said his conscience one day. "You are not an Englishman so stop trying to be one. You are an Indian, and you will have to live in India."

So he settled down to study law, the purpose for which he had come to England.

He stopped all of his lessons and sold his violin. He found a small apartment and walked wherever he had to go to save the fares. He must economize if he wished to stay long enough to finish his studies. He bought a small stove and cooked his own food. Breakfast was oatmeal and hot cocoa; the midday meal he ate at a vegetarian restaurant; supper he fixed himself of bread and cocoa.

Gandhi stayed in England for four years. During that time his ideas were being formed by his English friends, his studies, his reading. Going to school with young Englishmen, visiting in their homes on Sunday afternoon, discovering that they were interested in his family, especially his baby son, helped him to understand the English people better, to know their lovable traits.

He did a great deal of reading during his early years. It was in England that he discovered religions through his reading. He hadn't known much about his own religion, Hinduism, until then, when he read its holy book, the Bhagavad Gita, or Song Celestial. He discovered the true meaning of Christianity by reading the New Testament from cover to cover, and he never forgot the Sermon on the Mount.

"Who hateth nought of all which lives . . . that man I love!" he read in the Bhagavad Gita.

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"But I say unto you, love your enemies," he read in the New Testament.

His own philosophy of peace and love began to form with the reading of these scriptures.

He worked hard at his law studies, too. He had to learn English Common Law, Roman Law, and Hindu Law. He was admitted to the bar on the 10th of June, 1891, and enrolled in England's High Court the next day. On the 12th of June he sailed for home, something of an English dandy in his foreign clothes.

He was eager to be home. Four years is a long time to be away from those you love. He wanted to see his wife and his little son, and, above all else, he wanted to see his mother. He wanted to tell her that he had kept all of his promises to her. He had not touched wine or meat, and he had been most proper about women. He knew that would make her happy.

The first person he saw as the ship pulled into the dock in Bombay was his brother. And the first question Mohandas asked was:

"How is Mother?"

The elder brother shook his head. He had not wanted to send shocking news all the way to England so he had waited until now to tell Mohandas.

"Mother died while you were in England."

Mohandas laid a hand on his brother's arm, and the two young men walked away from the dock together. He felt more grief-stricken about his mother's death than about his father's, but he did not show his grief. His brother probably did not realize how badly he did feel because Mohandas was careful to check the tears.

"How was England?"

"Oh, interesting enough. I'm glad to be home."

They walked past the piles of baggage, the porters shouting and pushing, through the crowded streets of Bombay,

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to the railroad station. There they boarded a train that would take them toward Rajkot.

Return to India was not easy for Mohandas. The members of his caste were still quarreling about him. Some of them wanted to reinstate him and others did not. Gandhi never gave in, and he never asked to be readmitted to his caste, even though some of his wife's family belonged to the hostile group. He remained outcaste with that group from then on, which meant that he could not even drink a glass of water in their homes.

More important was his four-year-old son. His fondness for children had begun to show even in those youthful years. His concern for his own child's education made him stop and think about education for children in general. He took over the teaching of his son and his brother's children, and a gay party they made, laughing and playing together as they learned their letters.

Most important of all was the problem of earning a living. Even though he had done well in his English exams, he knew he was not properly trained to practice law in India. He was inexperienced and brown-skinned in a land where too many advantages went to the white man.

"Why don't you go to Bombay where the High Court is located?" his friends suggested. "You can learn something of Indian law there."

Gandhi thought it over. They were probably right. There would be more jobs in a big city like Bombay. So back to the big, bustling "gateway to India" he traveled.

Gandhi had to taste deeply of failure before he could know success. That is usually the way with great men.

His first law case was small, and so was the fee. When Gandhi went into court to represent his client, he was promptly informed that he would have to pay a "commission" to the higher-ups if he wanted to bring his case into court.

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"Thank you, no," was his reply. "I will pay no one anything."

"It's good business," was the advice.

He was firm. Good business or no, he paid nothing; and contrary to custom he was allowed to try his case.

What happened when he arrived in court with his client is another matter. All went well until the green, inexperienced Mr. Gandhi had to stand up before the courtroom and question a witness. As he arose and looked about at everyone and realized that all eyes were on him, an attack of shyness overcame him and his knees shook. His stage fright was so terrible that he felt sick and dizzy, and his tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth. The words left him. Terror-stricken and mortified he fled from the courtroom as the laughter of the spectators echoed behind him.

After that display of talent, Mr. Gandhi received no more cases to try. No more clients came to him asking to be represented. So, in about six months of total failure, he talked the whole matter over with his brother.

"What can I do? I have to earn a living."

"You had better come back to Rajkot," his brother advised. "You have more friends there, and you can open up your own law office."

Shortly after he returned to Rajkot Mohandas had his first lesson in what it means to be a citizen in a subject country. His brother had some difficulty with a British officer whom Gandhi had known in England.

"Will you please speak to him for me?" his brother asked.

Gandhi called upon the officer. But an Englishman in England and an Englishman in India were not the same creature. Gandhi was made aware of the difference immediately. He had spoken to this man as an equal in London; to do the same in his own land was an act of rudeness. Nevertheless he presented his brother's case. The man

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made it clear that he intended to do nothing for Gandhi's brother. Before Gandhi was even finished with what he had come to say, he was invited to leave. When he persisted, the Englishman arose, left the room, and a servant came in. The servant took hold of Gandhi and pushed him out of the room.

Young Gandhi was a hothead, and his anger was smoldering when he returned home and wrote to the English officer:

"You have insulted me. You have assaulted me through your peon. If you make no amends, I shall have to proceed against you."

The answer that came back was brief and clear:

"You were rude to me. I asked you to go and you would not. I had no option but to order my peon to show you the door. Even after he asked you to leave the office, you did not do so. He therefore had to use just enough force to send you out. You are at liberty to proceed as you wish."

Gandhi wanted to go to court against the Englishman, but his friends persuaded him not to do so. In those days one did not sue an Englishman in India without ruining oneself.

Gandhi's life was at a turning point, an important turning point, and his unfortunate experience with the English officer was a big factor, although he didn't realize it at the time. Events were leading him rapidly toward the amazing career he was to know.

Meanwhile he was not earning enough at law to contribute his share toward the household. He had two children by now, so something must be done.

Just at that point someone offered him a job in South Africa, and after he had talked it over with his family he decided to take it.

A large company in Porbandar, where Gandhi and Kasturba had been married, had law business in South Africa.

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dhi decided

The company offered Gandhi a chance to go to South Africa to assist them there. Oh, well, he thought, it would pay his expenses for a year and pay him about five hundred dollars in addition. Gandhi decided to take the job and asked the company to send the money directly to his family while he was away.

In the spring of 1893 Gandhi boarded another steamer sailing out of Bombay, this time in a southwesterly direction. He had been home in India exactly two years.

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3. *"COOLIE"*

"This that irks —
Thy sense-life, thrilling to the elements —
Bringing thee heat and cold, sorrows and joys,
'Tis brief and mutable! Bear with it, Prince!"
—GITA II.

FOR Gandhi South Africa was another land very different from India. At the end of May when his ship put in at the seaport of Durban, he knew he was seeing for the first time a strange and interesting country. South Africa is the land of the Dutch, the British, and the Zulu, the land of the white conqueror and the black native. It is a land with a mild pleasant climate, hilly countryside, fine resort beaches, rich farm land, industrial cities, and wild interiors.

The buildings looked more like those of England than India. They were squarish and did not have the domes and minarets of the East.

Durban had been discovered only seventy years before by an English merchant who made friends with the Zulus, settled there, and took possession of the area (later called Natal) for Great Britain. Gandhi found a prospering city in 1893. Strapping black Zulus had been reduced to rickshа boys and house servants, and the white man had built up for himself shops, houses, and elegant public buildings.

If South Africa looked attractive from the rail of the

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ship, it proved to be quite different as soon as Gandhi went ashore. Here in this white man's land the Indian was an inferior creature, he learned right away.

Abdulla Sheth, Gandhi's new employer, met Gandhi at the dock and took him to his offices in Durban. Sheth's client, however, lived in the city of Pretoria which was inland, a two-day journey north into the section called the Transvaal. Gandhi was expected to go to Pretoria.

"I want you to visit the courts in Durban first," said Sheth.

To court to watch a trial the two men went, and Gandhi was in trouble almost immediately.

"Will you please remove your turban?" said the magistrate to Gandhi.

Gandhi refused since, according to Hindu custom, it is rude to uncover the head. The magistrate insisted, and Gandhi chose to remove himself from the courtroom rather than submit to the embarrassing order.

Abdulla Sheth tried to explain the situation in South Africa to his quick-tempered young assistant fresh from India. Many Indians came to South Africa as indentured laborers for a term of five years. That is, they agreed to work for someone in South Africa for five years, and after that they were freed and could stay in the country. The majority of Indians in South Africa were either still indentured or had served their term and were now freed laborers. To Englishmen all Indians were "coolies" whether they were indentured or freed, and the color discriminations were severe. "Coolie barrister" was what they would call Gandhi.

Many Moslems from India pretended to be Arabs and avoided some of the contempt. The Parsis, Indians whose ancestors had come to India from Persia in the eighth century, called themselves Persians for the same reason. More courageous Indians continued to wear their turbans and

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proudly called themselves Indians. Gandhi was one of these.

"My turban stayed with me practically until the end of my stay in South Africa," he summed it up.

In a few days Gandhi boarded a train in Durban and started out for Pretoria where he would work for a year. He entered the train with a first-class ticket and seated himself in a first-class carriage. Again he must be reminded that he was a colored man! When the train stood idling in the station in a town called Maritzburg, another passenger came into the carriage. He took one look at Gandhi, noted that he was colored, and went out again. He returned in a short time with two officials.

"You will have to move to a third-class carriage," Gandhi was ordered.

"I paid for a first-class ticket," said Gandhi.

"We can't help that. A white man wishes to ride in this carriage, so you will have to move."

"I have no intention of moving."

"If you don't move we will have to call the police."

"You may do as you please about it."

They did. The police were summoned. Gandhi and his baggage were put off the train altogether.

Maritzburg is high up in the mountains, and on the night that Gandhi was put off the train the temperature was low and must have seemed even lower to a young man accustomed to the tropics. The train pulled out of the station and left him. He went into the small, dark waiting room of the railroad station. His only warm coat was locked up in his luggage, and he had no choice but to sit and wait for another train as the cold penetrated his thin jacket.

He waited all night in that dismal little station, and the next evening boarded a train that took him as far as Charlestown.

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Those were the early days in South Africa, and only a few railroads had been built. He had to travel by stagecoach from Charlestown. Again the color barriers!

The galloping of horses' feet meant the arrival of the stagecoach. It drew to a stop, and Gandhi started to climb in.

"I'm sorry. Your coach ticket has been canceled," said the driver.

Gandhi glanced inside of the coach and he knew what the trouble was. There were white passengers, and a "coolie" could not ride with them. Smoldering with anger, but having learned by this time to make the most of a bad situation, Gandhi climbed up and rode on the box with the driver.

That was not enough. When the coach paused at a small town, the driver's assistant, who had been riding inside of the coach in order to make room for Gandhi on top, stepped out, threw a dirty piece of cloth on the footboard, and said to Gandhi:

"You sit on this; I want to sit near the driver."

Gandhi had stood all he intended to stand, and his anger broke out.

"I won't sit at the driver's feet!" he announced hotly.

With that the man stood up and struck Gandhi first on one side of the head and then on the other. He grabbed Gandhi's arm and tried to drag him down from the coach. Gandhi clung to the brass rails of the coachbox. Still the man hammered at him, and Gandhi thought his wrist-bones would be broken. The man was bigger and stronger than he.

The passengers inside of the coach became excited. They didn't like to see what was happening.

"Man, let him alone!" they called out. "Don't beat him. He is not to blame. He is right. If he can't stay there, let him come and sit with us."

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The man felt crestfallen and stopped beating Gandhi, but to have the last word he shouted at the small, brown man:

"Take care, let me once get to our destination and I shall show you what I do."

Gandhi sat speechless and prayed to God to help him as the coach started up and rattled along over the rough, country road.

Gandhi did arrive safely in Pretoria, after completing the last few miles by train, and during that journey he thought a great deal about the unhappy plight of Indians in South Africa.

Pretoria proved to be a city about the size of Durban. It had been a village only a few years ago. Like most of the cities of South Africa it was new. The railroad had only recently been built, and few people traveled that far into the interior unless they had to.

In Pretoria Gandhi soon learned that his work was to be easy, more clerical than legal. This turned out to be a tremendous advantage because it left him with free time to study the conditions of Indians in South Africa.

Study and experience were changing Gandhi. From the time when as a young boy he had first seen the poverty of Indian villages he was becoming more and more conscious of human suffering. The treatment he had received when he first landed in South Africa had made him angry. Then, as he grew more mature and was influenced by his religious studies, he realized that anger was wrong, that it solved nothing. Investigating the hardships of Indians in this new land stirred him still more deeply, and he began to feel personally responsible for helping them.

"Something must be done," he realized, and since nobody else was doing anything about it, he decided to take action himself.

Soon the Indians living in the city of Pretoria were sur-

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prised to receive an invitation to a meeting. What in the world? Apparently some green-as-grass lawyer from India had just arrived and was going to change everything. Quite amused by the whole thing, the merchants and businessmen came to the meeting, and they nudged each other and exchanged smiles as the young whippersnapper got up to make a speech.

This was Gandhi's first political speech, and it wasn't a very good one. Gandhi would never be an orator.

Indians needed better treatment, Gandhi told his mixed audience of Hindus, Moslems, Christians, Parsis, and others.

"The wretched slums that they are made to live in must be cleaned up. They must be allowed to hold better positions. They need someone to represent them in court so that they will be able to obtain justice. We must forget our religious differences — these conflicts between Hindus and Moslems, high caste and low caste — and work together for the welfare of all Indians in South Africa."

He asked them to form a society or group to aid the Indians.

That was the beginning. The organization was formed. Under Gandhi's leadership it began to help the Indian in a foreign land to acquire a little self-respect and a little respect from those with whom he had to live.

Indians in the Transvaal (the state in which Pretoria is located) were not allowed to own land, and they had to pay a poll tax of about fifteen dollars to enter the state. They were not permitted to walk on public footpaths, and they had to observe a curfew after nine o'clock in the evening. Any Indian who wished to step out of doors after nine o'clock at night had to carry a permit.

Because of his excellent work and character the authorities had given Gandhi a letter permitting him to be out

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at any hour. One night, walking home alone along the dark path, he met a patrol. The patrol didn't bother to say, "Let me see your permit." When he was close enough to Gandhi to see his dark skin and Indian features, he pushed him into the roadway and gave him a sharp kick for good measure.

A friend of Gandhi's galloped up on horseback just that minute and dismounted.

"I saw that happen, and that man should be punished," he said to Gandhi angrily. "Let me be your witness in court."

But Gandhi, the inexperienced young hothead, was no more. In his place a more serious Gandhi, a more gentle and forgiving Gandhi, replied:

"No, thank you. I do not intend to do anything about it. What does the poor man know? All colored people are the same to him. He no doubt treats Negroes just as he has treated me. I have made it a rule not to go to court in respect of any personal grievance. So I do not intend to proceed against him."

During that year in Africa Gandhi began to feel that he had a real purpose in living. He became very popular, too, among all kinds of Indians: Moslems, Hindus, Parsis, Christians, because he was their champion. As the year drew to a close he found that he had put down roots in this strange land. Many of his friends asked him to remain, but his work was completed, and he began to long for his wife and two sons. He wanted to go home.

"At least let us give you a farewell party," pleaded his friends.

That was all right; in fact, that was most fortunate. While he and his companions were sitting around the table, Gandhi happened to glance at a newspaper lying nearby. His eye caught the heading, "Indian Franchise."

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He jumped out of his chair and picked up the paper to read more, while his friends crowded around him and read over his shoulders.

"What does it mean?"

A law was about to be passed in Natal forbidding Indians in that state to vote, Gandhi told them.

"If they take away our right to vote in one state, they can do it in another!"

" What shall we do?"

Gandhi was deeply disturbed.

"You must get together and fight this proposed law," he warned.

Few of them had much education, the merchants explained to him. The only lawyers they could turn to were the Europeans, who would have little interest in helping Indians. Many educated young Indians had turned Christian and no longer cared about Indian problems.

"Stay with us another month," they pleaded with Gandhi. "Stay long enough to help us defeat this bill. You are the only one who can help us because you are the only one with sufficient education and legal training."

Gandhi consented, and in another two or three days a huge meeting was held. They drew up a petition against the proposed law, and volunteers went out to canvass for signatures. Within two weeks they had collected ten thousand names.

Copies of the petition were printed and handed out everywhere. Copies were sent to the newspapers. The *Times of India* came out in favor of the Indian petition. Even the dignified London *Times* said that a law preventing Indians from voting would be unjust.

By this time Gandhi was so involved that he could not leave South Africa. The added month that he had planned to spend there vanished before the work had hardly begun.

"Don't leave us now," his friends pleaded. "We have

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collected some money and we will pay you a salary if you will work for us."

"No," said Gandhi flatly. "I can never accept pay for welfare work."

If he could earn enough money practicing law, he would be able to remain and give all of his free time to the Indian problem.

"We will give you all of our law business if you will stay in South Africa," said a group of merchants.

With his livelihood assured, Gandhi agreed to remain.

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4. *THE INDIANS HAVE A CHAMPION*

"Therefore, arise, thou Son of Kunti! brace
Thine arm for conflict, nerve thy heart to meet —
As things alike to thee — pleasure or pain,
Profit or ruin, victory or defeat."

—GITA II.

GANDHI opened his law office in Durban, where he could be closer to the center of things instead of being buried in the interior, and went to work at once to better the conditions of Indians in South Africa.

The Natal Indian Congress was founded on May 22, 1894, and Mohandas K. Gandhi was elected secretary. The new organization was to be supported by contributions of its members. Gandhi himself pledged about five dollars a month, which put a definite strain on his income.

The office of the Natal Indian Congress had been open only a few weeks when there came a knock at the door one day. Gandhi went to see who was there, and the sight startled him. He found an indentured Indian, ragged, beaten, and bleeding, shaken by the treatment he had received at the hands of his master. Gandhi helped him to a chair.

"What happened to you?"

The man was almost too exhausted to tell his story, but he managed to stammer out a tale of how he had been beaten by the man to whom he was indentured.

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Gandhi called in a doctor and asked him to examine the man's injuries. As soon as the doctor had given him a certificate, Gandhi went to see the beaten man's employer.

"You were legally in the wrong," Gandhi said. "We can take you to court and have the man's indenture canceled or have him transferred to another owner. Why don't you settle out of court and let me transfer his indenture to someone else?"

A European landowner being advised by a "coolie"? This was something new in South Africa.

"See here!" the landowner started to say with much indignation.

Gandhi stood his ground; he knew how it annoyed the white man to have to deal with him as an equal. "You know I'm right," he said.

The man nodded, and Gandhi went off to carry out his plans. In a few days he had found the Indian a new job.

The news traveled like wildfire all over South Africa and even to India. The Indians of South Africa had a champion at last! The indentured Indians began to bring their troubles to the secretary of the Natal Indian Congress.

Why were the Europeans in South Africa so prejudiced against the Indians? When Natal was first being colonized, about the time that the Civil War was raging in the United States, the settlers decided that they wanted to grow sugar cane. They soon found that the native Zulus were of no help at all in growing sugar cane. So they did the next best thing: they imported laborers. They offered Indians five-year contracts if they would come to South Africa to work. When the five years were up, the Indians were promised, they would be free and full-fledged citizens.

Indians are a proud, industrious, and self-respecting people. Those who came to South Africa fulfilled their promises faithfully. They cultivated the land with skill; they

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brought new fruits and vegetables with them from India. The mango tree that now flourishes in South Africa was brought there by the Indians. When they finished their five years of work and were free, they bought their own land, built their own houses, and became successful. They began to compete with the Europeans.

Then laws began to appear on the books discriminating against Indians in one way or another. They could not have indentured labor of their own. They were met with Jim Crow regulations wherever they went. The Europeans were afraid to give them too much liberty. If they did not go back to India when their indenture was over, they had to pay a huge poll tax to be allowed to remain.

How hard Gandhi worked to correct these wrongs! He worked all day and far into the night, at his desk, at meetings, in court. Before he realized what had happened, three years had passed by instead of the one he had planned to remain. He realized that he would spend many more years there. So in 1896 he went back to India for his wife and sons. He would bring them to South Africa, and they would make their home there with him.

His wife was not consulted as to her interest in going to South Africa to live. Hers but to do and die. Kasturba Gandhi was not even permitted to decide what clothes she would take with her.

"I know what is best," he explained. "You will receive much better treatment in South Africa if you dress like a Parsi."

So Mrs. Gandhi wore the sari, a long piece of fabric wound around the body, beginning as a skirt, then around the shoulders and over the head. His two sons, aged nine and five, wore the knee-length coat and tight-legged trousers. This journey was the small boys' first experience with shoes and stockings, and the little feet that had been

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so free in their own land suffered many blisters and discomforts until they became used to their coverings.

But Mohandas Gandhi was not too unkind a husband. During the long, slow sea voyage from Bombay back to Durban, he tried to explain South Africa to his family. He wanted them to like it because he knew they would be living there for many years, and he knew they must be afraid of their new venture. This was the first time they had been away from India.

At last the harbor of Durban was sighted, and trouble was waiting for the Gandhis before they set foot on the land.

The white people in South Africa didn't want any more Indians there. They especially did not want Gandhi back. He was a troublemaker.

"Go back to India!" was the message they sent aboard.

As the ship slowly moved toward the dock, the passengers could see a mob of angry whites gathered on the shore.

"You had better be careful," the ship's captain said to Gandhi.

"I'm going ashore no matter what happens," Gandhi announced. "But I want my wife and children to be safe."

"Wait until sundown."

So the Gandhis remained aboard ship until dark. After dark Mrs. Gandhi and the two boys were taken off the ship and driven in a ricksha to the home of Mr. Rustomji, a Parsi shopkeeper and fellow worker of Gandhi's. Gandhi himself was to travel quietly on foot. With a companion he started to walk the two miles from the dock to Mr. Rustomji's house.

"Gandhi! Gandhi!" a cry went up as he was recognized.

It was too late. The crowd began to gather, to shout, to quarrel. Gandhi and his companion tried to get into a ricksha, but the ricksha boy became terrified and bolted

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when he saw the angry mob. Eggs, stones, anything the crowd could lay their hands on flew through the air. The rowdy excitement grew. Someone grabbed Gandhi's turban and tore it from his head. He was backed against the iron fence in front of a house and kicked, beaten, punched.

Suddenly a fashionably dressed lady forced her way through the crowd to Gandhi's side. Opening her parasol, she held it before Gandhi to protect him from the flying missiles. The crowd knew who she was — the wife of the Superintendent of Police — and they did not dare to harm her.

The short pause gave the police time to arrive, and they escorted Gandhi the rest of the way to Mr. Rustomji's home.

The white mobs were not through with this arrogant and dark-skinned young man who was so bent on stirring up trouble among the local Indians. When they learned where Gandhi had gone, they gathered outside of the Rustomji house.

"We want Gandhi!" they shouted.

"Give us Gandhi!"

The Superintendent of Police went to the door to talk to the crowd. While he talked to them at the front of the house, Gandhi was spirited out through a back door. The crowd left when it learned that its victim had escaped.

"You can have them arrested for beating you," Gandhi was told.

He knew that. Again he refused to do such a thing. Punishment was no solution to race conflicts. His job in South Africa was to find out what caused all this hatred of Indians and do what he could to overcome it.

He was only twenty-eight years old when he returned to that country with his family and settled down to stay. He had changed a great deal from the mischievous boy who had tried to eat meat and who had sneaked cigarettes. He

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had grown in mind and body and heart. His religious and spiritual ideas were developing. His ideals were becoming higher, and they would become still higher, so high that they would be beyond the reach of ordinary men.

The friends he made in South Africa and the books he was reading in those days both influenced him a great deal. He had many friends among the Christian missionaries, and they helped him to make a careful study of Christianity. Charles F. Andrews (Charlie) in particular became one of Gandhi's best-loved and closest friends for years in South Africa and later in India. Gandhi learned to understand and respect Christianity, although he always remained a Hindu.

One day Gandhi came upon a book by Leo Tolstoy called, *The Kingdom of God Is Within You*. It held him spellbound. When he finished it he wanted to read more books by the same author; he wanted to know more about Tolstoy. Tolstoy believed in simple living, in hard work, in having no violent thoughts. Tolstoy was a Russian writer who had given up riches and his membership in the Russian church to live a Christian life in his own way. In his middle years he took to peasant clothes, to working in the fields, to eating a vegetarian diet. He believed that the best teaching was in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, especially in the words, "Resist not evil." He believed that all violence is wrong, especially war.

Gandhi's excitement grew as he read on. Tolstoy was right! Life had to be simple. Violence was wrong. A man had to work hard to be happy.

One exciting experience was heaped upon another when someone gave him a copy of John Ruskin's *Unto This Last* to read. Ruskin said that every man must work hard to be happy, that the happiest work is real labor, farming or handicraft, and that one man's work is just as good as another's and just as important. Ruskin said that if you

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helped any human being to be a little happier you were helping all of mankind.

These three ideas — hard work, equality, living for others — would be the ideas that shaped Gandhi's life.

But Mohandas Gandhi was a Hindu, and he found that the Hindu faith was the best for him after all.

The Hindu religion taught him that self-control, self-discipline, self-denial are necessary for real happiness, which is another way of saying hard work and service to others. Hindus believe that a man's spirit and his body are in conflict with each other: his desire to do good and to discipline himself on the one hand, and his physical desires on the other, his love of fine clothes, fine food, and rich living. If a man cannot master himself and his physical desires, he can have little hope of reward in the next world.

Brahman — that is at-one-ment or communication with the Most High — is the thing that every man must strive for. It is the triumph of the spirit over the flesh. Brahman is knowledge, not ordinary book knowledge as we know it, but the knowledge of truth, the understanding of God. A man achieves Brahman through self-discipline, meditation, and prayer.

Everyone must strive for Brahman. He must not eat too much. He must not want too many worldly things. He must spend a certain amount of time every day in prayer. Then, when he dies, he will be born again into the world to a better life. For a Hindu believes that each man lives many, many times, not just once. Everyone is born, dies, is reborn, redies, and so on and on into eternity, until his soul is finally absorbed into the Eternal Spirit. If he is born to a low caste this time, he can achieve a higher caste in the next life, provided he lives a worthy life. The way he lives in this world will determine how lucky he will be in the next.

On through the ages he goes through his many lives,

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striving to come closer to God, until at last, when he has achieved true knowledge and purity, he can break out of the endless cycle of birth and death, birth and death, and join his own spirit with God's. That is the end for all Hindus: Brahman.

Mohandas Gandhi, after much study and reading, was beginning to understand his own religion. He must simplify his own life. He must discipline himself. He must learn to do without worldly goods. Then, and only then, could he be of real service to others.

He began to make his own life simpler. He gave up his laundryman and learned to do his own washing and ironing. He was still wearing English dress at this time, and until he learned the skill of ironing a starched collar his appearance suffered. Into the courtroom or his office he would come with his shirt collar scorched on one side or pulled out of shape.

He learned to cut his own hair so that he would not have to depend upon a barber. At first his hair was a sorry sight, and when he arrived in court after his first self-haircut, his legal friends roared with laughter.

"What's wrong with your hair, Gandhi? Have the rats been at it?"

"No. The white barber would not condescend to touch my black hair," he replied, "so I preferred to cut it myself, no matter how badly."

Since the time as a growing boy that he had had to go to his sick father with a confession, Gandhi had held to the truth. He told the truth and he thought the truth in all things. During the first two years that he and his family lived in South Africa, he won a reputation for his honesty in law.

"Gandhi is a stickler for the truth!"

"Lawyer Gandhi won't represent you in court unless you tell the truth."

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A client who deceived him could expect no help. The guilty had to plead guilty and take their punishment.

He could not preach honesty to others unless he practiced it himself. Instead of suffering as a result, he was more successful than other lawyers. Case after case came his way, and his law practice prospered.

When he was not practicing law he was working for the cause of the Indians, trying to better their living conditions. If hard work makes a man happy, Gandhi certainly must have been happy in South Africa.

In 1899 he took on still more work when a war broke out between the British and the Dutch, known as the Boer War.

It came as no surprise to Gandhi because in his six years in the land he had learned a great deal from the people who had lived there all their lives.

"The Dutch came to South Africa first," a Boer farmer had told him. "They founded their first colony in 1652. They conquered the wild land and the native tribes and built their homes on the coast."

"Who are the Boers?" he had asked.

"The Boers are a combination of Dutch, French, and a few Germans. A group of French Protestants sought refuge here from religious persecution in France. They mixed with the Dutch to make what is really a new species: the Boers — a proud, stubborn, peace-loving, hard-working people who have even developed their own language, Afrikaans. The word Boer is a Dutch word that means farmer or peasant."

Gandhi learned that the Boers had been left to themselves in South Africa until England went to war with France to defeat Napoleon. During that war the English captured South Africa in 1806. Then English settlers moved in and began to encroach upon the Dutch and French, or Boers.

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"We don't want to be ruled by anyone," said the Boers. "We want our liberty and our own government."

The Boers packed up their families and belongings in 1836 when the Great Trek took place. They moved in huge covered wagons drawn by double tandems of horses and started north to conquer new land for themselves. Let the British have the Cape and Natal. Thousands of families moved at one time. Men on horseback, rifles ready, driving cattle before them, women and children in great wagons, with their household goods and furniture, trekked northward across the Vaal River to face wild country, wild beasts, and naked and hostile Zulus. The trekking Boers settled the territory that became the Orange Free State and the Transvaal.

That meant that the British owned the territory along the coast, and the Boers had their own territory north of that. What then started the war between the Boers and the British?

Diamonds and gold and human greed!

The first diamonds were discovered on a farm in Kimberley in the southern part of the Orange Free State in 1870. The territory belonged to the Boers. A year later the British found an excuse for taking the territory away from the Boers to "protect" it. The Boers resented the act, but they did not go to war.

Fifteen years later gold was discovered in the Transvaal, the other state belonging to the Boers. As soon as the news got around that gold had been discovered a gold rush like that of the Klondike took place. People rushed in madly to stake out claims and mine gold. Many of them were British. The Boers' government was not too cordial and didn't treat the British miners too well. You came for gold and that's what you're getting, they said.

By the time Gandhi came to South Africa, hatred between the Boers and the British had been growing and

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growing. He had been there six years when actual war broke out.

When the conflict started Gandhi knew what he must do. His religion taught non-violence so he could not become a soldier. It also taught him sacrifice and service to others.

Mohandas Gandhi was a loyal British subject, and so he gave his service to the British as a stretcher-bearer and first-aid worker.

"Here are human beings in need," he said to his fellow Indians. "We must help them."

More than a thousand Indians responded to his call to form an ambulance corps. Right into the firing lines they went, with no fear for themselves, carrying the wounded back on stretchers. Indian stretcher-bearers sometimes walked as far as twenty-five miles to bring a wounded man from the field to a hospital unit behind the lines.

Others led mules carrying huge bags of water. If rifle fire killed the Indian leading the mule, another Indian stepped forward to take his place.

Gandhi watched the bravery of his fellow countrymen, and he saw the surprise on the faces of the Europeans. Up to now Indians had been thought cowardly creatures who had come to South Africa merely to make money.

Perhaps now, he hoped, perhaps now that the Europeans had watched the Indians perform this service to others, a little tolerance could be wrung from their hearts.

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5. *SACRED VOWS*

"Do thine allotted task!
Work is more excellent than idleness."
—GITA III.

THE BRITISH won the war against the Boers, which meant that they captured the two Boer countries of Orange Free State and the Transvaal. British victory meant that the Indians in the two countries would have a new government. They would be governed by the British instead of the Dutch. Would that be better or worse? Gandhi didn't know.

After eight years of hard service in South Africa, Gandhi felt too tired to judge clearly. Kasturba had another thought:

"Perhaps you're homesick," she suggested.

"Are you homesick?" he asked her, and she nodded her head. She wanted to go back to Rajkot and to visit with friends and family once more.

"Don't leave us!" his friends pleaded. "We need you here."

"I have definitely decided to return to India," Gandhi told them.

"What about this new government? We don't know what to expect."

Gandhi paused and thought about the situation. No, he must go home. He did not want to stay in South Africa any longer.

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His wife and children were busy packing. Mrs. Gandhi's eyes shone with happiness at the thought of going home. The boys raced about excitedly from one corner of the house to another. They were going on a long sea voyage!

"If you need me badly enough," he promised his friends, "I'll come back."

The Gandhis sailed out of Durban once more, and as they stood at the ship's rail, watching the shoreline disappear, they remembered the mob of whites who had greeted them on their arrival. There would be no angry mobs waiting for them in Bombay. They would not have to wait until dark to go ashore.

India! What would it be like after so long? Gandhi really didn't know much about his own country at that point in his life. He knew only the western part where Rajkot and Porbandar were located. He remembered the villages dotted over the countryside, the little farm plots, the rains and the drought. He remembered Bombay. That was about all. There were whole vast stretches of the land that he had never seen.

Gandhi was again faced with the question of where to live and what to do for a living, and he wanted advice. He wanted advice from someone who knew India well. So as soon as he had seen his family safely home he journeyed across India to Calcutta to consult Gokhale. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, an elder Indian statesman, was someone whom Gandhi had admired and respected for a long time.

On the slow Indian trains the journey across India, a distance of more than twelve hundred miles, took Gandhi more than three days to complete. He had to carry his bedding with him for the railroads provided none. He had to purchase his food whenever the train pulled into a station and urchins ran along the platform crying their wares up to the train windows.

"Water? Water?" the barefoot boys would shout. Some-

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times they offered tea to thirsty passengers, or fruits and sweets.

As the train traveled toward the eastern coast and Calcutta, Gandhi looked out of the window at the great plateau. For hours and hours the land was nothing but flat plains that were hot in summer, cold in winter. Sometimes he rode through a stretch of forest, then more plains. As he reached the eastern part of the country the plains seemed greener and not as dry. It was a tiring and tedious trip, and he was glad to reach Calcutta, with its wide streets, parks, and English-type architecture.

He went directly to Gokhale's house, and the aged gentleman held out his arms to the young man fresh from South Africa.

Gokhale was like a beloved elder brother, and Gandhi stayed with him for nearly a month, talking with him, listening to his advice, telling him about his work in South Africa.

"Why don't you live in Bombay and practice law there?" Gokhale advised.

That seemed like a good idea to Gandhi.

"Are you going to stay in India this time?"

"Absolutely," said Gandhi. "I'm home to stay."

Gandhi explained further that he wanted to attend a meeting of the Indian National Congress Party, of which he had heard, because he wanted to report to them on the plight of Indians in South Africa. Perhaps they could take some action that would be of help.

Gokhale shook his head.

"I don't want to discourage you," he said. "Go to the Congress meeting, but don't expect any help from them. They have no power at all."

In spite of Gokhale's remarks, Gandhi went to the meeting of the Indian National Congress. He didn't know much about Indian politics, and this would be a chance to learn.

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The Indian National Congress is really a political party and is often referred to simply as the "Congress Party." In 1901 when Gandhi first visited one of its meetings, the Congress Party was a mild-mannered organization that accomplished little. Today, however, in free India, it is the strongest and most important political party in the country.

The thirty-two-year-old Gandhi was an energetic fellow. Merely attending meetings and listening to speakers wasn't enough. He wanted to get into his Congress Party and really work.

"Can I be of help to you in some way?" he said to one of the officers.

The other man hesitated. Most people who came offering their services free of charge wanted honors. They wanted to sit on the platform, to make pretty speeches.

"Why not let me work in your office as a clerk?" Gandhi suggested.

Clerk? Definitely! There was plenty of routine work to be done, the kind of work that members did not usually volunteer to do. Gandhi plunged into the task at once. There were stacks of letters to be answered, filing and bookkeeping to be cleared up. Actually, he learned more than he ever would have learned about the Congress Party in an official position.

Gandhi was surprised to discover how divided Indians were among themselves. Moslems and Hindus did not get along with each other at all.

The majority of Indians, he knew, were Hindus. Next came the Moslems, the second most important group in India. Moslems believe that there is one God, Allah, when they worship. They believe that all men are equal and do not believe in the caste system as Hindus do. They consider it perfectly proper to eat meat.

Seeing Untouchability at close range horrified Gandhi.

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Untouchability was much worse than he had ever realized, and at the Congress Party meeting it created awkward problems. Some Hindus, for instance, had to have a special kitchen far removed from the others because if they so much as looked at an Untouchable while they were eating they were polluted.

"If you can't get along with each other how do you expect to accomplish anything?" was Gandhi's logical question.

Several thousands came to a Congress Party meeting, and so a special camp had to be built — a city of tents. Gandhi found conditions around the camp perfect for a major epidemic: pools of stagnant water on the ground; not enough toilets, so that many used the ground and gave no thought to the effect. Only an Untouchable could clean up such dirt; a caste Hindu could not touch it.

"Who will help me?" Gandhi asked as he picked up a broom and started to sweep the ground.

"You are a caste Hindu!" exclaimed the others in horror. "You can't do that, and neither can we."

The job was too much for one man, and Gandhi laid the broom down. But he did not forget the conditions he found around the first Congress Party meeting he attended, and when he finally settled down in India for good he tackled the sanitary conditions all over the country in addition to his other work.

As soon as the Party meeting was over, he traveled back to Bombay to open his law office. The law practice soon began to prosper. The Gandhi family was contented and settled in a cottage in the suburbs. At last life seemed permanent. Mrs. Gandhi could set her house in order, and the boys could go to school. Until —

A telegram came from South Africa.

Mrs. Gandhi watched cautiously while he opened and read it. She would have liked to say, "What is it this

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time?" but she remained silent. Her duty was to help her husband in whatever he wanted to do.

"We need you desperately," the telegram said. "Can you please come back to South Africa?"

They had been in India only a year. Gandhi had said that he was home to stay, but he had also promised his South African friends that he would return if they needed him.

"This will only be a short visit," he assured his wife. "I'll go alone and be back in a few months."

So, leaving his family in Bombay, Gandhi set sail once more, arriving in Durban at the end of 1902.

He was shocked by the postwar conditions that he found there: refugees, sickness, poverty, red tape, confusion in government offices, office seekers, ruined businesses. Up in the Transvaal where the fighting had been the thickest conditions were the worst.

"The war had reduced the Transvaal to a howling wilderness," he wrote in his diary. "Empty or closed shops were there, waiting to be replenished or opened, but that was a matter of time. Even refugees could not be allowed to return until the shops were ready with provisions."

The authorities did not welcome Gandhi back. They did not want anyone around making trouble for them among the Indians. They had their new Asiatic department set up to deal with the Indian problem, and they intended to be strict.

Gandhi saw at once that the Indian problem under the New British government could not be solved in a few weeks or even a few months.

"You had better pack up and move to South Africa," he wrote to his wife. "I'm going to be here for a long time."

He opened a law office in the city of Johannesburg, the heart of the trouble spot in the Transvaal, and went to work at once.

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The amount of work that Mohandas Gandhi could do in a day is hard to believe. He needed only four or five hours' sleep a night, and he used every waking minute. He practiced law, he took care of his family, he started a newspaper called *Indian Opinion*. He bought a farm, about twenty miles from Durban, at Phoenix, where his family and fellow workers could live.

"Everyone must work to be happy," he said, and he and his friends cleaned up and improved the farm land with its spring of water, mango and orange trees, and one run-down cottage. Everyone had to do his share, whether he be laborer or professor; he must share in preparing vegetables, washing floors, carrying out waste, weeding the vegetable garden, helping build the houses they needed. There were no profits at Phoenix Farm. Everyone contributed to the welfare of the group, and everyone received the same wage.

At first Gandhi did not live full time at the Phoenix Farm. He continued his law practice at Johannesburg, spending his week ends and vacations at the farm.

As soon as the buildings were up, the presses of *Indian Opinion* were moved to the farm and the paper issued from there, its pages rolling from a hand-turned press. *Indian Opinion* carried its message in two languages: English and Gujarati. In its pages Gandhi wrote encouragement to his fellow countrymen, exposed living conditions in the "ghettos" in which the Indians were forced to live, made appeals to the government to change laws.

All this time Gandhi the man was growing more patient and gentle, in spite of the pressure of work. There was time in every busy day for meditation and prayer. His religious beliefs were still forming and growing. It was during this part of his life in South Africa that he developed his greatest and most important religious ideas. People were beginning to call him "Mahatma," the "Great Soul."

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Each day he turned to the Hindu holy book, the Bhagavad Gita, Song of the Lord. In these pages Gandhi always found comfort and guidance.

The Bhavagad Gita is the story of God, called Krishna, who appears in mortal form and talks to the warrior, Arjuna. Krishna explains to Arjuna the meaning of life, the meaning of true knowledge, the truth about God's love, the ways of achieving Brahman or eternal life. Krishna's advice to Arjuna is good advice for anyone to follow. Faith, hard work, meditation, self-discipline, service, the Gita recommends.

The Gita, Gandhi had long since learned, was only a small part of the sum total of the Hindu scriptures, just as the New Testament is only a part of the Bible. Other Hindu holy writings are collections of hymns and songs, prayers and spells, telling the story of the ancient peoples of India: songs of creation, of the geography, of battles and conquests, of crops and cattle, of the beginnings of caste. Some of them were written as far back as 3000 B.C. But the Gita, written about 400 B.C., was Gandhi's favorite. It became the guiding light of his life.

Gandhi's life became more spiritual as he was guided more and more by the Gita and its teachings. He began to understand that a man must choose the type of life he wants to live. Gandhi chose spiritual (religious) living because he felt that that was his mission here on earth. He must school himself and train himself to be worthy of that mission.

"I have been born to serve others," he said reverently.

He had to give up all comforts and luxuries. Fruits and nuts, raw and cooked vegetables, were all that he allowed in his diet. Even though his life had been extremely plain and simple up to that point, anyway, it was not severe enough to satisfy Gandhi. No extra clothing, no furniture,

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no bank account, no worldly goods of any kind — he must own nothing! Wisdom comes through self-control.

"That man alone is wise who keeps the mastery of himself," says the Gita.

Gandhi felt the call to spiritual living so deeply that in 1906, when he was thirty-seven years old, he took his great religious vow. He vowed to give up everything that was not spiritual. He would do without all comforts. His vow meant complete chastity. Gandhi vowed to do without everything, from his married life on down to such small things as spices and flavorings in food.

The Gandhi family would continue to live together, but he and Mrs. Gandhi would be as brother and sister, no longer as husband and wife.

Gandhi began to live like a priest, possessing nothing, having no comforts, feeling no violent emotions. In order to achieve this he had to spend many waking hours in prayer and meditation, asking God's help.

Still his busy life went on. He worked in the courts as a lawyer, after hours to help the Indians; he wrote for his newspaper *Indian Opinion* about every subject that concerned him: health, diet, politics, oppression of the Indians.

One day some Indians from Johannesburg came to him in deep trouble.

"They are trying to put us out of the city!"

Gandhi listened quietly as they told of attempts to evict them from the city entirely. They had already been herded into a separate section far too small for the growing population. There was almost no sewage disposal, no garbage collection, bad roads, and no lights.

"They can't make you move out." Gandhi was decisive.

"They claim we made those bad conditions ourselves," the Indian spokesman said in utter hopelessness.

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"It's the excuse they are using to drive us out. Help us, Bhai!" said another.

"Bhai" or "brother" was what they had learned to call him.

"You have ninety-nine-year leases on your land," he reminded them. "You have a legal right to remain."

So "Bhai," the efficient attorney, went into court to represent them. He was no longer the scared young man in court that he had been years ago when he tried his first case. His knees no longer shook when he stood up to talk. He was a dignified, experienced attorney now. A small, slim man, whose face shone with a kindly light that made everyone forget how homely he was, he stood before the magistrate on behalf of the Indians of Johannesburg. There were some seventy cases in all, and Gandhi won decisions in favor of the Indians in all but one.

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6. *THE LESSON OF SERVICE TO OTHERS*

"Faith — yea, a little faith —
Shall save thee from the anguish of thy dread."
— GITA II.

BEHIND the scenes in all these activities moved the devoted figure of Mrs. Gandhi — Kasturba, or simply Ba, as she was called. Quietly and willingly she had adapted herself to every change in their living. She and her sons had moved from India to South Africa, from South Africa to India, and back to South Africa again. The youngest two of her four sons had been born in South Africa.

Harilal, the oldest, had remained in India this last time in the care of an uncle. The other three, Manilal, Ramdas, and Devadas, grew up in Johannesburg and at Phoenix Farm.

Kasturba lived a rather silent life with only duty as her lot. As the years passed, the faithful manner in which she carried out her duties and cared for her husband and sons earned for her in her own home a position of greater and greater dignity until, by 1906, when her husband took his religious vows, the child bride emerged as the priceless life companion.

Mohandas Gandhi's vow of celibacy, she knew, meant that there could be no more children, and she accepted the new way of living with valor and courage. Kasturba's courage was a quality that Gandhi had learned to depend upon.

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She fell desperately ill once, while they were in South Africa, and the doctor said she would have to have an operation.

"I cannot give you an anaesthetic," said the doctor. "Do you think you can endure the pain?"

Kasturba nodded her head and endured the whole operation without uttering a cry.

"She went through it with wonderful bravery," said Gandhi.

After the operation she did not rally; her strength did not return.

"She must have either wine or beef tea," the doctor said. "She needs one or the other to restore her strength."

Gandhi flatly refused to let her have either. Meat-eating is forbidden to a Hindu, and the cow in particular is a sacred animal. Alcoholic beverages are likewise forbidden.

"Then I will absolutely not be responsible for the consequences," the doctor announced and abruptly prepared to leave. "Your wife will die unless you allow her to have what I prescribe."

Gandhi was distraught. He didn't want to lose Kasturba, but he didn't want to persuade her to commit a sin either. He decided to talk it over with her, sick though she was.

As he sat down at her bedside, she was so weak that she could hardly raise her hand. He told her of the doctor's ultimatum.

"I will not take beef tea," she said. "It is a rare thing in this world to be born a human being, and I would far rather die in your arms than pollute my body with such abominations."

She was as absolute in her faith as he was in his.

When the doctor was informed of the decision, he refused to have anything further to do with the patient. Let them call another doctor.

Since Kasturba was being cared for in the doctor's house,

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it became necessary to move her to another place, and Gandhi decided to take her to Phoenix Farm.

"She's too sick to be moved!" cried the doctor.

"Pray move me at once," was Kasturba's comment.

Gandhi carried her in his arms from the house to the ricksha, from the ricksha to the train. She had lost so much weight that he hardly felt the burden. From the train at Phoenix he and some others transported her in a kind of hammock to the farm. There, with careful nursing, she slowly and painfully recovered her health without having to touch beef tea or wine.

It was not the first time that Gandhi had been his wife's nurse. He had looked after her when their third and fourth sons were born.

Gandhi enjoyed nursing. He liked caring for the sick, watching over them tenderly, speaking words of cheer and encouragement to them. He had cared for the sick and wounded during the Boer war; and he had nursed a group of Zulus during an epidemic of black plague.

"My aptitude for nursing gradually developed into a passion, so much so that it often led me to neglect my work, and on occasions I engaged not only my wife but the whole household in such service," says his autobiography.

By this time Mr. and Mrs. Gandhi and their three sons were living all of the time at Phoenix Farm. They had given up their house in Johannesburg to help run Gandhi's ideal community where everyone was equal, where plain food — hand-ground flour, fruits, nuts, simple vegetables — was the rule.

Gandhi never asked others to do what he would not do himself, and he usually imposed the strictest rules on himself. For self-discipline he began to fast completely on certain holy days. On those days he would take nothing but water all day.

While he spent much time in devotion and self-disci-

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pline, his thoughts were for others. He looked after everyone's welfare at the farm, supervising the minutest details himself: serving of meals, cleaning and care of the house, education for the children, editing of *Indian Opinion*.

But he never lost sight of his greatest purpose in being in South Africa — to help the Indians living there.

"I learned in South Africa the lesson of service instead of self-interest," he once remarked.

An item in a Transvaal newspaper, on August 22, 1906, electrified all of the Indians into action.

"As I read the sections one after another I was first alarmed and then horror-stricken. I saw nothing in it except hatred of Indians," Gandhi wrote.

The new government was planning to pass a Registration Ordinance, a law making every Indian over eight years of age register at the Asiatic office, giving every imaginable kind of detail about himself or herself: age, caste, address, scars, even fingerprints. He would then have to carry a registration card with him at all times, and any police officer could demand to see his card whenever he wished. The police could even enter Indian homes and demand to see registration cards. To disobey would mean prison and fine.

Gandhi was a man of action. He promptly translated the planned law into Gujarati and published it in *Indian Opinion*. As fast as he and his helpers could roll copies of the paper off the presses at Phoenix Farm, the news was circulated all over the Transvaal. Indignation began to rise.

Within three weeks a giant mass meeting of Transvaal Indians met in the Old Empire theater in Johannesburg. They gathered from all over the Transvaal, from every walk of life, well-to-do and poor, educated and illiterate. They packed themselves into the theater until the place could hold no more.

"Have you read the new Ordinance?"

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"Yes, it will mean the end of our lives here."

"We will have to be licensed like automobiles."

The long and bitter struggle against the "Black Ordinance" began with that meeting in 1906 and lasted for eight heartbreaking years, until 1914.

Mr. Gandhi was the leader and the inspiration that kept up the courage of the Indian people through those eight years of hardship.

He stepped up on the stage of the Old Empire Theater and faced the huge audience. The shouting and arguing died down and everyone looked hopefully to "Bhai."

"This is a very serious crisis," Gandhi announced calmly.

They were being hounded out of the country, he pointed out. If they sat idly by and allowed the Ordinance to be made a law, their happiness would be at an end. They must resist!

How were they going to resist?

Speaker after speaker arose, came to the stage, and urged the Indians of South Africa to resist the Ordinance. The meeting was conducted in four languages — Hindi, Gujarati, Tamil, and Telugu — so that all might understand.

But how were they going to resist? By violence? By warfare?

"Absolutely not!" said Gandhi and many others. "There must be no violence." Let others commit violence if they wished.

Then how? By resolving never to obey the law if it was passed. They would not go to the Asiatic office to register. They would not carry registration cards. They would not answer questions about themselves and their families.

A resolution which Gandhi had helped to write was read before the meeting, a resolution not to submit to the Registration Ordinance if the British decided to make it a law.

A dignified and respected Indian merchant arose in the

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meeting and said: "I feel that we must make this more than a resolution. It must be a solemn oath before God."

The suggestion made Gandhi sit bolt upright. Make the resolution a religious oath? He had not thought of that until this moment. A religious oath would mean that there could be no withdrawing or turning back even in the face of death. His excitement grew, and he wanted to make certain that everyone present understood the idea. He arose to speak to the meeting once more.

They must understand what they were doing. If they took an oath before God they were risking their lives. Disobeying the law meant that they could be sent to prison, flogged, made to work at hard labor. Their property could be taken away from them.

"We all believe in one and the same God, notwithstanding our religious differences," he reminded them. "To pledge ourselves, or to take an oath, in the name of God is not a mere trifle."

Absolute silence reigned when Gandhi finished speaking. Another minute passed; then every Indian in the meeting rose, raised his right hand, and with God as his witness swore never to submit to the Black Ordinance should it be made a law.

In that moment, with that pledge, satyagraha came into existence. Its message would be heard throughout the world.

Satyagraha is an Indian word that cannot be translated because there is no word like it in English. *Satya* means truth, and *graha* means firmness or force. Satyagraha means truth-force. "Soul-force" was what Gandhi liked to call it. Truth, he said, is all-powerful and needs no force of arms. A satyagraha campaign is based entirely upon moral strength. Satyagraha is really a complete pattern of living in which the person's every thought and deed must be motivated by love, truth, and non-violence: no cunning, no

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scheming, no secrecy, not even a trace of resentment toward anyone. Truth is the greatest force in the world.

Gandhi had begun his life in South Africa in 1893. From then on until 1906 the idea of satyagraha had been growing in his mind.

The satyagraha in South Africa started in full force; it grew in size and courage. Meetings soon had to be held out of doors because there was no building in South Africa large enough to house them. Circulation of *Indian Opinion* skyrocketed. Hindus, Moslems, Parsis, Christians stood united. Volunteer workers picketed the registration office or went out and made speeches on street corners.

Arrests and persecutions followed almost immediately.

Absolutely no violence was Gandhi's strict order. Brute force had no place in a satyagraha campaign. No matter how badly the police handled them, they were to submit meekly.

In spite of the protests and meetings and rallies, the legislature of the Transvaal State passed the Black Ordinance. The only change they made was to say that women would not have to register, only the Indian men.

The satyagraha campaign was renewed with zeal when the Indians heard this news. Thousands and thousands of them simply did not go near the Asiatic office to be registered, questioned, fingerprinted.

To end the trouble quickly the government arrested a few ringleaders, and naturally Gandhi was one of their first choices. Surely if they took Gandhi out of circulation, the satyagraha campaign would die down. In December, 1907, Mahatma Gandhi began his first jail sentence of two months.

It did no good. The satyagraha campaign went on. Other Asiatics, such as the Chinese, joined with the Indians in their fight for justice. There wasn't room in jail for all of them. Speeches, parades, new recruits —

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"Take the satyagraha vow never to register!"

By February, 1908, Gandhi was out of jail and back into the campaign. By the following October he was arrested again and sentenced to three months in jail, this time at hard labor.

When the government said "hard labor" that was exactly what it meant. First Gandhi was taken to a kind of camp called Volksrust Jail, and with him were some seventy-five other satyagrahis including one of his sons. They were sent out for road construction, and later Gandhi was singled out for work of a scavenger.

Mohandas Gandhi worried much less about his physical suffering than his friends did. For him it was a test of his moral strength. It brought him closer to God.

"The greatest good I have derived from these sufferings was that by undergoing bodily hardships I could see my mental strength clearly increasing, and it is even now maintained," he wrote later. "The experience of those months in prison left me more than ever prepared to undergo all such hardships with ease."

The ruthless efforts of the government to break the spirit of the satyagraha movement went on. Asiatics were insulted, mistreated, imprisoned. Many were deported with no regard for the fact that their property, businesses, and families were in South Africa.

As soon as Gandhi completed his second jail sentence he plunged back into the struggle: more picketing, refusals to register, protest meetings, arrests, and abuses, with the Indians facing one bitter disappointment after another.

By the time another year had passed, thousands of Indians who had gone to jail for short terms, for deliberately refusing to register, were now unable to find work. Aside from prejudice, nobody wanted to hire an Indian who was liable to be back in jail in a short time.

Gandhi talked over his worries about the resulting un-

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employment and poverty with one of his friends, Hermann Kallenbach.

"What can we do to help them?"

"I have an idea," said Kallenbach.

Without delay Kallenbach bought a large piece of farmland about twenty miles from Johannesburg and offered it as a gift to the impoverished satyagraha refugees and their families. That was Tolstoy Farm, named after the writer Count Leo Tolstoy whom Gandhi admired so much.

Hermann Kallenbach, a European, was already a Gandhi follower. He had applied long ago for admission to Phoenix Farm, adopting the simple life, giving up all luxuries, helping to edit *Indian Opinion*. He even learned how to make shoes when he found that the community needed a shoemaker.

Whole families moved into Tolstoy Farm, putting up more buildings, repairing those that were already there. Rules regulating sanitation, food, clothing, recreation, education were strict; but as soon as Gandhi explained the reasons for them they were obeyed cheerfully. The grounds and houses had to be kept spotlessly clean so that no one would become sick. School had to be arranged for children of all ages.

There was no money for nonsense. If any resident of Tolstoy Farm decided to take a trip to Johannesburg for pleasure, he was required to walk the twenty miles there and the twenty miles back.

Tolstoy Farm became an experimental community. There Gandhi learned what he had already believed: that people can live together generously, sharing what little they have with each other.

News of the Tolstoy Farm reached other countries and came to the ears of Gandhi's friend, Gokhale, who was then living in England. Gokhale remembered with a smile and a nod the ardent young man who had visited him in

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Calcutta and had worked so hard at the Congress Party meeting. Gokhale tried to do what he could for the Indians in South Africa by talking to government officials in London. At last he traveled all the way to Africa in 1912, landing at Capetown in October. He was an aging man, not in the best of health, and the long sea voyage wore him out. Nevertheless he traveled all over South Africa making speeches, seeing officials, adding his dignity to the cause. He and Gandhi held long conferences over the problem. At last Gokhale went back to England, deeply discouraged by what he had seen but determined to make further appeals to the government in London.

Such troubles cannot go on forever, and they did not. First they grew worse. Then came the final big event.

The Black Ordinance, although the biggest complaint, was not the only grievance the Indians had against the government. There was a poll tax amounting to about fifteen dollars that each indentured Indian had to pay upon gaining his freedom. A fantastically high sum! More than an indentured Indian saw during his entire servitude.

Gandhi kept the spirit of the satyagraha campaign going for seven years, and his activities were centered mostly in the Transvaal. In 1913 satyagraha spread to Natal. Why? The Supreme Court passed another law declaring all Moslem and Hindu marriages illegal. That made most of the Indian children illegitimate, and in that case they could not inherit their rightful property from their parents — another way of discouraging the Indians from remaining in South Africa.

That law was one too many and so enraged the Indians that it inspired them to fight still harder for their rights. The satyagraha campaign that had been going on for seven years and had died down in some places took on new vigor.

The Indian women in the Transvaal banded together and went to the mining areas of Natal. They called upon

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the Indians working in the mines of Natal to come out on strike against the Court decision that had made Indian marriages illegal.

"What happened to us can happen to you in Natal!" they warned.

The miners began to leave their work. Mines began to shut down for lack of workers. The mine owners began to take an interest.

"Do something!" they said to the government. "How can we stay in business if the Indians won't work for us? What are they complaining about? Why are they out on strike?"

But governments act slowly.

Gandhi decided to act quickly. He went to Natal to lead the movement in person, encouraging the satyagrahis, spreading the strike, closing the mines.

"Now that we are out on strike what shall we do next?" they asked Gandhi.

Gandhi knew exactly what to do.

The thousands who were out on strike had formed a camp at Newcastle where they slept out in the open fields in every kind of weather. They suffered starvation and exposure. Many had died; many more were dying.

On October 30, 1913, before a gathering of nearly four thousand satyagrahis at Newcastle, Gandhi gave the order to march. They were to march to the Transvaal. In crossing the border from Natal into the Transvaal they would be deliberately violating the immigration laws that barred Indians from the country. Their destination was Tolstoy Farm or jail.

Gandhi notified the government in advance of his plans. Then his ragged, cheering army set out, covering about twenty-five miles a day, long columns of them choking the roadways.

Gandhi shared all of the hardships of the marchers, slept

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in the open with them, ate the same kind of rations, or went hungry when they did. Others joined the marchers on the road. Their numbers grew each day as they traveled toward the Transvaal.

The authorities were embarrassed by this vast civilian army that would commit no act of violence in its own defense but submitted meekly to every hardship. They did the only thing they knew how to do. They arrested the entire army.

When Gandhi's marchers reached a place called Balfour, they were met by long rows of railway cars waiting to bring them back to Natal prisons. The government really played into Gandhi's hands in making the mass arrest. That was just what he wanted.

Some of the marchers wanted to rebel when they realized that they would actually be put into jail. Gandhi held them to their discipline, and they boarded the trains voluntarily. Of course, the prisons in Natal were not big enough to hold them all. The satyagrahis knew that. The government went to a lot of expense to house and feed its thousands of prisoners.

"Great hunters would give up lion-hunting if the lion took to non-resistance," Gandhi wrote in one of his books.

The authorities had caged a completely tame lion. The lion was so tame, so gentle, that public opinion was beginning to rebel at the harsh treatment he was receiving. News of the sufferings of the satyagrahis began to travel abroad in every direction. As attention was drawn to the cause of the Indians, more volunteers joined them, and large sums of money were donated to help them.

The pressure of public opinion finally told on the government, and at the end of about two months all of the satyagrahis were released from jail. A Royal Commission was set up to consider their cause.

Interviews, conferences, and correspondence followed,

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ated Black

and in the spring of 1914 — triumph! The Asiatic Relief Bill became a law. It repealed the poll tax; it made Indian marriages legal; it declared Indians to be equal with Europeans; it repealed the hated Black Ordinance.

The first satyagraha, the first "soul-force" campaign, ended in complete victory. Gandhi's forces of truth had won out over the forces of armed might.

Gandhi knew his work in South Africa was finished. In the middle of July he and his family sailed for home.

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7. *HOME TO INDIA AT LAST*

"Let right deeds be
Thy motive, not the fruit that comes from them."
—GITA II.

THEY went to England before returning to Bombay, and the sea voyage was slow and tedious. The ship seemed anchored in the water, and the Gandhi boys, now aged twenty-two, seventeen, and sixteen, were restless. They were curious to see their oldest brother who had remained in India, and to the youngest two India was a completely new country because they had been born in South Africa.

"How much longer, Father?"

"One more day and we will be there."

"How long shall we have to stay in England?"

"Not long. Then on to India."

World War I started before the Gandhis reached England. Mines had been sown in the English Channel, and their ship inched toward Southampton slowly and cautiously.

As soon as Gandhi heard the news he began to work out in his mind a plan for helping England, because in 1914 he was still a loyal British subject. He immediately got in touch with other Indians living in England.

"I think we should form a first-aid unit," he suggested.

"How can you?" he was challenged. "How can you support a war and still follow your belief in non-violence and ahimsa?"

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Ahimsa is another Indian word for which there is no exact English word. Ahimsa means non-killing, but actually it means much more than that. To live according to the doctrine of ahimsa is to feel only love for all living things. Gandhi believed in ahimsa — love of every living person and animal — and he believed in satyagraha — soul-force, the power of truth. Truth and love were the keywords of his life.

Gandhi was deeply troubled by the question of war. In England at the beginning of World War I his ideas about war were still growing. His final devotion to ahimsa, absolute non-killing, would be one of the great decisions of his life.

He knew in his heart that anyone who aided fighting in any way was as guilty as the soldier who did the killing, but he could not turn away from the sufferings of the wounded. So he decided to do volunteer work while he was in London.

He met the brilliant and dramatic Sarojini Naidu during his war work. Petite and vivacious, Mrs. Naidu has been recognized as India's most outstanding woman poet. She was a high-caste Hindu from the city of Hyderabad, in southern India. At sixteen she had determined to become a poet, and by the time she was twenty-six she had published her first volume of verse. Her poetry is delightful; palanquin bearers, corn grinders, wandering singers, snake charmers, village folk, Indian dancers, gypsies, Buddhas, parade through the lyrics. Her poetic genius was dedicated to India when Gandhi came and began to lead India to freedom. The protected high-caste Hindu girl became a political speaker and leader of Indian women. She went to jail many times during her exciting life, and after India was freed she became governor of one of the provinces.

Gandhi saw her first in London in 1914 at the Lyceum, a

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women's club, making clothes for soldiers. She was not at all impressed with the Indian gentleman who presented himself to her.

"Have you any work for us to do?" Gandhi asked humbly.

"Yes," said the busy Mrs. Naidu, barely looking up, as she handed him a huge stack of garments that had been cut out but not stitched. "Have these sewed."

Gandhi took them back to his friends cheerfully.

But even before starting his war work Gandhi had paid a visit to Gokhale to report to him on the victory in South Africa. His visit was none too soon. The damp and penetrating fogs of England had become too much for Gokhale's aging bones, and he sailed for home.

The English climate did Gandhi no good either, and he suffered a severe attack of pleurisy. He tried for a while to direct the war relief work from his bed, but the effort was too exhausting. His pleurisy became worse and he grew weaker. At last he, too, booked passage for India.

On the way home Mrs. Gandhi saw to it that he rested completely aboard ship, and by the time they reached the warm climate of the Suez Canal he felt well enough to walk about with the rest of the party: Mr. Kallenbach and other residents of Phoenix Farm. They were all going home to India together.

As soon as Gandhi set foot in India Gokhale sent for him because Gokhale knew Gandhi needed stern advice. Gokhale knew how impetuous Gandhi was and how happy he felt after his success in helping the Indians in South Africa. Gokhale knew that Gandhi would probably try the same thing in India. Realizing that Gandhi would become involved in politics, Gokhale said to him:

"Promise me that you will not express any political opinions until you have been in India for at least a year

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and have traveled around and learned something of your own country."

A year was a long time for a man of Gandhi's energies to be still, but he gave the promise and lived up to it.

As the two men sat talking, Gandhi told Gokhale about his ambitions.

"I want to found an ashram in India," he said. "Something like Phoenix Farm. I want to keep my group together."

Gokhale nodded. He approved of the idea, and he promised Gandhi his help.

An ashram, a place where disciples can gather, was not a new idea in India. Withdrawing from the world and living in a religious colony, sitting at the feet of a great teacher, was in line with the Hindu religion. The Hindu faith teaches withdrawal from material things and the importance of spiritual living.

Gandhi's dream of having a Tolstoy Farm, an ashram, in India came true on May 25, 1915. He found a piece of farm land about five miles outside of the city of Ahmedabad near the Sabarmati River where his followers gathered together. On the land was a small cottage or farmhouse and several huts, enough shelter for everyone. They would live together as one family, sharing all they had, owning nothing, working hard, and beginning each day with prayer, eating simple food, and wearing the plainest of clothing.

"This place shall be called 'Satyagraha Ashram' — soul-force ashram," said Gandhi.

The new ashram was in his home province, not far from Rajkot where Gandhi had many friends. Some of the wealthier of them agreed to help the religious colony with donations of money.

In the midst of the excitement of getting the place in

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order, scrubbing out the rooms, unpacking their clothing, carrying water, turning over the soil for planting, a piece of sad news reached Gandhi, news that darkened the picture for a time: the death of Gokhale. The members of the ashram gathered together and bowed their heads in prayer as they remembered how much Gokhale's advice had meant to them. Gandhi, in particular, felt the loss because he had depended upon Gokhale's guidance. Now, for the first time in his life, at the age of forty-five, Gandhi was entirely on his own.

"Launching on the stormy sea of Indian public life, I was in need of a sure pilot," he wrote.

The ashram family was settled only a short while when its first big problem arose. A message came from an Untouchable family:

"Please, may we join your ashram?"

What now? The members believed that all men are equal. There was no caste or discrimination within the ashram. Could they actually accept an Untouchable family into their group? It had been easy to say, "We do not believe in Untouchability." Gandhi knew what he wanted them to do, and he waited for his family to decide.

"Of course," they said. "They are as good as we. They have a perfect right to join the ashram."

Thrilled and happy and proud of his family, Gandhi sent for the Untouchables. They arrived: Dudabhai and Danibehn and their tiny daughter Lakshmi, ragged and poor and black of skin.

The situation was not easy at first; everyone felt self-conscious. So deeply had the belief in Untouchability been bred into the souls of caste Hindus that they could not shake off their prejudice with a snap of the fingers. Neither was it easy for the Untouchables themselves to act as though they were accustomed to being treated as equals.

Untouchability was really a form of slavery in which the

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people with the blackest skin were made to do the meanest work. They were called Untouchables because their very touch was believed to be contaminating. In some parts of India an Untouchable had to bow his head to the ground when a caste Hindu walked by. In others, in the South, for instance, the very shadow of an Untouchable was defiling. The Untouchable enjoyed no privileges at all: he could not go to school, and he could not even enter a Hindu temple to worship.

India is an independent country today, and Untouchability is against the law, but when Gandhi was a young man Untouchability was a vital part of Indian life. To break such an important custom by treating an Untouchable family as equals was inviting trouble.

Within the ashram all went well, but the trouble came from the world outside.

"You will have to stop using the well," said the man who owned the bungalow and rented it to the members of the ashram.

If an Untouchable used the well water, drops of water from his bucket would pollute him, the man insisted.

"Continue to draw water," Gandhi told his followers and Dudabhai. The well was their only source of water.

The man began to shout, to insult Dudabhai whenever he could.

"Ignore him, and do not answer back," said Gandhi.

At last the man became ashamed and let him alone.

There came a more severe test. Those who had given financial aid to the ashram stopped their contributions when they heard about the Untouchable family that lived there. Without funds the ashram was doomed.

"We must not give up," said Gandhi. "We can move to the Untouchable section of town and earn what we can by working as Untouchables to support the ashram. We must show the world that we mean what we say."

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At the last minute one of the children came running to Gandhi to tell him that out in front of the cottage a Sheth (head of a caste) sat in his car and wanted to talk to him. Gandhi walked out to the car.

"I've heard about your ashram and want to make a donation," was the Sheth's brief comment.

"We are at the end of our resources," Gandhi admitted.

"I'll be back tomorrow," said the Sheth and whizzed away.

The next day, true to his promise, the Sheth returned, handing Gandhi thirteen thousand rupees, enough for the entire ashram to live on for a year. Where others had been too bigoted to want the Untouchable family to dwell at the ashram, the Sheth admired them for their courage. He, too, wanted Untouchability abolished.

Gandhi was well known and widely respected throughout India even in those early days because of the magnificent work he had done in South Africa. News of his satyagraha campaign had traveled far and wide. It was only natural that Indian people would come to him with their troubles.

When he went to Lucknow in 1916 to attend the annual meeting of the Congress Party, he learned of the terrible plight of the indigo workers in Champaran.

He had never been in Champaran, and he wanted to hear more about it.

Champaran is in Bihar State, near west Bengal, in the northeastern part of India. There are vast stretches of jungle in Bihar, and the temperature can go as high as 115 degrees. The people usually live in small villages set in clearings in the jungle; poverty and epidemics are common.

Champaran was noted for growing indigo. That little square of "bluing" used in the weekly laundry came from a plant grown by the tenant farmers in Champaran, under a system that ground them down into misery.

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Gandhi traveled all the way across India to Champaran to find conditions even worse than he had feared. The farmers lived in poverty without medical aid or schools. Children ran wild for a few years while their parents worked, and then they, too, were put to work on the indigo plantations for appallingly low pay. The landowners forced the farmers to grow indigo as rental for the land, even when other dyes were invented as substitutes for indigo and the world no longer had to buy the Indian plant.

Gandhi went to work at once, reforming whole villages, opening beginners' schools for the children in six of the villages, teaching the people sanitation, cleaning the filth from the roadways, cleaning out the wells where the people went for their drinking water, filling in stagnant pools to stop the growth of malaria mosquitoes. Several members of his ashram, including Mrs. Gandhi and his son Devadas, came to Bihar to help.

At the same time Gandhi argued with the authorities to change the laws that were the cause of so much poverty and misery. Success crowned his efforts. The laws were changed, and the peasants had learned something of a better way to live.

The people of Bihar Province had never heard of Gandhi until he appeared on the scene and started to help them. They had never heard of the Congress Party either, since they lived in such a far-off corner of the land. In a few months they learned to love him. Crowds gathered and cheered him. Children clung to his hands.

They pleaded with him to stay, just as his countrymen in South Africa had done. However, Gandhi went back to his ashram near Ahmedabad as soon as his work in Bihar was finished.

Hardly was he back at his ashram, back at his farm work and his meditations, when word came of a famine in Khaira.

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Famine! Dread of the masses of India who are too poor to lay anything aside for an emergency. Thousands die when the rainfall fails. If a farmer's crops wither, he must wait a whole year before he can begin to grow any more. Meanwhile his family starves. He sometimes borrows from the moneylender in order to buy seed for next year's planting. Then, of course, he will owe the moneylender an exorbitant part of the following year's crop.

Khaira is in the western part of India, in Gandhi's own home region. He prepared to leave immediately.

His wife protested: "I think you should rest up after your trip to Bihar."

The others at the ashram echoed her: "Take a short rest first."

Gandhi had no time for such a luxury as rest, and he shrugged off their advice. What he found when he arrived in Khaira was staggering. A huge region of nearly six hundred villages was on the verge of starvation because the crops had failed. No wheat or vegetables meant no food and no income.

"We cannot pay our taxes!" the people told him.

"You don't have to pay your taxes," said Gandhi the lawyer. "The law says that when your crops fail your taxes are canceled."

"But the government has not suspended our taxes! The government is trying to collect taxes anyway."

"Then you must refuse to pay taxes!" Gandhi told them. "You are on the side of right."

Satyagraha once more! Satyagraha was to be tried in India for the first time.

Thrilled at the idea of at last having a leader to guide them and represent them, the peasants of Khaira united. They pledged that they would not pay taxes to the government. Officials could arrest them, send them to jail, take their property, but they would never give in. Rich and

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poor alike entered the satyagraha campaign. Even those who were not suffering from the famine joined in. No taxes would be paid by anyone until the government agreed to suspend taxes for those whose crops had failed.

At first the government was as stubborn as the peasants. Officials came into the district and took cattle and furniture to sell for taxes. Some peasants lost what little they had. Others were arrested and sent to jail.

"No violence!" was Gandhi's order, and he stayed with the satyagrahis the entire time to make certain that they did not spoil the effect of their campaign. Under his inspiring leadership the farmers lost their fear of the mighty government officials. They defied the police and went cheerfully to jail or faced poverty and the loss of their homes and land. The satyagraha campaign went on for five long months.

At last word came to Gandhi that if the well-to-do farmers would pay up their taxes, the taxes would be canceled for those unable to pay.

Victory again! Gandhi's first experiment with "soul force," the power of truth over might, had met with success in his own country. The government had had the authority, the guns, the greater numbers, but it had not been able to win against men and women of courage.

News of the Khaira satyagraha traveled far and wide throughout India, especially among the peasants in the villages. The campaign brought them their first message of ahimsa and awakened them to think about their right to a better life.

But the indigo workers in Bihar and the famine in Khaira were only two episodes in Gandhi's schedule. The satyagraha campaign in Khaira took place while World War I was still raging on the continent of Europe. To most the war seemed far away, but Gandhi spent many days and hours campaigning for army recruits. He traveled over

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miles and miles of country, spoke at countless meetings, and during all of this activity lived up to his vows of plain living and strict diet.

There are limits to anyone's energy, even Gandhi's.

One night in a town near Khaira he was seized with abdominal pains and dysentery. He developed a high fever. The combination of too much work, too little sleep, too strict a diet had taken its toll.

"This is a complete nervous breakdown," the doctor said.

Lovingly his wife and friends moved him back to Ahmedabad and put him to bed in the bungalow of a friend. Gandhi knew he was seriously ill, that he would be ill for a long time. So he wanted to go home. After he had recovered from his first violent attacks he insisted upon being taken back to his own ashram.

He had his usual argument with the doctor about diet. He needed meat broth, milk, raw eggs, the doctor insisted. Gandhi explained once more, in spite of his weakened condition, that he could not break his religious vows. He could not eat anything that meant killing: he could not drink cow's milk because the cow is a sacred animal.

Kasturba had a sudden inspiration.

"What about goat's milk?"

"Yes," chimed in the doctor immediately. "Goat's milk would be fine for the patient."

Gandhi gave in and allowed them to feed him goat's milk from time to time, although he was never comfortable in his own mind about the complete honesty of what he had done.

Slowly Gandhi recovered his health, and when he was well enough he was permitted to see the news. It was good to hear that the war had at last ended in Europe bringing victory to Great Britain.

A few weeks later Gandhi happened on a less happy piece

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of news. As he rested in a chair near his bed, still too weak to be about, he read in a newspaper the report of the Rowlatt Committee.

"Look here!" he called. "What is this?"

His ashram family gathered around him as he read the news to them.

The Rowlatt Committee was an official group consisting of two Indians and two Englishmen; it had for its chairman Mr. Justice Rowlatt, a lawyer fresh from England. The British government had sent the Rowlatt Committee to India to investigate conditions there after the war. Britain was really worried about India. India was becoming restless under British rule. Indian leaders were talking about independence and self-government.

True enough there were upsets all over India because of World War I. A war anywhere affects people everywhere. Young Indian men were back home from the army and out of work. Factories that had been built in India to make war goods were now shut down and that meant unemployment on a large scale: jute mills in Bengal, for instance, and cotton mills in Bombay and Ahmedabad. War profits had gone to a few millionaires in England and India, but the people who had worked in the factories were paid disgracefully low wages and had to live in huts with no windows or chimneys, no lights, and no clean water supply.

England saw trouble brewing and sent the Rowlatt Committee to make a report.

The Rowlatt Committee didn't stay long enough to understand India. Instead of recommending that England do something to help the unemployed and the starving, the Rowlatt Committee recommended two new laws, laws that would take away what little freedom the Indian people had. This is what Gandhi read.

"I can't believe it," he exclaimed to his ashram followers. "This report doesn't make sense."

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They waited for him to speak again.

"We can't allow such laws to be passed," he went on. "We must stop them at all costs."

"You've been too sick. You're not well enough, Gandhiji."

"Please," said Kasturba. "Wait a few weeks more, until you are stronger. There's time."

Gandhi didn't answer his wife. He decided to think about it very carefully. He would meditate through the night.

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8. *HOW THE BRITISH CAME TO INDIA*

"That which is
Can never cease to be." —GITA II.

AS Gandhi lay on his cot, his eyes closed, his thoughts disciplined, he reviewed the history of his country. Why were the British there? How had India become a subject nation?

Thousands of years ago, when the rest of the world was still primitive, India was a land of kings and emperors. As far back as 5000 B.C. there were highly developed cities with fine buildings. Today scientists are just discovering some of these cities buried in the valley of the Indus River in northwestern India. The people that long ago wore fine clothing and jewels, knew how to farm and trade, could sculpture figures in marble, knew the secret of curing meat. Their cities were laid out with wide, straight streets, and their houses sometimes had swimming pools and wells. These ancient people were called the Dravidians.

That was more than six thousand years before Columbus discovered America. The rest of the world was not interested in India then, didn't know that such a place existed, until the Aryans discovered it.

The Aryans were, we believe, a wandering tribe of people who lived in central Europe. They lived in tents and traveled on horseback, never staying in one place, wandering about in search of good land to graze their cattle.

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About 4000 B.C. these Aryans invaded India through Afghanistan in the northwest, pouring into the Indus Valley and beyond it, conquering the Dravidians, and making most of northern India their own.

They came as strong, overpowering warriors, racing by in horse-drawn chariots, but they settled down in this new, rich land they had conquered and became farmers. They brought their families and their cattle with them, and found that the best plan was to live in small villages scattered about, with strips of land around each village for raising their food and the wider fields beyond for pasturing their cattle. That is why India today is a land of small villages, thousands and thousands of small villages, each with its little cluster of grass- or tile-roofed huts and surrounding patches of farmland.

The Aryans changed the face of India. They brought their own customs, their own religion, and their own literature. The Hindu religion of today really grew out of customs of the Aryans. Hinduism was not founded by one person the way so many other religions have been. It grew up slowly from ancient times, how far back nobody really knows, from folk songs and customs.

The Aryans were a light-skinned people, and the Dravidians who had been in India before them were a dark-skinned people. When the Aryans swarmed over northern India, taking the land for themselves, the Dravidians had to do one of two things: they could submit to the conquerors or retreat to the south. Some remained as slaves. Others migrated to southern India. That is why the people of southern India today are darker of skin than the people of northern India.

The conquered Dravidians eventually became the Untouchables. The Aryans looked down upon them and made them do the most menial work.

The caste system started back in the time of the Aryans,

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too. They found living more efficient if they divided up the work among specialists. Some were assigned to be soldiers and warriors (Kshatriyas), some did the trading and farming (Vaisyas — Gandhi's caste), some did the hard labor (Sudras), and the luckiest of all became the scholars, priests, and teachers (Brahmins).

India at the time of the Aryans was not a nation as we think of the word. There was no central government. Each tribe of Aryans governed itself, and sometimes war and conflict sprang up between the different groups.

Not until thousands of years later, about 300 B.C., did one tribe grow stronger than all the others. The leader of that tribe became emperor of all of India, and the right to rule was handed on from father to son.

The first series of emperors were called Mauryans, and the greatest of all the Mauryan emperors was King Asoka. Kindly and tolerant, he tried to improve the conditions of the people. Although a great and powerful king, he remained a humble man who loved all living things.

Empires come and go, and soon the kingdom built up by the Mauryans grew weak, and the different tribes began to govern themselves once more.

Not until five hundred years later did another great empire govern India. Then, when the Guptas began to rule, India entered upon her Golden Age. The Gupta emperors were men of military might, and they set about to conquer and subjugate all the other kings and chieftains. This was around 300 A.D., and India became a land of great wealth, prosperity, scholars, princesses adorned with precious jewels, fine silks, and pageantry.

News of the great wealth and prosperity in India began to reach other parts of the world. Northern India traded with the rest of the world by means of great caravans, and southern India traded with the world by sea. India had gems, silks, spices, grains, ivory, gold, and silver that the

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other countries wanted. These were invitations to invasion and robbery. In spite of the Himalayan Mountains in the north and the oceans on three sides, India had a lot of difficulty protecting her borders.

As the years passed the Gupta Empire grew weak, and another kind of people invaded and conquered India — the Moghuls.

The Moghuls were really Mongolians who had settled in the Near East, in the land known today as Turkey, Persia, and the southern tip of Russia. Because the Himalayans stopped them everywhere else, they, too, had to invade through Afghanistan and the Khyber Pass. Armed with guns, mounted on thundering elephants, the first of the Great Moghuls and his thousands of men swept into India as far as the city of Delhi. Even as India's other conquerors, the Moghuls remained, because they found the land richer and more fertile than their own. The Moghuls reigned over India until 1700, a hundred years after the arrival of the first British.

The Moghuls, too, brought their own religion and customs and arts to India. They built many of the beautiful buildings — the Taj Mahal and the Pearl Mosque, among others.

They brought the Mohammedan religion to India. The words Moslem, Muslim, Mohammedanism, and Islam are all used to mean the same religion, the faith of the followers of the Prophet Mohammed. The Moslems believe that there is one God, whom they call Allah, and that Mohammed is His prophet. They believe in the equality of all men and do not believe in the caste system. Their holy book of scriptures is the Koran.

In the early days of the Moghul rule, the Hindus and Moslems were able to live side by side peacefully, each worshiping in his own way. The bitter conflicts between Hindus and Moslems developed in later years.

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All these invasions and empires, and many minor invasions in between, brought many kinds of dress to India. No single costume is typical of the land. Each province, each section, has its own. On the streets of a big city like Bombay or Calcutta, you will see Moslem women with their faces veiled, Hindu women wrapped in saris, Kashmiri women in silk trousers and blouses. Hindu men usually wear turbans on their heads; Moslem men wear fezzes.

As the Moghul empire began to decline and the different provinces began to govern themselves independently, British ships landed on the west coast of India. When the ships' masters saw the wealth of the land, they decided to start a trading post, and in 1600 Queen Elizabeth of England, the Elizabeth of Shakespeare's day, granted the British East India Company its first charter.

British merchants sailed to India and bought precious stones, silks, perfumes, indigo, spices, for low prices. Back in Europe they sold them for high prices. The East India Company grew bigger and richer, and so did its stockholders.

Because the Moghul princes were doing a poor job of ruling their own land, the British found it easy to move in. India was once more a collection of states, each state ruled by its own prince or raja. The British merchants could make deals with the rajas, who permitted them to open trading posts.

The Dutch and French were doing the same thing, but the British had the biggest navy, and they finally won control of most of India. This was about the time when the British took New York away from the Dutch. The British Empire was growing and expanding all over the world.

"The sun never sets on the British flag," was the popular saying.

The land seemed so rich that the East India Company

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thought there was no limit to the booty they could carry away. Actually, they drained away so much for such a long time that soon some of the provinces were reduced to poverty. With poverty came trouble.

To make matters easier for himself the white sahib made the moneylender in each village his representative. The moneylender collected from the peasants, took out his share, and passed the rest along to the white man. As the Indians became poorer, they had to borrow more from the moneylender. The moneylender grew stronger and more powerful. As a villager grew poorer, his debts grew greater, until he lost his land altogether and had to watch his children die of starvation.

Still the East India Company went on. At one point there was a frightful famine in Madras, but the company collections from the local moneylender were as large as ever.

At last word of the conditions in India reached England, and the people of the Empire were shamed by the actions of their own merchants. They protested to the government, and in 1784 Parliament passed Pitt's India Bill. This Bill sent a government commission to India to supervise the activities of the East India Company. Lord Cornwallis (who had fared so badly in his dealings with George Washington) was made Governor-General.

This made matters no better in India. Establishing British rule in India simply meant that the Indian peasants had to pay taxes to the new government. In short, they were paying rent on their own land.

The new government required an army of occupation, sent from England to keep order. The Indian people had to feed and clothe that army, a Jim Crow army in which no Indian could hope to become a commissioned officer.

The whole terrible situation came to a head in 1857. Just as the American colonies had revolted in 1776, the

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people of India revolted in 1857. Hindu and Moslem princes and nobles led their people in an armed and bloody rebellion that lasted for three months. The British moved in with their armed might and quelled the insurgents. Frightful atrocities were committed on both sides. Indians killed British, and British cavalry swooped down and burned out whole villages. It would have been India's war of independence, but India lost.

The revolt of 1857 was an important turning point in India's history because it attracted the notice of Queen Victoria. She finally promised justice to the people of India.

The Indian people were waking up, showing signs of independence. They wanted to govern themselves, and England knew it. Indian leaders came to the fore and spoke up for their people. One of these was Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Gandhi's guide and teacher, the man who had advised him to live in India a year before he expressed any political ideas. Gokhale worked hard all his life for self-government for India. He was a moderate man, and he did not want to end British rule. He wanted to improve it so that the English and Indians could live happily together.

Other Indian leaders disagreed with him. They demanded complete freedom and independence. They wanted industries, and they wanted their people to be educated and prosperous.

This was when the Indian National Congress — the "Congress Party" — was started. The British Government approved of the plan whereby the Indian leaders could meet once a year, make speeches, and present ideas. They felt that it would be a safe outlet of the revolutionary spirit that was growing in India. The Congress Party did no governing, however; the British continued to rule India.

The Congress Party met once a year, each time in a different city. It grew in size but remained very conservative.

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It was this mild-mannered Congress Party that Gandhi attended when he visited India in 1901.

During the fourteen years that Gandhi busied himself in South Africa, unrest grew in India. Riots and disorders were common. Up north in the mountains of the Punjab thousands of Indians were arrested for their rioting; many were sent to jail, some even put to death. Many wondered why the British didn't go home and let Indians govern themselves.

The British were beginning to feel nervous about India, especially when they remembered the rebellion of 1857. When World War I started, Britain was afraid to allow the Indians to have an army or even guns of their own. An Indian villager living on the edge of the jungle was forbidden to keep a rifle in his home to protect himself against wild beasts that might stray too close to the village.

During these days of unrest the Moslem League was formed to speak up for the rights of the Moslems in India.

As soon as World War I ended, Great Britain had time to investigate her troubles in this area more thoroughly. The Rowlatt Committee embarked for India to make recommendations.

Gandhi was still weak from his breakdown when he picked up a paper and read the report of the Rowlatt Committee. As he looked through paragraph after paragraph, his horror mounted.

The Rowlatt Committee wanted two laws passed that would permit the British Government to arrest and keep in jail without trial anyone whom the government suspected of "sedition"; in practice, the new laws would allow the government to throw a man in jail and keep him there without explanation.

"Sedition" was defined as disturbing the peace by making speeches, marching in parades, or writing articles in

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newspapers. A man could easily be arrested for disturbing the peace merely if a crowd gathered around to hear him make a speech.

Gandhi was an attorney; he understood what such a law would mean in terms of human freedom.

"Wait until you're a little stronger," pleaded his wife when she saw his determination to act.

Gandhi waited, but only until the next morning. After his night of careful meditation, he wrote to the legislature; he made a personal call on the Viceroy, top British official in India; he called a meeting of Indian leaders, among them Sarojini Naidu, the poetess — but to no avail.

In a few weeks the Rowlatt recommendations were enacted into law.

Up to this time Gandhi had been loyal to Great Britain. He had helped that country in the Boer War and in World War I. Now his loyalty came to an end; from this point on he worked for Indian independence.

Gandhi was no longer the hotheaded youngster who had gone to South Africa, but a thoughtful and slow-speaking man in his late forties. When he heard that the Rowlatt Acts had been made laws, he said very little. In such a grave matter he needed the help of God.

He spent most of that day and night in meditation until his far from strong body demanded sleep. Long before the dawn he awoke, and as he lay on his cot he continued his prayers. Suddenly an idea burst upon him and he opened his eyes.

"The idea broke upon me," is his own way of describing his inspiration.

All of India must have a satyagraha campaign. All of India — millions of people far and wide — must protest the Rowlatt Acts, and they must protest with dignity and reverence, for satyagraha is a religious act. There must be

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a nation-wide hartal, a day of complete mourning throughout India.

In great excitement Gandhi called his ashram family about him and explained his idea. All shops and businesses would close, and all of India would spend the day in fasting and prayer.

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9. *MASSACRE!*

"Cast off the coward-fit!
Wake! Be thyself! Arise, Scourge of thy foes!"
—GITA II.

THE first necessary step was to teach the Indian people the meaning of satyagraha. Only those in Bihar and Khaira, where Gandhi had already visited, knew about it, and they were just a few thousands among three hundred million.

Gandhi toured from city to city, from village to village, speaking to great gatherings. Many were seeing and hearing him for the first time in their lives. The half-naked peasant, walking barefoot across his fields, sowing seed from a pouch hung around his neck, paused to listen to Gandhi. The hard-working and discouraged farmer, guiding a plow that was pulled by a bony and half-starved ox, left his field to listen to Gandhi. The wealthy and bejeweled raja, riding atop an elephant, stopped and heard.

"Satyagraha is soul-force," Gandhi explained over and over again. "It is the way of love and truth. There is no hatred or violence in it. You can overcome your enemy with love and self-sacrifice."

His listeners looked at each other and asked themselves: Who was this homely little brown man, with a tiny head and big ears, a large nose, a skinny body from which all flesh had been dissolved by dieting? He talked like a messiah!

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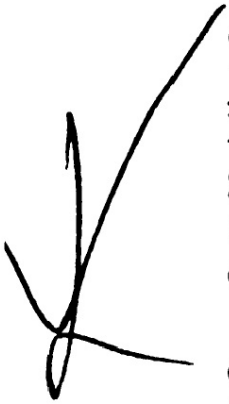
Gandhi was not a man of impressive appearance, certainly; he didn't even stand as straight as a man ought to stand. He was not an orator, either; yet when he spoke he kindled fires in the listener.

Jawaharlal Nehru was so deeply influenced by him that he wrote: "He was like a powerful current of fresh air that made us stretch ourselves and take deep breaths, like a beam of light that pierced the darkness and removed the scales from our eyes, like a whirlwind that upset many things but most of all the working of people's minds. He did not descend from the top; he seemed to emerge from the millions of India, speaking their language and incessantly drawing attention to them and their appalling condition."

Young Nehru had been born to riches and ease, for the Nehrus are India's number one family. His bringing up had been very different from Gandhi's. The Nehru family was Westernized; their language was English. They traveled abroad and did not believe in ancient Indian customs. Jawaharlal became the first Prime Minister of free India; his sister Swarup (Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit) led India's delegation to the United Nations and later became ambassador to the United States; his younger sister Krishna became an outstanding writer and social worker.



Still, under Gandhi's spell, the Nehrus gave up every comfort and luxury. They joined his movement to free India. Their home was raided by police; their property was seized; they served time in jail. Jawaharlal Nehru, in all, was to spend sixteen years of his life behind prison bars.

At last the day of the great hartal arrived: April 6, 1919. Shops were closed; blinds were drawn; street were deserted. Big, bustling cities like Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Lahore, and Amritsar were silent, draped in black.

This was only the beginning.

Gandhi workers went out into the streets selling leaflets

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that explained satyagraha. The petite Sarojini Naidu was among them, walking about the main streets of Bombay, selling the forbidden literature. Wartime rules that had gagged the press and limited public meetings were still in effect. Selling "seditious" literature was a dangerous thing to do.

"Gandhi, Gandhi!" cried one of his followers one day. "I have heard a rumor that you are going to be arrested."

"It's perfectly possible," said Gandhi calmly. "Under the new Rowlatt Acts they can arrest me and keep me in jail as long as they like."

The satyagraha campaign against the Rowlatt Acts went on. Gandhi continued to travel about the country making speeches, stirring up excitement.

Excitement can get out of hand, and it did. Gandhi was kindling the sparks of revolution in the hearts of his countrymen.

"Remember your non-violence pledges," Gandhi pleaded.

Gandhi started out for the city of Delhi where he planned to make some speeches. He never arrived. The police arrested him and brought him back to Bombay, four days after the great hartal.

When the satyagrahis heard that their leader had been arrested, excitement broke all bounds. There were riots in the streets protesting his arrest. More arrests had to be made. The army had to keep order with fixed bayonets.

Gandhi was set free in a day or two, and the rioting died down, but not until some mill workers had murdered a police sergeant. Martial law was proclaimed in many cities. Armed guards stood everywhere.

Deeply depressed by the violence, Gandhi called a meeting of his workers at his own ashram. A huge, quiet, and respectful crowd gathered to hear Gandhi's message.

"You broke your pledges," he scolded them. "You be-

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haved violently with your riots and killing. You have proved that you are not ready for satyagraha. Satyagraha means non-violence and love."

He himself would expiate their guilt, he went on. He would offer satyagraha for his own people by fasting for three days and spending the time in prayer and penitence.

His followers hung their heads and quietly left the meeting. They had to face the embarrassment of having their Mahatma pay for their sins. Gandhi did exactly what he said he would do. He spent three days in prayer, and no food passed his lips.

"I made a Himalayan miscalculation," he confessed with complete honesty. "I should not have started a revolution so soon. The satyagraha campaign must be called off immediately."

You do not turn off human emotions as easily as you turn off a faucet. The Indian people were excited; they could not quiet down. There followed six weeks of violence and killing, with the worst atrocities occurring up north in the mountainous section called the Punjab.

The governor of the Punjab decided that he would bring about quick order by arresting the Congress Party leaders.

"The Party leaders in the Punjab have been arrested!" the word got around.

News of the arrests only angered the people more. A great crowd gathered in the city of Amritsar and began to march toward the District Magistrate's house. They were noisy and excited, but they were unarmed.

"Don't let them pass!" ordered the magistrate, terrified for his own hide.

As the milling, shouting crowd came closer, shots rang out. The military guard had fired into the mob, killing several and wounding more.

Violence only makes more violence. The Punjabis were so enraged that they turned to revenge. They didn't care

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whom they killed just so he was an Englishman. Without rhyme or reason they rushed into the National Bank of India, seized the manager, and murdered him. They killed four more white people in the same day. They set fire to buildings. Martial law was clamped down upon the city of Amritsar and enforced by mounted troops brandishing lathis (long bamboo poles).

By a peculiar coincidence, April 13 was a day of festivities for both the Hindus and the Moslems, and a large crowd gathered to celebrate the festival in Jallianwalla Bagh, a rectangular piece of ground surrounded by buildings in the city of Amritsar. Entirely unarmed, nearly twenty thousand of the celebrants had gathered inside of the enclosure from which there was only one narrow exit.

When General Dyer, who was in charge of the military section, heard that another crowd was gathering, he became alarmed. Without stopping to investigate he ordered troops, backed up by armored cars, to the entrance of the Bagh.

"Fire!" The troops took aim and riddled that defenseless gathering of people who had come to celebrate their holy day.

They went on firing — sixteen hundred rounds — until their ammunition gave out and nearly four hundred had been killed and twelve hundred wounded. The rest, reduced to panic, were unable to escape since the only exit was blocked by troops.

General Dyer determined to teach Amritsar a lesson. His next order forbade anyone to bury the dead or tend the wounded; they lay all night in the open Bagh, bleeding and in pain. If the Punjab had tasted martial law before, it felt worse after the Amritsar massacre. The area was mercilessly bombed and strafed by airplanes. Indians were publicly flogged, made to crawl on all fours in the street, kept in cages in the burning sun, arrested, deported.

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Women were not excepted, and even small children were made to walk great distances.

Newspapers were forbidden and telephone lines were cut, so the rest of the country did not hear the news of the terrible massacre for a long time. When the evil tale finally reached Gandhi he was crushed by it, especially since the massacre had taken place on the same day as the meeting outside of his ashram, the day when he had called off the satyagraha campaign and started his three days of fasting and prayer.

If he had made a Himalayan miscalculation before in starting satyagraha too soon, he had a Himalayan task before him of teaching the people of India that violence is wrong.

Many other Indian leaders felt as he did. There must never be another tragedy like the Punjab episode.

They gathered together: Jawaharlal Nehru, his father Motilal Nehru, who was president of the Congress Party at the time, Gandhi, Sarojini Naidu, and others.

"We will hold our next Congress Party meeting right in the heart of the trouble spot," they decided. "We will meet in the city of Amritsar."

They all traveled north to Amritsar: the kingly Nehrus, Mrs. Naidu with her flashing brown eyes and brilliant wit, the humble and god-fearing Mahatma Gandhi, the two Ali brothers, and a long list of others.

The Ali brothers were vivid characters. Moslem in faith, they had been fanatical and violent men before they met Gandhi, demanding open warfare and bloodshed as a solution to India's problems. Yet Gandhi was able to convert them to the idea of satyagraha and ahimsa. They were big, brutal men and Gandhi awakened their souls. They became gentle and non-violent.

"I think we should revolt against England," some said at the meeting.

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"Let's be patient," Gandhi advised them. "Let's give England a chance."

"We must avenge Amritsar!" they argued.

"No!" Gandhi replied. "Vengeance will do no good. Perhaps England will punish General Dyer for what he did."

"Let's start our non-co-operation movement right away, Gandhiji!"

"We must give England a chance," he insisted, and they agreed to wait.

England did not punish General Dyer. Instead, she approved heartily of what he had done. Order must be maintained in India; India must obey.

That was the turning point for Gandhi.

"No Indian has co-operated with the British Government more than I," he wrote. "But when you approve of the Punjab atrocities, I must revolt against you. You leave me no choice. My religion forbids me to bear any ill-will towards you. I would not raise my hand against you even if I had the power. I expect to conquer you only by my suffering."

The Amritsar Congress had met in December of 1919. The next August another vast non-co-operation movement began with Gandhi in the lead.

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10. *SPIN! SPIN!*

"Unto friend and foe
Keeping an equal heart—"

—GITA XII.

GANDHI now had to lead three hundred million people, living in a land three fourths as large as the United States, in a great non-violent revolution.

How could one man reach the hearts of so many millions of people? How could he make them understand satyagraha, when more than 80 per cent of them could not read or write? They had no radios, only a few newspapers.

Only Gandhi understood his people well enough for this task. He went to them with a single, simple idea, an idea so simple and easy that even the humblest peasant could understand: the spinning wheel.

"The spinning wheel will set you free," he said. "Spin thread and weave cloth. This is our peaceful revolution, our satyagraha campaign."

If they would learn to spin their own thread and weave their own cloth in their homes, they could stop buying British cotton goods. England made cotton goods and she had to sell it. India was one of her best markets. India grew the cotton plant, sent it to England to be woven into cloth, and then purchased the cloth that England shipped back

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"Spin!" said Gandhi to India. "Spin and weave."

The poorest Indian in the smallest village, who had felt so small and poor that he could never protest against anything, suddenly felt important. He could defeat the British Empire simply by sitting in his hut quietly spinning thread.

As Gandhi and his workers traveled around India from one village to another, explaining satyagraha, urging people to spin, the idea caught on. One told another. Rich and poor joined in the non-co-operation movement. Those who could afford silks went about in the new homespun, or khadi cloth, as it was called. City folk, country folk, students, businessmen wore it.

The spinning wheel, or charkha, became the sign of Indian independence; and it was more than that. It was another way of earning a living. Most of the people were farmers, but because of the climate they could farm during only half of the year. During the other half of the year, in the rainy season, they were out of work. Now, when they could not farm, they could earn something by spinning and weaving.

The charkha is a simple affair. The spinner sits cross-legged on the floor in front of a board about three feet long with a wheel about the size of an automobile wheel at one end of it. The thread is wound around the large wheel at one end of the board, and at the other end is a smaller device for holding the cotton. As the spinner turns the wheel by hand, the thread is spun from the cotton.

The members of the ashram, of course, learned to spin and weave because they had to teach others. Dressed in khadi they traveled through the countryside urging others to spin and weave.

What about those so poor that they could not even buy an inexpensive spinning wheel? If a man with a family earned only thirty dollars a year, how could he buy any-

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thing extra? What of those who earned even less, or nothing? Gandhi campaigned for funds to buy spinning wheels for those who could not afford them.

"This is only the beginning," Gandhi pointed out. "There is much more that we must do in this great satyagraha campaign."

The Congress Party, with Gandhi in the lead, urged Indians to resign from positions in the British Government. They must take their children out of British schools, and college students must stay away from their classes. Indian lawyers must not practice in the courts. Young men must refuse to serve in the British army. And, above all, no one must buy any foreign goods. India must spin her own thread and weave her own cloth. A whole country was on strike!

All of India was falling under the spell of a homely little man, a deeply religious man who consulted God in every decision, a man called Mahatma. Wherever the Mahatma went he was cheered by great crowds shouting:

"Mahatma Gandhi ki jai!" (Victory to Mahatma Gandhi!)

On Gandhi went, from place to place. When he stopped at Aligarh College (Moslem) to address the students, two thirds of the student body joined the non-co-operation movement, and the college had to close as a result. The same thing happened in other colleges — Sikh Khalsa College in Amritsar, the Hindu College in Benares, the Islamic College in Lahore.

"Abandon the use of these foreign clothes; take the khadi produced by hand looms; let us open our own schools and colleges on national lines!"

Gandhi started another newspaper, like the one he had published in South Africa. His paper in India was called *Young India,* and it was shaped like a tabloid. Sometimes it contained only four pages, sometimes more, never any

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pictures, and it was devoted to every subject that Gandhi felt was important, from the biggest political questions to the smallest problems of diet. *Young India* came out every Wednesday and sold for one anna a copy. The satyagrahis waited for it eagerly each week to read the Mahatma's message, or have someone read it to them.

All through the year 1921 the Gandhi fever spread and mounted. Excitement reached a new pitch in August when Gandhi and his followers staged a huge bonfire of foreign cloth on the sea beach of Bombay.

From all over the city Indians gathered at the seashore and rallied around Gandhi.

"Let this be an end of foreign cloth!"

They brought with them whatever foreign cloth they had in their homes and threw it on the gigantic pile. Only khadi for India! Costly silks and brocades went into that stack which grew higher and higher. Let there be no more foreign cloth! Gandhi himself stepped forward from the assembled multitude and held a lighted match to the mountain of material. Up shot the flames. They mounted higher and consumed the fabrics. The light of that bonfire could be seen for miles around, and the crowd danced about it jubilantly, tearing off their coats or whatever other imported items they were wearing and tossing the garments into the flames. Similar bonfires lighted the skies in other cities. Freedom for India!

Gandhi was roundly criticized for that bonfire by both friends and enemies. His devoted friend the Reverend Charles F. Andrews (who had come to India from South Africa) wrote him a sad and thoughtful letter:

"I know that your burning of foreign cloth is with the idea of helping the poor, but I feel that there you have gone wrong," wrote Andrews, explaining that the destruction of beautiful things could not be a good idea in the long run.

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Gandhi published Andrews' letter in *Young India* on September 1, 1921:

"The destruction helped us and brought us nearer," Gandhi explained. "Love of foreign cloth has brought foreign domination."

The British Government was not asleep during all this excitement and upset. Things were getting out of hand in India. The police tried to quiet the crowds. The cavalry galloped around brandishing their lathis, trying to break up meetings. It was no use. The commotion went on.

At last the Prince of Wales, England's future king, made a personal visit to India. This was to be a goodwill tour.

But the people of India had lost patience. They didn't want a prince on a goodwill tour. They wanted the Rowlatt Acts repealed.

When his Royal Highness landed at Bombay, he was greeted with a city in mourning. Shops were closed, blinds drawn, windows draped in black, in a hartal like the one that had started the satyagraha campaign. The streets were empty; there were no devoted crowds cheering their future king.

"Please try to understand," Gandhi wrote. "The people of India have nothing against Your Highness personally. They are protesting the actions of your government."

The police feared for the safety of the Prince when they saw the way the people greeted him. They guarded him every step of the way, and they arrested a few potential troublemakers in advance. Jawaharlal Nehru and his father, among others, were clapped into jail.

The Prince of Wales and his armed escort traveled all the way across India, from Bombay to Calcutta. At Delhi, the capital city, he stopped to visit with the Viceroy.

Delhi is a city of great beauty, containing some of the most exquisite architecture of India. There is the Pearl Mosque, built of gray and white marble, and the Great

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Mosque, a red sandstone and white marble edifice, decorated with fine carvings of flowers and birds. These mosques are Moslem places of worship. Delhi really has two distinct parts, almost like two cities, Old Delhi and New Delhi, because the city has been rebuilt many times. The British Government buildings were in New Delhi, and here it was that the Prince of Wales visited.

From Delhi he traveled to Benares, holy Benares, on the Ganges River, one of the most interesting cities in the world. As the Ganges River winds through the rich plains of the United Provinces it turns through a graceful curve as it approaches Bihar; on the north side of the river, on the outside of the curve, is the city of Benares, huddled against the water. A holy city for the Hindus, it contains some fifteen hundred shrines and temples. Every true believer in Hinduism wants to travel to Benares once in his life to wash away his sins in the sacred river and to worship in one of the temples. To die there is to be especially blessed. Almost the entire bank of the Ganges throughout the city is made of stone, wide stone steps leading down into the water, stone platforms for burning the dead, or stone shrines belonging to wealthy princes. Crowds continuously gather along the stone steps, quiet, meditating crowds, who do not jostle or hurry. They are worshipers, and they have come to bathe in the sacred water. They wade in slowly, fully clothed, praying all the while. Each is too busy with his own prayers to notice anyone else. Here is a starving Hindu in rags, there a wealthy rani in her silken sari and precious jewels. They have traveled for miles and miles to reach Benares and the Ganges River. The water is polluted, floating with dirt, banana peelings, refuse, even half-burned corpses, because the dead are brought to the river banks to be burned, and sometimes the poor cannot afford enough firewood to finish the job. The water is holy nevertheless.

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The Prince of Wales traveled on to Calcutta. There he was greeted with a hartal more complete than the one in Bombay. Even the food stores were closed, and the Britishers had to get along with what canned goods they had on hand.

As he traveled through the country, the arrests of unruly Indians continued. By the time he finished his tour, leaving India in January, 1922, there were nearly thirty thousand Indians in jail — but not Gandhi. For some reason the British Government did not arrest the worst troublemaker of all.

Gandhi was busy holding conferences and meetings at his ashram.

"We must make our satyagraha campaign complete," Gandhi said.

"But how, Gandhiji?"

They were working early and late, yet he expected more of them.

"The people of India must stop paying taxes," he announced. "Taxes keep a government in power."

"Civil disobedience" was the expression Gandhi used. He had learned it from an American writer, Henry David Thoreau.

Thoreau had once written an essay called, "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience." Gandhi read it, and he never forgot it. Thoreau had lived in New England in the Civil War days, and he had worked hard to help free the slaves. He once refused to pay a poll tax to the government because it allowed slavery, and he deliberately spent a night in jail for his disobedience.

In his essay on civil disobedience Thoreau said that too much government is not good and that any government has to be watched so that it will not become too powerful. Men must not have too much fear of the law because that

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ooden

can lead to slavery. "A common and natural result of undue respect for law is, that you may see a file of soldiers marching in admirable order over hill and dale to the wars, against their wills." "Wooden men," Thoreau called them, and he said that there were times when it was right to disobey the law in order to make the government change a bad law.

"Our next step is to disobey the tax laws," said Gandhi. "We will start with the town of Bardoli."

Gandhi had no secrets, ever. He wrote to the Viceroy and told him what to expect next.

"Let the thirty thousand satyagrahis out of jail," said Gandhi, "or we will stop paying taxes."

Before he received his answer from the Viceroy, tragic news reached his ears.

All over India people were excited. Crowds milled about in the streets; riots broke out. Store windows were smashed, buses overturned and burned.

In a town called Chauri Chaura in northern India, a rioting mob of peasants descended upon the local jail house. They surrounded the building, set fire to it, and burned to death several policemen.

These reports shocked Gandhi. He realized that his people were not yet ready for true non-violence. Such an act of brutal violence showed that they did not understand the meaning of ahimsa.

"The civil disobedience campaign must end," said Gandhi.

"But, Gandhiji — "

He shook his head to forestall arguments. Even at the cost of the whole revolution the violence must be stopped.

The sorrow in his face quieted their arguments.

A revolution being canceled by one man! Had such a thing ever happened before in human history? It could

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happen in India because the Indian people are deeply religious and because Gandhi was a religious leader. His influence was profound.

On February 16, 1922, he wrote an article in *Young India* regarding Chauri Chaura:

"God has been abundantly kind to me. He has warned me the third time that there is not yet in India that truthful and non-violent atmosphere which, and which alone, can justify mass disobedience, which can be at all described as civil which means gentle, truthful, humble, knowing, wilful yet loving, never criminal and hateful. . . ."

Gandhi knew full well that he had been guilty of "sedition" in stirring up such disorder. Under the new laws, the Rowlatt Acts, the government could arrest him and keep him in jail as long as it wished.

He faced facts, and he published another article in *Young India* on the 9th of March in which he gave full instructions to his followers in the event of his arrest.

"If I am arrested," his message read, "there is to be no violence. There should be no hartals, no noisy demonstrations, no processions. I would regard the observance of perfect peace on my arrest as a mark of high honour paid to me by my countrymen."

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11. *ON TRIAL FOR SEDITION*

"Fearlessness, singleness of soul, the will
Always to strive for wisdom —"

—GITA XVI.

THE very next day Gandhi was arrested.

A government car drove up to the ashram and the Superintendent of Police stepped out. Members of the ashram ran to Gandhi and told him the news.

"Gandhiji! Gandhiji! They have come for you."

"Very well, very well," he replied calmly. "I've expected it."

Gandhi gathered his followers around him. There must be no sorrowing, he reminded them. This was a cause for celebration because in this act of going to jail he was offering satyagraha for his entire country. This stay in jail would be his own gesture of love and self-sacrifice.

The ashram sang his favorite hymns and offered up prayers for his safety. His wife and a few others were allowed to go part of the way to jail with him, postponing their farewells as long as possible. His last words to them were words of wise counsel: they must continue to work for Indian independence by peaceful means, and, above all else, they must spin and weave. They must never give up the spinning wheel.

Thus a simple, almost naked holy man, clad in nothing but a loincloth, his shanks thin and bony from fasting, his ribs showing, his body slightly bent, half his teeth gone by

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now, his head shaven bare, and his cheeks hollow, he entered Sabarmati Jail.

Gandhi had stopped wearing Western clothes. He wore only the dhoti, a single piece of cloth wrapped around the hips and pulled between the legs. It was the dress of India's poorest peasant, for Gandhi wanted nothing for himself that the poorest did not have.

While he waited in jail for his trial, he was allowed to see his friends from three to five every afternoon. His diet was respected, and he was given his fruits, nuts, and goat's milk. His only bed was a mattress on the floor, but Gandhi welcomed any suffering. Smiling and cheerful, even a little excited, he received friends and followers who trooped in to see him.

They couldn't all get in. Outside of the jail thousands gathered and waited, some praying, some standing quietly in the searing hot sun. Many wore khadi; even businessmen dressed in Western suits had their shirts made of khadi.

His trial took place eight days after his arrest. Throngs gathered to await the results, but only two hundred special guests were admitted into the courtroom: wealthy, silk-clad Indians, Gandhi followers dressed in khadi, high government officials. Jawaharlal Nehru was there, and so was the petite, high-caste Indian poetess, Sarojini Naidu.

The judge, dressed in his black robe of justice, climbed up behind his high desk.

Then the humble little man in his homespun dhoti and sandals was led into the room.

Gandhi had no lawyer to represent him; he would speak for himself when the time came. He sat quietly and listened to the charges brought against him and to the testimony of the witnesses.

There was plenty of evidence. The prosecutor displayed copies of Gandhi's newspaper, *Young India,* and read arti-

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The Hindustan Times

Mahatma Gandhi visiting with the poet Rabindranath Tagore.

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Acme Photo

Gandhiji strolling in front of Birla House with two of his "walking sticks." His granddaughter, Mani, in whose arms he died, is on the left, and Mrs. Ava Gandhi is on the right.

Mahatma Gandhi leads a prayer meeting at Juhu Beach near Bombay.

D. R. D. Wadia

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International News Photo

Mohandas K. Gandhi shortly after his return to India.

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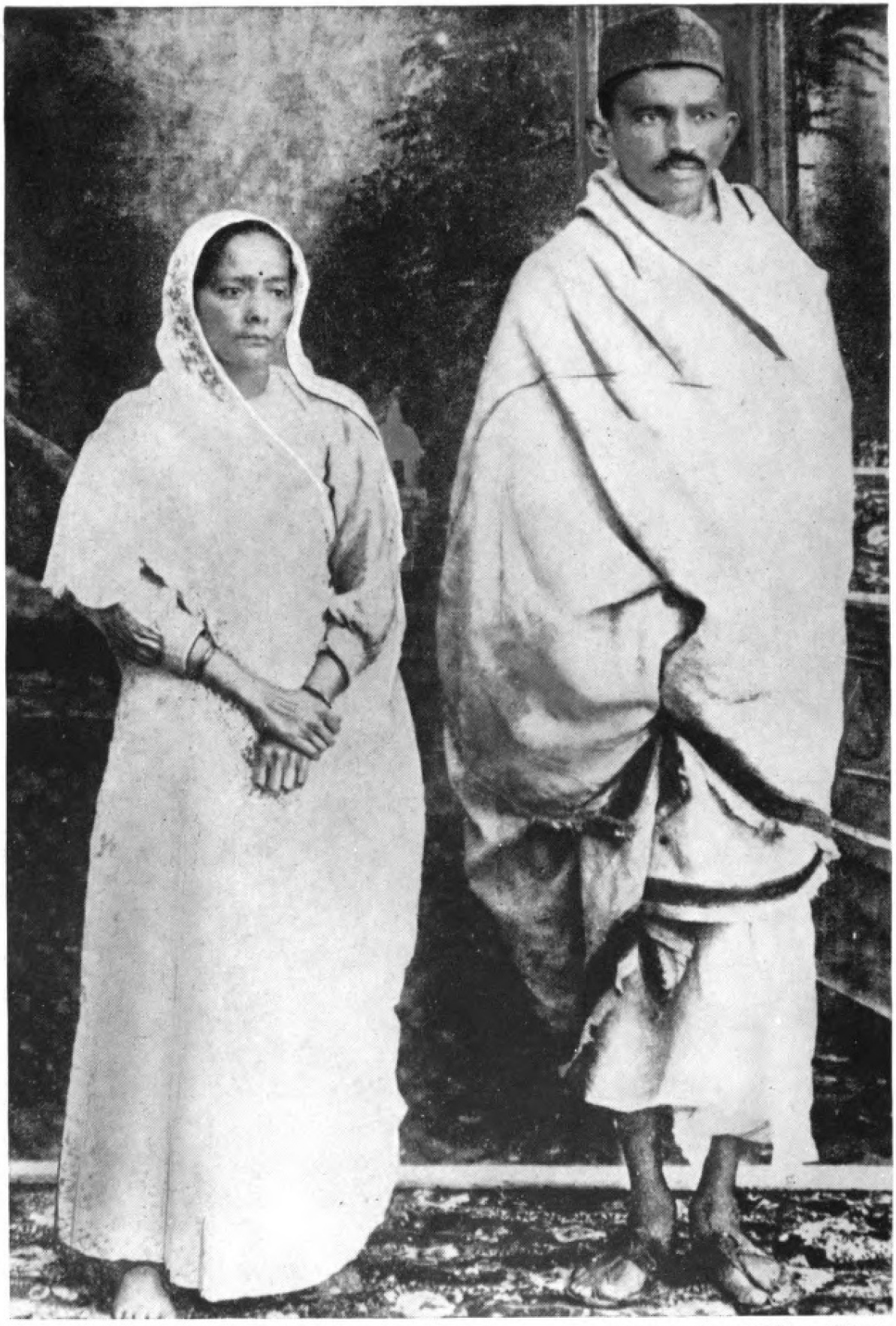

International News Photo

Mr. and Mrs. Gandhi in 1921, after he had returned to Indian dress.

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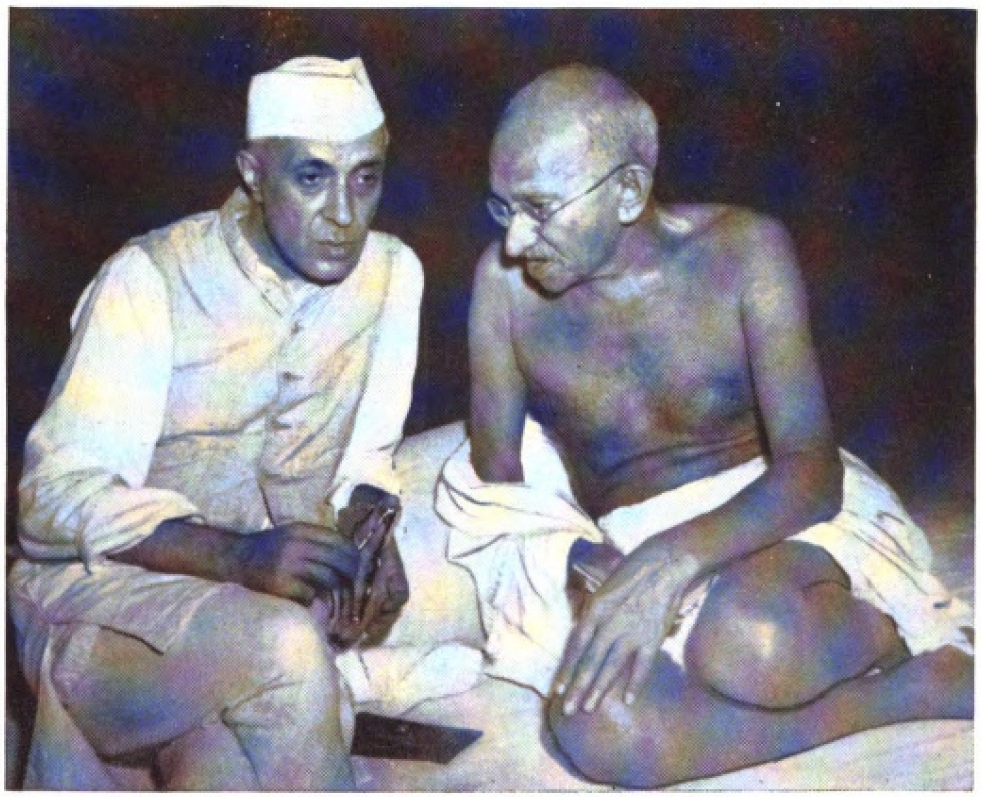
International News Photo

Mahatma Gandhi and Mirabehn examine some goats during their visit to London.

Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi at a Congress Party meeting in Bombay in 1946.

Acme Photo



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Keystone View Co.

Mrs. Gandhi at the age of sixty.

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Wide World

Dr. Sushila Nayar reads to Gandhiji during his last fast.

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Wide World

The Mahatma lies in state under a blanket of rose petals.

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tion of

cles in them to prove that Gandhi was guilty of sedition. Gandhi had written about a "declared rebellion" against England. In another issue he had talked about a "fight to the finish." In still another edition of *Young India* Gandhi had written: "How can there be any compromise whilst the British Lion continues to shake his gory claws in our faces?" There it was in print. Gandhi's guilt.

At last the Mahatma himself was called to the stand, and there was a stir and bustle as he crossed the room. Those watching through the windows passed the word to the crowds outside.

"He is taking the stand. They are going to question him now!"

After the usual questions about his name and age, the prosecutor asked:

"What do you do for a living?"

"I am a farmer and a weaver," humbly replied the man who had liberated South Africa's Indians and who was now the spiritual leader of millions of Indians.

"Where do you live?"

"At Satyagraha Ashram."

"Do you plead guilty or innocent?"

"I plead guilty to all the charges."

He had been charged with "bringing or attempting to bring into hatred or contempt or exciting or attempting to excite disaffection towards His Majesty's Government established by law in British India."

Weighty words! Gandhi had answered them with utmost simplicity: he was guilty as charged.

His plea caused another stir in the courtroom. As long as Gandhi admitted guilt, the judge could sentence him immediately. Further trial was unnecessary. But the judge hesitated. It seemed a bit hasty.

"What do you think?" the judge asked the advocate-general.

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"I don't think waiting will do Gandhi any good," said the advocate-general. "Look at the man's record. Look at the things he has written in *Young India.* Look at the trouble he has stirred up. Look at the killings at Chauri Chaura. Why don't you sentence him to a good long term in jail?"

The courtroom was tense. Those outside the windows pressed their noses against the glass. The crowds were quiet. What would the judge do?

Gandhi himself saved everyone's face by saying:

"I wish to make a statement."

With the court's permission he stood up and spoke. He was an uncompromising non-co-operator, he told them, and he was guilty as charged. He *had* promoted disaffection toward the government. He had once been loyal. He had helped Great Britain in the Boer War and in World War I because he believed in Great Britain. Then Britain imposed upon India the Rowlatt Acts, designed to rob the people of India of all real freedom.

He reminded the people in the court of the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh, the crawling orders, the public floggings. India was not allowed to have any arms. How else could she revolt except by non-co-operation?

"Your honor," said Gandhi to the judge. "You know I am guilty. What else can you do but sentence me? I think you should give me the hardest sentence possible."

Mahatma Gandhi wanted to offer satyagraha for his country. He wanted the maximum penalty.

With deep misgiving in his heart, the judge passed sentence: six years' imprisonment!

The courtroom was deathly silent when it heard that long penalty.

Gandhi broke the silence:

"Your honor," he said. "I wish to thank you. I could not have expected greater courtesy."

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12. *THE GREAT FAST*

"And they who, day by day denying needs,
Lay life itself upon the altar-flame,
Burning the body wan. Lo! all these keep
The rite of offering, as if they slew
Victims." —GITA IV.

SPIN thread! Weave cloth!"

This was the Mahatma's farewell message to his followers as he was led away to Yeravda Jail near Poona.

Satyagraha was not to end simply because their leader was in prison. Instead, Gandhi's arrest, his complete sacrifice of himself, inspired others.

Kasturba Gandhi came out of her home to make speeches and campaign.

"My dear countrymen and countrywomen," she said, "my husband has been sentenced to six years' imprisonment."

They could shorten those six years, she went on, by carrying out the program of the Congress Party and of Gandhi. Khadi must replace foreign cloth. They must spin yarn every day and persuade others to do the same.

The excitement gradually died down and so did the rioting. Some thought that the non-co-operation movement was finished. It was, except for the spinning, and the stacks of foreign goods that nobody would buy piled up on the wharfs.

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In Yeravda Jail Gandhi was received with kindness and courtesy.

"I like to sleep out of doors," he told the authorities, so they left his cell door open to the courtyard. He could walk about and exercise in the tiny yard if he liked. After he had proved himself a model prisoner, his jailers gave him a light to read by, a bedstead so that his mattress could be lifted from the floor, and even a mosquito netting. But the things that meant most to him were denied.

"You can't see any newspapers," said the officials.

He could receive and write only a few letters. He was allowed to see two friends and three relatives at each interview, but they must not talk politics. The other prisoners were kept away from him, lest his ideas cause "disaffection" within the prison walls.

"My dear Charlie," he wrote to Charles F. Andrews, "I am as happy as a bird! My ideal of a jail life — especially that of a civil resister — is to be cut off entirely from all connection with the outside world. . . . The forthcoming imprisonment will be to me more than a political advantage. If it is a sacrifice, I want it to be the purest."

His spinning wheel went to prison with him, and each day he sat meekly at his charkha spinning yarn to be woven into khadi by his followers. How they waited to receive the precious yarn!

MAKE YOUR PILGRIMAGE
To Tirupur Conference
On 4th and 5th November
To see exhibited for the first time
THE GREAT NATIONAL TREASURE —
YARN SPUN BY MAHATMA GANDHI
IN YERAVDA JAIL.

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Such was the announcement carried by a Madras newspaper. Another time one of his followers sent out this bulletin:

"The postman brought me an insured parcel just now. My heart throbbed and my fingers trembled as I opened the packet; for it contained a national treasure too sacred for me to touch and handle. YARN SPUN BY OUR PEERLESS SAINT IN THE SOLITUDE OF HIS PRISON."

Gandhi's message went out to his people in the thread he sat spinning as he dutifully served his time in prison.

Two years of the six passed. Gandhi celebrated his fifty-fourth birthday in jail.

Soon after that he fell ill, desperately ill, wracked with pain and fever.

"You have appendicitis," the prison doctor said. "You will have to be operated on at once."

Gandhi shook his head. He had no faith in Western medicine. The spirit, he maintained, should have complete power over the body. When that was achieved medicine was unnecessary.

The doctor was just as firm in his belief. "You will either have to be operated upon or you will die."

At last, as the pain became too much for him to bear, Gandhi gave in. In the middle of the night a British surgeon performed the emergency operation.

When the Viceroy of India received the news of Gandhi's illness, he ordered him released from prison. As soon as he was strong enough to walk, Gandhi was taken from Yeravda Jail to Juhu, a little seaside town not far from Bombay. It was quiet and secluded, with no sounds save the breaking of the surf and no sights but stately palm trees, beach, and sea. His secretary, Mahadev Desai, was with him, and so were a few close friends.

Sometimes he strolled slowly up and down the beach,

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leaning on Desai's arm, as others walked along and gave him the latest news. The members of the Congress Party were quarreling among themselves. Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal's father, thought Gandhi was too much of a religious dreamer to be a good politician. The Ali brothers agreed. They were big, lusty men; they wanted action, not prayers.

Unperturbed, Gandhi continued his strolls. Day by day, patiently, he was winning back his health. Soon he would be strong enough to leave the seashore and return to his ashram.

Home at last! He found crowds waiting to cheer and greet him, throw flower garlands about his neck, reach out and touch his garment.

"Gandhiji is back! Gandhiji is back!"

In the village to which he returned after two years, more and more people were wearing khadi, saris, and dhotis of rough, undyed, bleached white homespun. The spinning wheels had been humming in cottages and huts.

Happiness welled up in him as he looked at his ashram and remembered what it had been in 1915. In seven years the place had become a successful farm, a whole community, a religious retreat. This was where he would really recover, in his own home, with his own family and loved ones.

The ashram always awoke early. Long before sunrise, sometimes as early as two or three o'clock in the morning, but usually at four, a gong was struck with a covered baton to rouse the members and guests. In the darkness, or sometimes in the moonlight, they would silently leave their bare little rooms to assemble on the veranda for prayers. There, still in absolute silence, they squatted on the floor in meditation. Religious verses were chanted from the Gita and other Hindu scriptures, and the group would sing a hymn. Silence again, and they returned to their cells to await the rising sun.

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At seven o'clock Gandhi drank his goat's milk and ate his fruit, and the activity of the morning officially started. Much had to be accomplished before the heat of the day. Each had his assigned task, without regard for caste. There were no Brahmins, no Untouchables. Each person took his turn at peeling vegetables, sweeping floors, drawing water from the well, and emptying slops, whether he be a university professor or a humble villager.

Mrs. Gandhi's special responsibility was the kitchen where she supervised the preparation and serving of food. For such a large family as gathered about her husband, that was a big task. It was she who looked after visitors and broke the rules of the ashram for them. If someone came to the ashram from England or America, it was Mrs. Gandhi who saw to it that he had a steaming hot cup of coffee for breakfast, in spite of the no-coffee rule.

The Mahatma had learned to be a little afraid of Kasturba. She could really scold him when she thought he needed it.

One day Kasturba finished her day's work, tidied up the kitchen, and closed it for the day. She went to lie down and rest. Hardly had she dropped off to sleep when some guests arrived who had not eaten. They were distinguished persons at that, Motilal Nehru among them. Important as his guests were, Gandhi was afraid to ask his wife to go back into the kitchen and prepare more food. So he asked some other members of the ashram to tiptoe out to the kitchen and fix some vegetables and chapaties (round flat biscuits). Alas, somebody dropped a dish, and the crash awakened Mrs. Gandhi. Out she rushed to the kitchen, storming violently at the Mahatma in Gujarati for not calling her when there were such important guests present in the house.

"You think I am such a bag of lazy-bones?" she demanded.

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Gandhi could only shrug his shoulders helplessly.

By eight o'clock every morning there were visitors waiting to see the Mahatma, and they continued to come all during the day. From everywhere on earth they came to seek advice, to discuss political issues, to argue philosophical questions. They came to pay tribute, even to worship, although Gandhi did not want to be worshiped.

Best of all, Gandhi loved the company of children and there were many at the ashram, some with their families, some sent by their families. Each was considered a member of the community family. Gandhi's children, like all the others, were surrendered to the greater family circle. He was their father, their Bapu, and Mrs. Gandhi was their mother, their Ba.

The children adored Gandhi. They brought him flowers; they played games with him and clambered into his lap. They were his walking sticks that he could lean upon when he went for a stroll. How they resented the visits of state officials! For then the children had to withdraw and wait for the high-ranking person to leave. Why did such people bother their Bapuji?

He was strict with all of his children. They, too, must obey the rules of the ashram. Once two little girls went on a visit in the village. When they returned they reported to their Bapu. Yes, they had had a lovely time. Had they obeyed all the rules of the ashram? Oh, yes. Bapu wasn't so sure. Something in their averted glance, perhaps — Then the truth came out as the truth always will. They had eaten some bhajas, little spiced pastries fried in deep fat, and in eating them they had broken three rules of the ashram: no eating between meals, no fried items, and no spices. The worst offense of all, their Bapu pointed out to them, was the lie they had told in denying their guilt. For that he would do penance because their lie must be expiated. He himself would fast for two days. In utter mor-

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tification the two little girls had to see their Bapuji suffer for what they had done.

In addition to his other jobs, everyone at the ashram had to do his share of spinning, and each took his own clothes to the Sabarmati River to wash. The hot midday sun of India bleached the homespun white and dry, fit garments for a life of voluntary poverty, truth, and purity.

When he joined, each member took a vow of truth. He promised to speak the truth and think the truth no matter what hardship it might mean.

The vow of ahimsa, non-killing, non-violence in all things, was part of the ashram code. Members must regard life as sacred.

Every member took a vow of celibacy. He could not be a special servant of society, and he could not live a truly religious life, and have a married life, too. He was really entering a priesthood when he joined the ashram.

Every member took vows of simple living and poverty. Henceforth he would eat only the plainest of foods; he would own nothing. With the world so full of poverty and misery, Gandhi felt that owning too much was as bad as stealing.

All of the ashram family vowed to spin and weave khadi and never to buy foreign cloth.

At noon the Mahatma usually rested for half an hour. After his rest he devoted an hour to instructing his sons, because he wanted them to learn the Gujarati language. From tutoring, Gandhi went to his spinning, and in spinning he found relaxation. All during the afternoon more visitors streamed in to see him, rich and poor, humble and proud, caste-marked and Untouchable.

By dusk Gandhi was a tired man. He had been up since long before the sun in the proper Hindu custom. A short evening stroll with his "walking sticks," who counted it an honor to have Bapuji lean on their shoulders, and he came

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back to the veranda for evening prayers. After prayers another period of silent meditation ended the day.

Gandhi set aside one day of every week as a day of silence, when he uttered not a word. Any messages from him were scribbled on scraps of paper. On that day he usually wrote his weekly article for *Young India.* Sometimes reporters from other lands would blunder in and ply him with questions, utterly confused by his failure to answer until an onlooker explained:

"It is the Mahatma's day of silence."

All this time he was training his flock to serve India. His young volunteers traveled all over India helping the poverty-stricken villagers. They lived with the poor in their dirt-floor, grass-roofed huts, showed them how to have clean drinking water, how to sweep the refuse from the roadway that ran through the village, how to make their huts and cottages cleaner, how to spin and weave. Like missionaries, fine young Indian men and women traveled on foot in the heat and dust, trudging over the countryside explaining hygiene and cleanliness, spinning and prayer.

There were other troubles in India. News reached Gandhi of religious riots between Hindus and Moslems. True, they worshiped God in different ways, but that was no excuse for fighting and killing.

"India can never be free until Hindus and Moslems learn to get along with each other," was Gandhi's warning.

But news came of worse trouble, even more violent outbreaks.

Now there are many parts of India where Hindus and Moslems have always lived side by side in peace and contentment. Gandhi knew this. He knew they could live in peace everywhere if both factions honestly tried.

At last he made an exhausting trip around the country to see for himself. Conditions were even worse than he had heard, particularly in Kohat in the northwest. There the

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slightest incident might set off a mob of rioters. The Hindus do not eat meat and they consider the cow a sacred animal. The Moslems enjoy beef. To see a Moslem molest a cow would enrage a Hindu. The Hindus use music in their worship; the Moslems do not. Music played too near a Moslem church, or mosque, will set a Moslem's blood to boiling.

Gandhi came back to his ashram, grief-stricken by what he had seen. As always he turned to prayer to find the answer to this tragic problem.

"How can I bring about peace between the Hindus and Moslems?"

In morning and evening meditation he concentrated his thoughts on bringing peace to India. He prayed for guidance, for the wisdom to teach both Moslems and Hindus tolerance. Each night he fell asleep with a prayer on his lips.

At last a ray of divine light flashed into his mind and filled it with inspiration. He knew what he must do. God had spoken to him, and he would listen to no human protests.

"I intend to fast for twenty-one days," he announced in his newspaper.

Twenty-one days without food? No, he must not! He could not!

"This is an act of penance," he explained, "for the sins of my people."

The fast was to purify his own soul, but that was between God and himself.

Gandhi was loved by hundreds of thousands. Hindus and Moslems alike revered and respected him. That he should undertake such a superhuman task, a task that could kill a strong man, when he was still so weakened from his operation and his imprisonment, terrified their hearts. They needed him! India needed him! They would not

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allow him to be so careless with his own life. Anguished protests poured in.

Advice meant nothing to Gandhi unless it came from God, and God had told him to fast.

"No act of mine is done without prayer," he wrote in *Young India.*

He chose the city of Delhi, where rioting had occurred, for the scene of his fast. At the home of a friend, Mohamed Ali, a Moslem, on September 18, 1924, only eight months after his release from prison, the twenty-one-day ordeal began. This frail little man of the great soul intended to take nothing but water for three weeks.

The Reverend Charles F. Andrews ("Charlie") hurried to Delhi to be with the Mahatma during his trial. He edited *Young India* during the three weeks and spent devoted hours by his bedside.

Doctors, nurses, friends, disciples came to Gandhi's bedside, too, to wait upon their teacher, since he would not change his mind.

They watched him as he lay in bed, covered with a piece of homespun, suffering for the sins of an entire nation.

The effect on the outside was almost electric. The rioting quieted down, for both Hindus and Moslems had lost heart for the fight. Their leaders went right to work to promote permanent peace between them.

Gandhi still had to finish his fast. He must endure the entire twenty-one days. All over India the waiting was tense; the Mahatma's life hung in the balance.

On the twelfth day the doctors held a conference.

"He must eat something at once or he may die," they agreed.

They called in "Charlie" Andrews.

"You have influence with the Mahatma. See if you can persuade him to eat."

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Andrews sat down by the cot and looked at the saintly man who lay so still, barely breathing.

"Bapuji, can you hear me?"

Gandhi opened his eyes, and Andrews told him what the doctors had said.

"Will you consider eating something?"

It was Gandhi's day of silence, and he wrote on his slate: "Have faith in God."

Andrews sat still for a while. He tried to persuade Gandhi again, and Gandhi replied on his slate:

"You have forgotten the power of prayer."

As they waited through the night for the crisis to pass, a storm raged outside the house. It was the monsoon season, and thunder and lightning crashed and flashed as rain poured down. The next morning Gandhi was still alive and no weaker than he had been. More days passed.

His bed was on the terrace or veranda of the second floor of the house. One afternoon, while streams of motor cars were passing in the street below and sportsmen were playing golf across the way, he called "Charlie" Andrews to his side.

"Some musicians had come, and he wished me to hear the music," Andrews wrote of it later. "It was one of his worst days; his weakness was extreme. A boy was singing softly at the far end of the terrace. As I passed in order to sit down and listen to the music, I could not but take note how drawn the face of the sufferer was with pain. The sight renewed my anxiety, and at first I hardly listened to the music. The sun was setting in the west, and shafts of light were pouring from it, piercing the open glades where the golfers were busily playing their rounds of golf. The rocks and ruins on the hilltop were flushed with crimson and gold. At last the beauty of the sky arrested me and soothed my inner fears. . . . Instinctively my gaze turned

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back to the frail, wasted, tortured spirit on the terrace by my side, bearing the sins and sorrows of his people. . . . And in that hour of vision I knew more deeply, in my own personal life, the meaning of the Cross."

The three weeks were almost over. On the twentieth day Gandhi was in the best of spirits. The next morning, at his customary four o'clock, the morning prayers began. This was the last day of the fast. Today the Mahatma would take food! Doctors, friends, attendants gathered together anxiously, awaiting the command of their Bapuji. The morning dragged slowly on.

At noon Gandhi called everyone to his bedside and thanked them humbly for their constant service and their devoted help. Among that group on the day he broke his fast were Motilal Nehru and the Ali brothers. They were there to pray with as much reverence as anyone else.

The ceremony that Gandhi had requested began: Moslem, Christian, and Hindu. First he wanted to hear verses from the Moslem Koran; then the Christian hymn, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"; and finally recitations from the Hindu scriptures.

"Shanti, shanti, shanti," were the closing words of the Hindu chant. "Peace, peace, peace."

Gandhi implored Hindus and Moslems to unite, and every person present gave his solemn promise to work for Hindu-Moslem peace. The doctor handed the Mahatma a glass of orange juice. He drank it, and the fast was over.

Deep joy took hold of everyone in the room as they gratefully realized that he had survived his ordeal and was now out of danger. Soon he would recover his strength and be their inspiring leader once more. Quietly they withdrew from his bedside and let him rest.

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13. *INDIA DECLARES HER INDEPENDENCE*

"With blare to wake the blood, rolling around
Like to a lion's roar, the trumpeter
Blew the great Conch." —GITA I.

THE influence of the Great Fast lasted for nearly a year. There was peace and quiet in the streets. After that, though, the passion and bitterness began to show again.

As soon as Gandhi recovered his strength, he was back on his schedule — traveling about, speaking to meetings, explaining non-violence. He had gained more followers since his fast, and he was in public life once more. It didn't take him long. The fast ended on October 8, 1924, and the following December he was elected president of the Congress Party.

This was the thirty-ninth year of the National Congress Party. The conference met during December, 1924, and January, 1925, in Belgaum: a huge affair to which so many thousands came that an entire city of tents had to be put up, tents for kitchens, tents for sleeping, for dining, for meetings, for emergency hospitals. Fifteen thousand Indians came to that conference. Some came on foot, others in cars, many in two-wheeled carts pulled by bullocks. The little town of Belgaum was overwhelmed.

The tent in which the entire fifteen thousand met was huge enough for a circus; the strips of canvas fanning out from the center pole were made entirely of khadi cloth,

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lovingly spun and woven by hands devoted to Gandhi. There were no chairs inside. The crowd sat cross-legged on the ground on grass mats, packing themselves close together so that all might be admitted.

Up on the speakers' platform sat India's notables: Mahatma Gandhi, Sarojini Naidu, Lajpat Rai, the big, blustering Ali brothers, Motilal Nehru, and many others.

Whenever Gandhi came or went, a wave of excitement swept over the crowd, but they did not greet him noisily. There were no cheers or applause, because he was their saint. Instead, the reaction was religious. Some bowed their foreheads to the ground as he passed by. Others reached out to touch the edge of his dhoti or reverently picked up the dust upon which he had walked.

One of the first things that Congress Party meeting did was to elect Gandhi as president. He was their leader and their guide. As Gandhi stood up on the platform to make his acceptance speech, he spoke bluntly:

"You want independence for India," he challenged them. "You want to govern yourselves. But how can you govern yourselves if you can't stop fighting among yourselves? India is not ready for independence. India must be purified of her own sins first. Many of you feel that we ought to start another non-co-operation movement. It's too soon for that. We must wait. First, India must spin and weave and boycott foreign cloth. Then, Hindus and Moslems must stop fighting and killing each other. Indians must learn to live together peacefully. We must put an end to Untouchability. We must campaign against the use of opium and alcohol. Insanitation must be cleaned up. There is plenty to do before we can think of revolting against the British."

Many Indian leaders did not agree with Gandhi. They shook their heads when they heard his speech. Was this practical politics? Hardly!

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Even if some of the leading Indians did not agree with Gandhi, the poor people of India adored him. He had given up wealth and worldly goods to become as poor as they. He was a poor man's poor man in a land of widespread, incredible poverty. He had no worldly possessions beyond his dhoti, his sandals, his eyeglasses, the bowl from which he ate, and the mattress on which he slept.

Now that Gandhi was president of the Congress Party, more poor people came to the meetings. Factory workers joined, too, and the Congress Party became more democratic, more alive. It had two main goals: freedom for India and freedom for India's Untouchables.

Abraham Lincoln said that no nation can live half slave and half free. Gandhi said the same. India must end Untouchability if she was to deserve her freedom.

Both high-caste Indians and Untouchables believed that Untouchability was right because it had been a custom for so many hundreds of years. To ask a Brahmin (the highest caste) to associate with an Untouchable, or to eat food that an Untouchable had touched, was like asking him to caress someone with smallpox. The Untouchable himself was just as convinced that his touch could defile.

The caste system is dying out slowly in India. Modernized Indians, the younger generation, have given up the idea and no longer paint their caste mark on their foreheads. When industries came to India and built factories, they tended to break down the caste system because caste Indians and Untouchables had to work side by side on assembly lines.

When Gandhi was elected as president of the Congress Party, there were about forty-three million Untouchables. But they were beginning to awaken as the rest of the country awakened. One of them, Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, was fortunate enough to have the help of a wealthy Indian prince, who sent him to England and to the United States

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to be educated. Dr. Ambedkar became a lawyer and eventually the leader of the Untouchables. Soon he helped organize the Untouchables into the Depressed Classes Federation.

Dr. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi did not always agree. Gandhi wanted Untouchability to disappear. Dr. Ambedkar wanted Untouchables to be a special group with special favors given to them.

Gandhi gave the Untouchables a new name; he called them Harijans, meaning children of God. He even began to publish another paper called *Harijan*.

What about these other problems of liquor and opium? Gandhi worried about everything. Anyone who took note of Untouchables and their sad life could see that liquor and dope were part of their lot. Whenever an Untouchable's life became more than he could bear, he could drink or he could use opium and forget it all.

"We are all agreed on this problem," said Hindus, Moslems, Sikhs, and other leaders. "We must stamp out drinking and the use of opium."

It was Gandhi who did something about it. He called his volunteers together, his satyagrahis, and gave them their instructions.

"Go out and picket the liquor and opium shops," he told them.

Out they went, standing in front of shop doorways, pleading with those who came along not to enter and buy.

When a customer came to the shop, he had to pass a whole line of pickets who begged him to give up his evil habit. Or he might have to step over the figure of a picket stretched out on the ground in front of the shop door. If the customer was an Untouchable, which was very likely, and the picket a Brahmin, training stopped him. How could he offend so high-caste an Indian?

The picketing was successful. Some shops went out of

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business, and others saw their profits go way down. Political complications arose from this, because the liquor and opium shops were licensed by the British Government. The money from the licenses was used to support what schools the British had built in India. Gandhi pleaded with the government to use other funds for supporting the schools.

Gandhi traveled all over India in his campaign against vice. He was becoming more and more popular, and he was beginning to have more and more influence over people. They loved him; he seemed like a messiah; they wanted to obey his wishes.

When he visited the Province of Assam, in the northeastern corner of India near the Chinese frontier, the town fathers were waiting for him as for a deliverer.

"Please do something about the use of opium in our villages," they begged.

Gandhi went directly to the people and talked to them about the evil drug habit. They must give it up immediately. How could they give it up? Opium was an unbreakable habit. Even if they gave it up, what good would it do? It helped them to forget their troubles, their hunger, their ragged clothes.

"Have faith in God," was his answer to all they said.

His effect on the villagers was magical. Six months after his visit, opium sales in Assam had dropped 25 per cent. Villagers who had been addicted to it for thirty years or more gave up the habit because Gandhi asked them to, which was more than a medical doctor could have hoped to accomplish.

In the cities opium was a hard problem, too. Women who had to work in the cotton mills had no one with whom to leave their babies. What were they to do when they were too poor to remain at home and care for their children? They did the next best thing: put them to sleep with

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opium. Nearly all of the women employed in the cotton mills of Bombay doped their babies each morning before going to work.

Gandhi's message traveled far and wide as more and more people in out-of-the-way places learned about him.

In the southern part of India in a little village called Vykom, the villagers heard his message of non-violence and of the sin of Untouchability.

Vykom is down in Travancore State where India is close to the equator and the people are black of skin. The land is covered with rice fields, crisscrossed with channels of water. In the region of Vykom there was one good road; the only other way to travel was across the rice fields. The highway across this watery land ran through the Brahmin section of town and, of course, past the temple. Untouchables were not allowed to use the road at all. Their shadows might defile a Brahmin.

"Our Untouchables must be allowed to use the highway and must be admitted to the Hindu temples to worship," they decided under Gandhi's influence.

The satyagraha campaign began when a young Indian, a Christian by faith, took an Untouchable by the hand and walked along the forbidden road. The two had not gone far when a group of Brahmins saw them and, outraged by the act, beat them severely. Later the young Indian Christian was arrested by the officials of Travancore State and tossed into jail. Legally, they had a perfect right to arrest him because he had broken the law. The purpose of the satyagraha campaign was to call attention to the evil law and have it changed.

News of the episode traveled fast. Gandhi devotees from all parts of India packed up and traveled to Vykom to help in the satyagraha struggle. Gandhi did not go in person. Instead, he sent "Charlie" Andrews to observe and report.

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It became a religious duty to trespass on the forbidden highway as the satyagraha campaign went on. As fast as the state arrested a batch of trespassers there were more volunteers to take their places. The volunteers poured in, many high-caste Hindus among them, and for sixteen months the struggle went on.

When it became obvious that there would be more volunteers to arrest than the jails could hold, Travancore changed its tactics. No more arrests. The police formed a line to prevent the volunteers from walking along the forbidden road.

"What shall we do now, Mr. Gandhi?" was the next question.

They could not force their way through the police line because that would be an act of violence. They could not give up the satyagraha campaign because that would be admitting defeat.

Gandhi advised them to treat the problem as a religious one. They must form their own line facing the police line, and their attitude must be one of prayer.

"Stand or squat in relays with quiet submission till arrested."

They obeyed. They formed their line; they chanted prayers and hymns as they marched to and from their relays. They built a small ashram of reed huts at the place and followed a program similar to the one followed by Gandhi at Sabarmati: rise at four A.M., eat a quick breakfast of rice, first relay march to the barrier at five A.M., some standing, some squatting, some even spinning, as they held their positions in utter patience. Six hours of vigilance, then another relay took their place at noon. The first relay marched back to the makeshift ashram singing hymns. Always facing that forbidding line of police was a line of quiet, gentle, praying satyagrahis, from early morn-

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ing until six at night. The ashram took its last meal of the day at eight in the evening, and after further prayer and meditation retired for the night.

Aid came to the satyagrahis from far and wide: people, food, money. A group of Sikhs set up a free kitchen. Gandhi personally objected to their receiving any but Hindu help. He felt that Untouchability was a vice of Hinduism and that the Hindus should bear the full responsibility.

Day after day, week after week, month after month, the religious vigil went on. Crowds gathered at the roadsides to watch the extraordinary event — all this in the stifling tropical heat with tormenting insects swarming in the air.

The monsoon struck at its appointed time. The hot wind blew over the land, lightning and thunder burst overhead, and rain fell in torrents. The satyagrahis stayed at their posts. The lands became flooded as the rains continued to fall. Soon the relays of satyagrahis were standing waist high in water. The police took to small boats tied with ropes to the towering palm trees. The satyagrahis stood in the water, enduring exposure and sickness. Smallpox broke out. So great did their suffering become that the vigils had to be shortened to three-hour relays.

At last even the most bigoted hearts were melted by the sufferings of the satyagrahis. After sixteen months the Brahmins of Vykom themselves announced that they were willing to allow the Untouchables to use the highway that passed through the Brahmin section of town.

"We cannot any longer resist the prayers that have been made to us, and we are ready to receive them."

The Untouchables had won their right to walk upon a public road.

"The opening of the roads is only the first step," Gandhi wrote in *Young India.* "Temples in general, public wells, public schools must be open to the Untouchables equally with the caste Hindus."

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That was just one example of the effect of Gandhi's influence. His power was spreading and growing, and some day he would lead another non-violent revolution against British rule. Not yet, though; that would not come until 1930. Then the fight for swaraj would begin. Swaraj means self-rule. The word raj means rule. A raja is a ruler. The British rule was often referred to as the British *raj*.

Many English people were sympathetic to Gandhi and believed that India ought to have her freedom.

Madeleine Slade came to Gandhi in 1925. Miss Slade was a beautiful, cultured young Englishwoman. She came to Satyagraha Ashram one day and asked to be admitted as a member.

"I believe in what you are doing, Gandhiji," she said. "I want to help you."

"No, no!" said Gandhi. "You don't belong here. Go back to your parties and fine clothes."

Madeleine Slade insisted. She was through with parties and fine clothes; she cared nothing about the color of anyone's skin. In spite of his objections she did join the ashram and she did give him a lifetime of service.

The color-conscious and class-conscious British were horrified, because Madeleine Slade was an admiral's daughter. A white woman to serve a brown man! An Englishwoman to serve a member of a subject race!

Madeleine Slade was true to her pledge. She entered the ashram as a nun enters the church, to leave the world behind her forever. She performed the humblest tasks; she nursed Gandhi when he was ill; she went with him to prison. She wore khadi and took an Indian name, Mirabehn.

Gandhi did not make life easy for her at first, and he did everything he could to discourage her. She was determined, and her devotion finally convinced him that she meant what she said. As the years went by, her face, framed

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by the white homespun sari, took on the sweet, happy expression of the truly religious.

She loved Gandhi the way the Indians loved him. She liked to sit near him in silence as he worked. Once she wrote about him:

"I am never tired of watching him handling his writing work. Nothing is ruffled or damaged by his hands, and nothing is wasted. . . . Bapu begins to write. The article seems to be of a serious nature, probably some burning problem of the day, for a concentrated, even stern, look appears on his countenance. Before the article is finished he begins to feel sleepy. The sheets are carefully put on one side, and Bapu turns and lies down. He removes his glasses, places them by the side of his pillow, and in one or two minutes he is fast asleep, and breathing as peacefully as a little child. I take up a handkerchief and, sitting near his head, keep off the flies. Such times are for me infinitely precious, infinitely sweet, and filled with a profound teaching which could never be conveyed in words."

Gandhi's influence reached the high-born of India, too. Rabindranath Tagore, the poet, was one of them. Tagore was the first important writer of modern India to become known in the rest of the world, and he once won the Nobel Prize for Literature. Tagore was very different from Gandhi. He did not dress in the dhoti of the poor but in bright silk robes, and his uncut hair and long silken white beard framed a handsome face. His spiritual retreat was more of a literary circle than Gandhi's ashram. Tagore's ashram was really a university with schoolrooms, dormitories, eating halls, and in the center of it all the temple where the poet himself led the devotions. Each morning began with the tolling of a bell, the signal to prayer for students and visitors. Shanti, shanti, shanti — peace, peace, peace!

Tagore considered Gandhi a saint, and he grew to love

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him as deeply as anyone anywhere, although he did not always agree with his ideas.

He and Gandhi both viewed with alarm the growing restlessness of the Indian people. So did Great Britain, and once more the ruling country decided the time was ripe for investigation. Another commission, headed by Sir John Simon, was sent to India and ordered to make a complete report.

It was in November, 1927, that the Viceroy summoned Gandhi to Delhi to tell him this news. When Gandhi saw the names of the men who were to serve on the commission, he simply got up and walked out of the Viceregal House without a word.

The Simon Commission, true to its name, was simon-pure white. Not a single Indian had been appointed to it. The British evidently thought that there was no Indian — not even Nehru or Gandhi — capable of serving on that committee. A terrible blunder!

The people of India were quick to resent the discrimination. The Simon Commission was going to gather material to write a new constitution for India.

Angry protests, strikes, and hartals followed the newspaper reports of this affront. When Sir John Simon stepped off the ship at Bombay, he was greeted with rioting mobs waving black flags and shouting, "Simon, go home!" Go home and take your white commission with you!

From Bombay to Delhi, from Delhi to Calcutta, Sir John Simon was greeted with strikes and riots. The British piled blunder on blunder. They tried to quell the disorder with violence of their own: troops, mounted police, lathi beatings, arrests.

Jawaharlal Nehru was himself one of the demonstrators against the Simon Commission when it arrived in Lucknow, a city halfway between Delhi and Calcutta.

A peaceful, unarmed procession was at the railroad sta-

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tion when Sir John Simon arrived. Most of its members were students of Gandhi's teaching. They planned a non-violent protest so they assembled in a large square facing the railroad station.

The police were taking no chances. Before Simon's train arrived they galloped into the crowd to break it up. Some were cruelly beaten, others trampled under the horses' hooves. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote:

"And then began a beating of us, and battering with lathis and long batons both by the mounted police and the foot police. It was a tremendous hammering, and the clearness of vision that I had had the evening before left me. All I knew was that I had to stay where I was and must not yield or go back. I felt half blinded with the blows, and sometimes a dull anger seized me and a desire to hit back. I thought how easy it would be to pull down the police officer in front of me from his horse and to mount up myself, but long training and discipline held, and I did not raise a hand, except to protect my face from a blow. Besides, I knew well enough that any aggression on our part would result in a ghastly tragedy, the shooting down of large numbers of our men."

The Simon Commission continued on its journey. The men made notes on what they saw and then returned to England to give their report to Parliament. The report was such a big thick volume, and it took so long to prepare, that it was not published until three years later.

Meanwhile Gandhi was winning more followers. He was fifty-nine in 1928, a ripe old age for an Indian, because people in a tropical country do not live as long as those in a temperate climate. But Gandhi's simple living, his plain food and regular hours, was keeping him young. He still had the energy of several men, and those who worked with him would sink down exhausted when the day finally ended.

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"Love every living thing," Gandhi went on teaching. "Spin and weave. That is the road to freedom."

The charkha was fast becoming a national custom. It could be found in home and cottage, in palace and grass hut. More and more persons were seen wearing coarse khadi, and that meant that more and more persons were agreeing with Gandhi that India ought to be free.

All this time Gandhi kept an eye on the way his countrymen behaved. He saw the Indian peasants walking more proudly. They were feeling a new self-respect. They were no longer so docile, so willing to pay taxes, taxes, taxes, and live forever in poverty. They were coming closer and closer to the time when they would be ready for their new revolt, their new civil-disobedience campaign, their nonviolent revolution for independence. Gandhi understood his people.

In December, 1929, the Congress Party held its regular meeting at Lahore, and when Gandhi saw the thousands of outstanding Indians gather together from all over the land, and as he watched their excitement, their sincere attempts to get along with each other, he knew the hour was at hand. They were ready for action.

Almost the first decision the Congress Party made as its delegates met under the giant tent was that a civil-disobedience campaign must begin at once. They sat down together, first, and wrote out their declaration of independence. As Thomas Jefferson had sat with his associates in Philadelphia in 1776 to draft a Declaration of Independence for the thirteen colonies, the leaders of India sat in Lahore in December, 1929, and did the same.

"We believe that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life so that they may have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any government deprives a people

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of these rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or to abolish it. . . ."

India had been ruined economically, the declaration pointed out. Her village industries had been destroyed, her leaders exiled, her educational system broken down, her spirit broken by poverty, her people disarmed.

"We hold it to be a crime against man and God to submit any longer to a rule that has caused this fourfold disaster to our country. We recognize, however, that the most effective way of gaining our freedom is not through violence. We will therefore prepare ourselves by withdrawing, so far as we can, all voluntary association with the British Government, and will prepare for civil disobedience, including non-payment of taxes. We are convinced that if we can but withdraw our voluntary help and stop payment of taxes without doing violence even under provocation, the end of this inhuman rule is assured. We therefore hereby solemnly resolve to carry out the Congress instructions from time to time for the purpose of establishing Purna Swaraj [complete self-rule]."

The Resolution on Independence was adopted at Lahore and Independence Day was set for January 26, 1930. Copies of the Resolution were printed up and sent out to be read in every village and town in the land.

The new flag of free India was flown for the first time over that Lahore Congress, a three-colored flag, saffron, white, and green. It was not a Hindu flag or a Moslem flag; it was an *Indian* flag.

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14. *THE SALT MARCH*

"Drive, Dauntless One!" —GITA I.

"HOW shall we begin our new civil disobedience?" Nehru asked the question that filled every mind.

Independence had been declared, but it had not been won. Nine years before the Indian leaders had asked Gandhi that same question. "Spin and weave!" Gandhi had said, and his idea of the spinning wheel had been spreading out over India ever since. Hand-weaving in India had hurt British trade and slowed down work in cotton mills in England. The spinning wheel had drawn Great Britain's attention to India. Now something more was needed.

Again guidance came from Gandhi. Out of his prayers and communion with God, out of his spiritual living, came the answer. The solution was as simple as the spinning wheel. It touched every home and life in India. It was so elementary that the most illiterate peasant could understand it.

Salt!

The British Government had a complete monopoly on salt in India. It made the salt, and it sold the salt, and to the sale price it added a stiff tax. It even went so far as to destroy salt where it occurred naturally along the sea so that poor people couldn't use it. The British Government

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netted itself nearly twenty million dollars a year from its salt monopoly in India, and it employed hundreds of persons to enforce the salt laws.

To a man whose income is five dollars a year, every tax is a burden, but, since no one can live without salt, no one could avoid the tax. The poor suffered most of all.

"We will begin our civil-disobedience campaign by calling attention to the unfair tax on salt," said Gandhi.

He himself would deliberately break the law. It would be a religious act. Mahatma Gandhi would march to the sea and extract from sea water tax-free salt. This was to be the signal for all of India to begin making salt and breaking the salt laws. It was to be the first move in a non-violence campaign that was to include non-payment of taxes, withdrawal from government schools, courts, and offices, boycotting of British goods and shops.

"This time on my arrest," Gandhi wrote, "there is to be no mute passive non-violence, but non-violence of the most active type. When I am put into jail I want you to carry on the revolution, until not one of you is either out of jail or alive at the finish. We cannot stop now until we have won our complete freedom."

Gandhi's instructions to the satyagrahis were as strict as ever. They must remember that their task was religious. No matter what evil was done them, they must never retaliate. They must cheerfully welcome arrest and even death, but they must never strike back. As prisoners they must submit meekly and mildly to whatever insults or humiliations were inflicted upon them. They must not quarrel with each other; Hindus and Moslems must work side by side. Their goal, as always, was complete freedom for India.

To the women of India he assigned the special task of picketing the liquor and opium shops. Joyfully they went out in their saffron-colored saris to stand guard at the en-

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trances to stores, imploring all those who would enter to remain away, give up their evil habits.

Gandhi encouraged the women of India to awaken, and he wanted them to have more freedom. He persuaded them to take part in politics, social work, and education. They marched in parades, sold literature in the streets, picketed the liquor and dope shops, spoke on public platforms, became delegates to the Congress Party meetings, taught in the new schools that Gandhi was establishing. He felt that women made better satyagrahis than men because they were less apt to become violent.

"But wait," said Gandhi. "Let's give the British one more chance before we start our revolution."

So he wrote to the Viceroy of India, a letter dated March 2, 1930 beginning, "Dear Friend."

"Before embarking on civil disobedience and taking the risk I have dreaded to take all these years, I would fain approach you and find a way out."

Look what British rule had done to India, Gandhi's letter pointed out. The taxes were so high that millions had been made poor. Some were so poor they had lost their little farms and were in rags begging along the roadsides.

"Look at your own salary," said Gandhi's letter. "You earn more than seven thousand dollars a month, and that has to be paid for by people whose average income is less than five cents a day.

"Unless you see your way clear to do something to end these evils, we shall have to start our revolution by breaking the salt laws."

Gandhi had written a long and thoughtful letter, warning the Viceroy what to expect. The Viceroy, appointed by the British Government in London, had the final say on everything in India. He was top man. He decided to ignore Gandhi. Gandhi's long letter received a short, short, answer.

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Dear Mr. Gandhi:

His Excellency the Viceroy desires me to acknowledge your letter of the second of March. He regrets to learn that you contemplate a course of action which is clearly bound to involve violation of the law and danger to the public peace.

Yours very truly,
G. Cunningham, Private Secretary.

"Very well, then," said Gandhi. "Our revolution must begin."

True to his word, on March 12, 1930, Mahatma Gandhi gathered seventy-eight of his followers together at Satyagraha Ashram. They were going to march to the sea, two hundred miles away. There they would make salt and pay no tax upon it.

For months plans had been in the making and by now excitement had grown to fever pitch. Gandhi, who had been telling them for so many years that they were not ready for freedom, was going to act! Thousands traveled over the hot, dusty roads to the ashram to see him off, and many climbed up into trees or on rooftops to get a better view.

"I shall probably be arrested at any moment," Gandhi reminded them. "Some of the Congress Party leaders have already been arrested."

The ashram arose at its usual five A.M., beginning the day with prayers and meditation. At six-thirty in the morning the march began. Dressed in their white homespun, carrying only the barest necessities, their beloved Gandhiji in the lead, his bent and aging figure supported by a walking stick that was almost as tall as he, the party started along the dusty road.

Only a thin gray fuzz of his hair remained on Gandhi's head; steel-rimmed spectacles with thick lenses rested on his nose; his large ears stood almost straight out; his body

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had no flesh on it at all. The walk to Dandi, the village he had chosen as his destination, was a tremendous physical undertaking in the intense heat. Gandhi was sixty-one years old.

In each village and town he paused to preach his gospel. The march took until the 5th of April, twenty-four days in all.

He urged the crowds that gathered to break the salt laws, to spin and weave, to give up liquor and opium, to adopt the philosophy of love and non-violence, to join in the civil-disobedience campaign. He brought them the message of truth and freedom.

As he moved from town to town, the rest of India watched with growing intensity. Those who could traveled to the west to catch a glimpse of him on his march and perhaps hear him speak. They came in cars, in bullock carts, on foot, in special trains. Excitement spread as the civil-disobedience movement became more and more real. Other followers joined the march each day until the original seventy-eight grew to thousands.

Many wondered why the government did not arrest Gandhi, why it allowed him to go on day after day stirring up more and more trouble. He was the most dangerous individual in all India.

On April 3 when he reached Surat he found a vast multitude gathered to hear him. All along the banks of the river Tapty they were waiting at the end of the long, hot, dusty day. They had brought kerosene lamps to light his way, and as the lamps blinked and drew insects Gandhiji spoke to the people in a cheerful, humorous vein. Probably the government was ashamed to arrest him, he joked.

That night, instead of resting for the next day's lap of the journey, he sat working at his spinning wheel. Every Indian was pledged to turn out so many yards per day, and Gandhi's spinning wheel went to Dandi with him.

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Dandi is a nondescript and barren little village on a desolate stretch of deserted beach. It is beyond the reach of trains and wheeled vehicles, and only rough, little-used paths approach it. The land all around Dandi is low and flat and swampy. The high tides wash in and when they recede leave stagnant puddles of sea water. The fierce, hot sun evaporates much of these puddles, leaving a salt deposit. The salt in this area is considered not fit to eat, but in the eyes of the law salt is salt.

Gandhi's party trudged on, and on April 5, weary and dusty, it wended its way into the unknown little village that would soon be immortal. A bungalow belonging to a Moslem had been put at Gandhi's disposal and was waiting for him. When he arrived his party knew its instructions. The balance of the day must be spent in prayer and meditation, in singing hymns, and in reading the Hindu scriptures. A grave mission was about to be completed.

On the morning of April 6 Gandhiji arose at his customary five o'clock, held prayers, and emerged from his cottage at six. Slowly and carefully, he waded out into the water, holding an earthenware bowl in his hand. Bending down, he scooped up some sea water and brought it back to shore. The water was soon boiled down until only a salt deposit remained in the vessel. The salt law had been broken. The British salt monopoly had been challenged. The signals were up for all of India to do the same.

And India did! The revolutionary spirit traveled throughout the land like a forest fire. The boycott of things British, all things British, went into effect, and the British *raj* knew it had a major revolt on its hands.

All along the coasts people were making their own salt and breaking the salt laws, and the government tried to stop them with the usual arrests and raids. In less than a week after the salt party, sixty-nine arrests had been made, among them Ramdas Gandhi, the Mahatma's third son,

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and Devadas Gandhi, his youngest son. Jawaharlal Nehru was clapped into jail ten days after the Dandi episode, and other leaders were soon rounded up and taken out of circulation.

Gandhi remained in his bungalow at Dandi, resting after the grueling two-hundred-mile walk. A week later the Gandhi party moved to a nearby village, and there in a cottage of reeds remained a month, and still the British made no move to arrest him. This terribly meek little man seemed to have something that held them at bay.

Shortly after midnight of May 4, Gandhi was awakened by a bright light shining directly into his face. It was the flashlight of the District Magistrate of Surat. With that worthy gentleman was the District Superintendent of Police, plus an Indian policeman. All three held pistols ready to protect themselves against the little brown holy man on the cot. Behind the three were some thirty more policemen carrying rifles.

"Please wake up!" Gandhi heard one of them say.

He sat up in bed: "Have you come to arrest me?"

"Yes. Your name is Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi?"

Gandhi nodded. "Do you mind waiting until I brush my teeth and wash my face?"

"You may brush your teeth."

Gandhiji did not hurry this time either. Cleaning the teeth, like so many other rules of cleanliness that a good Hindu obeys, is a slow and careful process requiring fifteen or twenty minutes. While he brushed his teeth, the Mahatma questioned the police:

"May I know the charge on which I am arrested?"

"I have a written order."

"Would you mind reading it to me?"

The District Magistrate read: "Whereas the Governor-in-Council views with alarm the activities of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, he directs that the said Mohandas Ka-

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ramchand Gandhi should be placed under restraint under Regulation XXV of 1827, and suffer imprisonment during the pleasure of the government: and that he be immediately removed to the Yeravda Central Jail."

Gandhi finished his toilet, told his grandson to fix his bedding, told his secretary Desai to take care of his papers, and gathered up his spinning equipment.

His captors were becoming restless. They did not like their task. Deep in their hearts they were afraid of it and wanted it to be over. That was why they had come in the middle of the night armed to the teeth. Gandhi was not yet ready to leave. He asked his devotees to sing a particularly favorite hymn, and while the officers glared at their watches the little group sang the hymn.

"Have you any message for Kasturba?" asked one of the members of his camp.

"No," replied Gandhi. "I have no message for her. Tell her she is a brave girl."

At last they were off, at one o'clock in the morning. Gandhi was whisked to the railroad station by automobile, then by train to Bombay. En route to Bombay the train was delayed and the passengers had to alight on the platform. When they realized that Gandhi was with them, they crowded around him shouting, "Mahatma Gandhi ki jai!"

Finally the nervous police escort reached Bombay with its quarry where it transferred him to an automobile with all the blinds drawn, and then on to Poona and Yeravda Central Prison where the prisoner was deposited for safekeeping. The danger-making little fellow had been picked up and jailed while the rest of India slept.

India did not sleep long after it heard the terrible news. Hartals were declared in the major cities to mourn his arrest, and disorder broke out in the land. Those not yet arrested plunged into the campaign to urge the people on to civil disobedience.

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Gandhi's message to the people of India went forth from Yeravda Prison almost immediately:

"Complete swaraj [self-rule] is the goal. . . . All the self-respect of India at the present time is centred upon a handful of salt. The fist containing it may be broken but it never should be opened. . . . Our path is fixed. Whole villages should come forward to collect and manufacture salt. The women should picket the liquor, opium, and foreign cloth shops. In every house young and old should begin spinning. Heaps of yarn should be woven daily. There should be bonfires of foreign cloth. Hindus should regard none as Untouchables. Hindus, Mohammedans, Parsis, and Christians all should heartily embrace one another. . . . Students should leave the government schools. Government servants should resign and be employed in the service of the people. Thus shall we easily attain to complete swaraj."

India was out of hand, and the British *raj* moved in with might of arms to quell the disorder and repress the revolution. There were wholesale arrests. Nearly ninety thousand men, women, and children were sent to jail in a few months. Unarmed satyagrahis were beaten by armed and mounted police.

Groups of satyagrahis raided salt depots. Police in turn raided shops that were selling the new illegal salt. Mass picketing and boycotts continued. Officialdom continued to arrest volunteers and sentence them to "rigorous" jail terms.

Gandhi's Salt March to the Sea was rapidly becoming as famous as the American Boston Tea Party. It had the same kind of meaning for the Indian people. The breaking of the salt laws became a symbol of their fight for liberty.

With the Salt March their revolution for independence really began.

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15. *GANDHI AND THE VICEROY AGREE*

"What the wise choose
The unwise people take; what best men do
The multitude will follow."

—GITA III.

THE Salt March and Gandhi's great civil-disobedience campaign united the people of India in spite of their different faiths, different ways of dress, and different customs. He understood them all, and he was able to bring them all together.

India is not an easy land to understand, and the reason lies in its history. Before the British came, India was a collection of states of all sizes, each state ruled by its own prince or raja. Even when the British established their rule over India, they took over only a part of the continent. Some five hundred and sixty-two independent states, called "princely states," were still sprinkled throughout India. Many were tiny with only a few thousand inhabitants. Others, like Hyderabad or Kashmir, were as large as nations.

Kashmir lies in the extreme north with Russia on its northern side. A lot like Switzerland, Kashmir has high mountain peaks, glaciers, lakes, scenic beauty, rich river valleys, and a healthful climate, with cold biting winters and warm summers. The Indus River flows west through the state and then turns south to the Arabian Sea. The

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sacred river Ganges arises in Lake Gangabal in Kashmir. Many Hindus make a pilgrimage to the lake each year during the month of August. In the winter Kashmir is a vacation land for hunting, skiing, fishing, and skating. The people of Kashmir are tall and strong, like their mountains, and most of them are of the Moslem faith.

Hyderabad, the biggest princely state of all, is in south central India. Instead of high mountain peaks it has miles and miles of flat, arid plains that are stifling hot in summer, cold in winter. Its people are mostly Hindus.

India is not a country, really; it is a whole continent, teeming with all kinds of people speaking many languages and dialects. In the central part of the country where most of the people live, a tourist might see women wrapped in long draping saris, walking along a country road with water pots balanced on their heads. Along the same road a raja and his attendants will pass, mounted on elaborately decorated elephants. Next will come a barefoot peasant with nothing but a dhoti wrapped around his middle. He will be driving a bony-looking bullock that is pulling a two-wheeled cart. Past them all an expensive automobile whizzes by with slight regard for those on foot. In the automobile will be a wealthy Indian who wears Western clothes because he was educated in the English manner. He probably owns a string of cotton mills or an iron foundry, and he no doubt lives in the city. Or perhaps he is a successful attorney who earns fine fees in the British courts.

There are as many varied peoples living in India as can be found in all the countries of Europe; yet Gandhi united them with his Salt March.

They were willing to endure hardship, lie down on trolley tracks or roadways and bid vehicles run over them if they wished, suffer beatings and imprisonment, even death, under Gandhi's leadership.

This new unity worried Britain, who was beginning to

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realize that repressive measures would never bring the revolution to an end. The report of the Simon Commission, though consisting of two thick volumes of fine print, was of little help. It recommended some changes in the government of India but not independence.

The report came out while Gandhi was still in jail. So were the Nehrus, both father and son, Sarojini Naidu, and many others. The most talented and best of the Congress Party leaders were behind prison bars.

But because they were the best, they were the hardest to beat. Since they were all in Yeravda Central Prison, they held their meeting right in jail. Together they composed a statement of their views and addressed it to the British Government. Any plan which the government wanted the Congress Party to support, they said, would have to guarantee "a complete national government responsible to India's people, including control of defense forces and economic control."

After that expression of sentiment, Great Britain tried something else. A government official came to the jail to reason with Gandhi.

"Why don't you call off this civil-disobedience campaign, Mr. Gandhi? Your people are suffering, many are dying."

Quiet and gentle, sitting cross-legged on his prison mattress, a dhoti around his middle, a shawl over his naked shoulders, Gandhi replied in a low voice:

"Repeal the salt tax, prohibit the sale of dope and liquor, let my satyagrahis out of jail, and I will call off the revolution."

The British would not, so Gandhi continued in jail and the civil-disobedience campaign continued on the outside.

"India must have complete self-government." Gandhi was adamant.

Months passed, and the British Government decided to try another tack. It called a meeting in London of Indians

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and British to talk over the problem. That was the first Round Table Conference, in November, 1930. Indians and British gathered together in the Royal Gallery of the House of Lords to discuss the report of the Simon Commission and a new constitution for India. Scores of speeches were made during December and into January, but nothing was settled. The Indian delegates returned to India.

The British Government made another attempt to bring peace to India. On January 26, 1931, the first anniversary of Independence Day, Mahatma Gandhi was released from prison. His wife, his secretary Mahadev Desai, and Jawaharlal Nehru were all given their unconditional freedom at the same time.

Gandhiji asked that he be released late at night to avoid demonstrations. As he left the prison, he looked back to say:

"I expect to be back there within two months."

If Gandhi's arrest had solved nothing, neither did setting him free.

"Civil disobedience is to continue," he announced.

Matters were going from bad to worse for the English. Some cotton mills in England had closed down completely; revenues from liquor and opium had fallen off. People on the coast continued to make salt for their own use, without tax. Imports to India of British goods, even cigarettes, had fallen off drastically.

Gandhi was more powerful at this point than he had ever been in his entire career; his thousands and thousands of followers continued to increase.

But because Gandhi's real aim was peace for India, a just peace, he made a personal appeal to the Viceroy of India.

"Why don't we meet and talk things over?" he asked. "Maybe if you will grant me an interview something can be worked out."

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Lord Irwin was Viceroy at that time, and he was better at his job than his predecessors. A sincere and genuine man, he had been in India four years and saw the situation more clearly than those who sat in faraway London. And, more than being a Viceroy dashing about in expensive cars and attending costly social functions in a land where the average income was five cents a day, he was a real person, a human being, honest, willing to listen and understand. So he granted the Mahatma an interview.

Gandhi traveled to the city of Delhi, and both Britain and India waited in suspense while the two men met behind closed doors. No one was admitted. No one heard those conversations. Reporters waited outside hoping to learn something, but all they were allowed was an occasional glimpse of the Mahatma as he came or went — on foot. Or they saw the devoted Mirabehn enter the Viceroy's house with her Mahatma's luncheon of milk and dates, because the affairs of state did not change the Mahatma's living habits.

Those luncheon scenes were not hard to imagine: Gandhi as he munched on his dates or drank milk from a thermos bottle, talking or listening to Lord Irwin; Lord Irwin in proper English attire tapping the polished table top with his fingertips, trying not to notice the audacity of this little fellow who sat before him half naked to remind him of the poverty of India.

Gandhi stayed at the home of Dr. Ansari, a Moslem, in Old Delhi, about five miles away. Mrs. Naidu, Mirabehn, and a committee from the Congress Party awaited him there each night, eager for news. Sometimes Gandhi walked the entire five miles to the Viceroy's house and back again.

Rumors flew around that Gandhi and the Viceroy were deadlocked. If that was true, it meant that the civil-disobedience campaign would go on, that there was no hope of peace.

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"I have got my toothbrush already packed for my journey back to prison," said Mrs. Naidu.

"I want your police investigated," Gandhi insisted. "They've been abusing my satyagrahis. I want the salt laws repealed."

When the Viceroy finally realized that he was dealing with an extremely shrewd and wise man who could not be pushed back an inch, he himself gave an inch and offered Gandhi a compromise:

"If you'll give up the police investigation, I'll give in on your other demands."

"If you make an appeal to me on those grounds, your Excellency," said Gandhi, with one of his winning smiles, "I have no other course but to respond to it."

Gandhi's next job was to convince his own committee waiting in Dr. Ansari's house. He put in one of his most strenuous days in order to bring about an agreement between Great Britain and India. He spent the morning with his committee from the Congress Party. He conferred with the Viceroy the entire afternoon until five-thirty. He held another conference with his Congress Party committee from six-thirty to eight-fifteen. At nine o'clock that night he trudged the five miles back to the Viceroy's house and talked to him until after midnight. Then he walked the entire five miles back to Dr. Ansari's house, woke up his faithful committee, and argued with them until five in the morning.

Gandhi and the Viceroy agreed at last, and they drew up the Gandhi-Irwin pact. The Viceroy agreed to let the satyagrahis out of jail, let the poor make their own salt from sea water, allow the satyagrahis to picket liquor and opium shops, and give back to farmers some property that had been confiscated. Gandhi agreed to go to London for another Round Table Conference and to call off the civil-disobedience campaign.

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Triumph at last! Britain could be reasoned with! There was hope for swaraj!

Let it be said for both men — the two most important men in all of India — that the talks between Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Irwin were peaceable even when they disagreed. Not one word of anger had been exchanged. When the conferences finally ended, the two men parted the best of friends.

Gandhi never forgot the respect due the representative of the King-Emperor and always addressed him as "Your Excellency."

Lord Irwin treated Gandhi as a friend and an equal.

They even joked about Yeravda Jail. "Well, Gandhi," the Viceroy would begin a conversation, "have you got your bag packed ready to go back to jail? You know, you are so popular with the governor of the jail that he misses you badly."

On one occasion Gandhi got up to go and left his shawl behind. Irwin, holding it by the tips of his fingers, followed him to the door, calling after him:

"Gandhi, you are leaving your shawl behind. You have not got so many clothes on, you know, that you can afford to leave any behind."

Tired and happy, Mahatma Gandhi returned to Ahmedabad, and all along the twenty-four-hour train trip crowds waited for a glimpse of him. He was their apostle of peace! Their deliverer! A year had passed since his Salt March to Dandi, and long strides toward freedom had been taken in that year.

Weary though he was, Gandhi rode the entire distance in a third-class coach, shunning the comfort of a first-class carriage. He was the poor of the poor, so he endured the hard wooden seats in an ill-kept car.

At each station there were cheering mobs waiting for him.

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sture of

"Mahatma Gandhi ki jai! Mahatma Gandhi ki jai!" they shouted, closing in about the train, clambering aboard the coaches and even the locomotive.

When he reached home, a way had to be fought for him through the sea of humanity. They cheered. They struggled to get close to him to touch him. They held the palms of their hands together in a gesture of prayer. They knelt and kissed the ground at his feet.

It was his day of silence, and he could not reply to the tributes with anything but his humble smile.

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16. *GANDHI GOES TO LONDON*

"An unrevengeful spirit, never given
To rate itself too high;—such be the signs,
O Indian Prince!" —GITA XVI.

GANDHI had promised the Viceroy that he would call off the civil-disobedience campaign and that he would go to London for a second Round Table Conference to talk over a new constitution for India. He did both.

Amongst cheering throngs throwing flowers and hanging garlands about his neck, Gandhi set out for Bombay, his port of debarkation. The August rain poured down in torrents, but that could not discourage the crowds that had come to wish their Mahatma godspeed on his journey. With him were Desai, Pyarelal (who was one day to become his secretary), Devadas Gandhi, Mirabehn, Sarojini Naidu, and others.

London and London life were not new to this sixty-two-year-old ascetic. As a young law student he had tried to imitate the English, to dress like them, behave like them. He had been there again in 1914 until his pleurisy drove him back to the warmer, sunnier climate of India.

In 1931 London saw a different Gandhi, clad only in his dhoti and sandals, a shawl around his shoulders to protect him against the chill autumn air. Many thought this was showmanship on his part; it was not. It was simply his voluntary poverty.

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Gandhi could have lived in the most luxurious royal suite because every hotel in London wanted him for a drawing card. Instead, he stopped at Kingsley Hall, a settlement house in London's East End, set among the mills, soap factories, refuse barges, warehouses, and distilleries, in a section called Bow, where poverty, hooliganism, and police raids were an accepted part of daily living. He went there at the invitation of Miss Muriel Lester.

She had visited his ashram on the Sabarmati River a few years before, and she knew from experience what his way of life demanded. He wanted simplicity, modesty, and real people. When he saw her "ashram" where she and her associates held daily prayers and devotions and spent their lives in service to the poor, he was moved with delight.

"That's exactly where I want to live," he said.

London really turned out to welcome Gandhi. Everyone wanted to catch a glimpse of the little man with the courage to talk back to the Empire even though it meant being clapped into jail. Crowds stood for hours along the streets and roads. There were receiving committees, town officials in high silk hats, speeches by prominent individuals, crowds, crowds, more crowds, until at last he was escorted to Kingsley Hall.

"There is no time to be wasted," was Gandhi's comment on arriving at his English "ashram," and he settled down immediately to his strict routine. He rose before five to pray; from five to six he went for his walk, frequently with Miss Lester, always attended by the devoted Mirabehn and Dr. Haridas T. Muzumdar, American-trained Hindese sociologist. Sometimes he gave an interview during this hour, and those who wished to talk to him could stroll along with his party. At six in the morning he returned to Kingsley Hall for his morning bath and breakfast. At seven-thirty his business day began in an office established for him near the center of the city.

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In these morning hours he saw journalists, delegations, representatives of this and that. At ten A.M. he went to St. James's Palace for the daily conference that remained in session until noon. Luncheon was quick and simple. Meetings took up the entire afternoon with groups and committees that were part of the Round Table Conference. At six in the evening he was back at Kingsley Hall for his supper. From seven to midnight he hurried to more meetings and consultations all over London. By midnight he had returned to Kingsley Hall, but not to sleep.

He still had to spin his daily quota of yarn, make his daily entries in a diary, and offer evening prayers. At last, at two o'clock in the morning, he was in bed, to rise again before five for his morning stroll.

No ordinary mortal could have stood such a strain; those who had to keep up with him would sometimes glance at each other in dismay, wondering how long it could go on.

The East End loved and adored him. The London "bobbies" had to hold back his admirers whenever Gandhi issued forth. Yet this was 1931, a year of deep economic depression, and thousands were unemployed, even destitute and on the dole. Many were jobless because Gandhi's boycott of foreign cloth in India and home-spinning campaign had closed the cotton mills in England. But somehow the poor understood Gandhi. They knew his life was devoted to lifting them up out of their misery.

Mirabehn, the former Madeleine Slade, daughter of an English admiral, who six years before had given up her place in London society to take the vows of the ashram, drew almost as much interest. London was curious about her and just as anxious to catch a glimpse of her. Mirabehn attended the Mahatma wherever he went, usually walking a few steps behind him, clad in her sari of khadi cloth, with crude sandals on her feet and a sweet and happy smile on her face.

Children are children the world around, and those of

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London were completely smitten by Gandhi. They vied with each other to catch a glimpse of him — on the roof of Kingsley Hall, in his car, through a window. The child who had seen Gandhi ranked higher on the social scale than one who had not. He might be "Mahatma" to India, or "Mister" to adult England, but he was "Uncle Gandhi" to the youngsters of London.

When they were allowed in to visit, they squatted on the floor the way he did and listened eagerly while he explained non-violence. It meant not hitting back when someone hit you. Sometimes he went visiting with them and admired the toothbrushes, the toys, the lesson books that they proudly displayed.

And the parents of the East End children were no less smitten. One lady commented:

"I never got on with my housework at all — I couldn't — I kept running in and out all the time to get a glimpse of him. The children were on the watch, too, all the time; they cheered whenever 'e came out of 'is cell. There wasn't much Sunday dinner eaten that day down our street. ' 'Ere 'e is,' someone'd shout and out we'd all run. Mrs. Brown over the way forgot to cook the greens and taters — and Mrs. Miller dished them up and forgot the beef. And such a nice gentleman as 'e was too, not a bit like wot the papers said. You could tell 'e was good all through and understood poor people. 'E was just like one of us."

The Round Table Conference struck a less cheerful note. It was not nearly as friendly.

On September 14, 1931, the King-Emperor, George V, ascended his golden throne in the Royal Gallery of the House of Lords to open the first session of the second Round Table Conference. The British representatives were there in their impeccable dress. The maharajas and princes attended in their turbans and fezzes and bejeweled costumes, the ladies of India in bright silk saris.

In the midst of all this pomp and splendor sat the little

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man in the loincloth and shawl, his humility unshaken. As the session came to order and quiet descended upon the great hall, he huddled in his chair, shorter than those around him.

The King-Emperor delivered the welcoming address; Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald made a speech; other dignitaries took the floor. When the meeting turned its eyes upon the Mahatma, he sat dumb. Not a word from the man wrapped in a shawl, huddled down in his seat! It was his day of silence!

On the second day of the conference and every day after that, Gandhi spoke out plainly. In his first speech he set forth the demands of his people.

"India wants her complete freedom," he told the British Government.

He went on to tell about the Congress Party and its growing strength, about India's declaration of independence.

"Time was," he said in his gentle voice to the King-Emperor, the Prime Minister of England, cabinet members, and members of Parliament, "when I prided myself on being a British subject. I have ceased for many years to call myself a British subject. I would far rather be called a rebel than a subject."

Had any subject people ever talked back to its conquerors like this?

Gandhi persisted at those sessions with speech after speech. Armed only with his thermos bottle of goat's milk and a basket of fruits and nuts for his midday meal, he spoke without anger or excitement. He blamed no one but simply pointed out the terrible wrong which must be made right.

All in all, from the middle of September to the first day of December, he delivered eleven full-length speeches, nine of them to special committees and two to the entire Round

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Table Conference, not to mention two speeches before the House of Commons.

A conference of men and women can do a lot of talking in two and a half months, and the Round Table Conference did. It studied the report of the Simon Commission. It talked over ways and means of writing a new constitution for India.

One issue in particular almost broke up the conference altogether: communal awards. Here Gandhi showed his greatest strength. He stood out against many opponents and refused to give an inch.

The word "communal" refers to a community, a religious community in this case. Communal strife is strife between two religious groups such as the Hindus and Moslems. Granting a communal award would mean giving a special favor to one group. Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald and his associates thought it would help to solve the confusion in India if each religious group elected its own representatives to the Indian legislature. "Separate electorates" was another way of saying the same thing.

Try to imagine communal awards, or separate electorates, in the United States. Negroes would hold separate elections and send their representatives to Congress; Jews would hold separate elections; so would Catholics, Protestants, and other groups. Soon the trade groups would want separate representatives, and communal awards would have to be given to carpenters, teachers, farmers, lawyers, doctors, and so on and on. The end would never be reached. The groups would be kept separate and distinct, and instead of friendship between them there would be rivalry and hatred. Anything that creates hatred is wrong.

"You must learn to live together! You must learn to love and respect each other!" Gandhi had been saying for years. "You can never have peace and freedom until you do."

Now they wanted to make matters worse by making

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Hindus, Moslems, Sikhs, and others separate groups forever with separate electorates.

"Never!" said Gandhi. "I will never agree!"

"Yes!" said the Moslems.

Even Dr. Ambedkar, leader of the Untouchables, favored separate electorates because he thought it would help the Untouchables and win them more recognition.

"It will do the Untouchables more harm than good," said Gandhi. "It would mean the perpetual bar sinister. They would be Untouchables forever and they could never rise above that state."

Dr. Ambedkar, the Moslems, Prime Minister MacDonald, insisted. Gandhi and his followers held out.

"I will not bargain away the Untouchables' rights for the kingdom of the world," Gandhi announced.

The conflict between the Hindus and minority groups such as the Moslems and Untouchables became so heated that the whole conference nearly collapsed. About the middle of November Ramsay MacDonald announced that the conference would have to wind up a total failure because of this gulf between the two groups of Indians.

"I cannot give in," said Gandhi, "even if it means closing down the conference."

But the conference didn't close down. The Moslems were persuaded to give in, and Gandhi won his point.

On November 30, Mahatma Gandhi made his last speech to the assemblage. Ten weeks of constant strain were finally telling on him, and he knew how little had really been accomplished.

"I live under no illusion," he said. "I do not think that anything that I can say this evening can possibly influence the decision of the Cabinet."

Again he reminded them of the importance and strength of the Congress Party. He reviewed the independence

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movement in India and asked them to do something about Indian freedom while there was yet time.

When he left the session, the newsmen crowded around him, plying him with questions:

"Will India get a new constitution, Mr. Gandhi?"

"Will there be a new civil-disobedience campaign in India?"

"What have you persuaded Britain to do for India?"

"I came here expecting nothing, and I leave with nothing," he told them sadly.

"How soon after you return to India will you begin the battle?"

"The masses of India are only awaiting my signal, but I think I shall study conditions awhile before I give it."

Slowly he walked home in the dismal London fog, Mirabehn following respectfully behind to make sure that he did not let his shawl fall from his shoulders.

The Round Table Conference had been only a hearing and its members could make no decisions. The next step would be for Prime Minister MacDonald's government to draw up a plan and submit it to Parliament for approval. The best India could hope for was dominion status in the dim distant future. Dominion status would mean self-government, but India would still belong to the British Empire the way Canada does. Real freedom seemed far away indeed.

After such heartbreaking efforts, Mahatma Gandhi and his party packed up and returned to India. They arrived home at the end of December, to be greeted by sad and shocking news.

The British Government had not been idle in India during Gandhi's absence. Jawaharlal Nehru was in prison. The Province of Bengal had been placed under martial law. In the United Provinces peasants were being arrested

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by the thousands for not paying their taxes. The Viceroy was making his power felt throughout the land. A whole series of "ordinances" had been passed with more to come. Special "star chamber" courts were imposing death or deportation sentences. Gandhi wondered if Britain had gone mad with arrests, sentences, muzzling of the newspapers.

As soon as Gandhi saw what was happening, he wrote to the Viceroy for an interview. His request was denied. Lord Irwin, the official who best understood Gandhi, had been replaced by a less tolerant man. The new Viceroy's decision forced Gandhi's hand.

On the first day of January the Congress Party announced a new non-co-operation campaign as a protest against the repressions. This time they took precautions. Important papers of the Congress Party were hidden away. Mirabehn laundered all her master's linens to have them ready. Gandhi bundled his few belongings together so that he would be ready for jail. There was no doubt in Gandhi's mind that he would be arrested.

He was right. Three days later he was taken into custody. Mahatma Gandhi, the Great Soul, who a month before had met in St. James's Palace with His Majesty's Government, who had addressed them as the single voice of all India, was now suddenly stripped of all dignity, a prisoner in Yeravda Jail.

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17. *THE EPIC FAST*

"Unto pure devotion
Devote thyself: with perfect meditation
Comes perfect act." —GITA II.

TRAGEDY spread over India as a result of Gandhi's imprisonment. Riots, strikes, mass protest meetings! Civil disobedience was in full swing again. The day after his arrest there was a nation-wide hartal.

Indians are usually a meek and docile people, but within them passion and anger smolder like banked fires. Once aroused they can go to any lengths of violence.

England sent out extra army reinforcements. New ordinances were issued. Peaceful picketing or spreading of false rumors, for instance, could draw a two-year jail sentence. The Congress Party was outlawed, its treasury confiscated, its offices closed, its flags hauled down.

Mrs. Gandhi, Mirabehn, Sarojini Naidu were arrested. Strikes spread to mills and industries. At Ahmedabad seventy thousand unionized workers walked off their jobs in the textile mills.

Sitting in his cell, Gandhi still managed to keep in close touch with events. He was the guiding light of the civil-disobedience campaign.

"Gandhiji," a visitor told him one day, "the British Government is talking in London about communal awards. They are thinking of granting separate electorates to the Untouchables in India."

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"They know how I feel about it," Gandhi said. "I made myself clear on this subject when I was in London."

"What can you do, Gandhiji, if they decide to grant separate elections for Untouchables?"

He did what he could do anywhere, in jail or out. He turned to prayer. He once said that he could do without food but not without his daily prayer.

Gandhi prayed for light, divine light. He sat cross-legged in meditation in the daytime and sometimes prayed the entire night through. As before, inspiration came to him; he knew what he must do if Britain decided to grant separate electorates to the Untouchables. He must "fast unto death" to prevent it. If necessary, he would sacrifice his life to save mother India.

His decision shocked and terrified all those who loved Gandhi, and their name was legion.

Letters and telegrams poured into Gandhi's prison cell begging him to reconsider. Bapuji must not die! He must not sacrifice his life.

Gandhi never kept any secrets. He gave fair warning to the government of his intention to fast.

"At the end of my speech at the Round Table Conference," he wrote, "I said that I should resist with my life the grant of separate electorate to the Untouchables. . . . I am not against their representation in the legislatures . . . but I hold that separate electorate is harmful for them. . . . I, therefore, respectfully inform His Majesty's Government that in the event of their decision creating separate electorate for the Untouchables, I must fast unto death. . . ."

In answer the Prime Minister made his fateful announcement, the announcement upon which Gandhi's life would depend: special electorates were to be extended to the Untouchables.

Gandhi wrote to the Prime Minister immediately:

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"I shall resist England's decision with my life. I shall begin a perpetual fast unto death from food of any kind save water with or without salt and soda. I shall begin at noon on September 20 next. I shall call off my fast when the government changes its mind about communal awards."

The government would not change its decision, but it did make two kindly gestures. It offered to release Gandhi for his fast so that he could be taken to his ashram.

"No, thank you," said Gandhi. "I remain in jail."

The government then allowed Mrs. Gandhi and Mrs. Naidu to come from the women's prison and nurse Gandhi during his fast.

On the morning of September 20, 1932, Gandhi took his usual goat's milk and fruit at six A.M., passed the morning listening to readings from the Bhagavad Gita, and at eleven-thirty took his last food, lemon juice and honey in hot water. His devoted companions gathered around him, singing hymns in Gujarati, and at exactly noon Mahatma Gandhi began his "tussle with God."

As the humble, kindly, gentle man lay on his prison mattress, with a piece of khadi cloth over him, his spinning wheel standing idle in the corner, they clasped their hands and wondered how long he would live without food. He was almost sixty-three, an old man by Indian standards.

"I am an incurable optimist," he told them. "I don't think I am going to die."

His satyagrahis tried to conceal their worry and grief.

"A shadow is darkening today over India like a shadow cast by an eclipsed sun," said Tagore, the poet, when the news reached him of Gandhi's fast unto death.

Gandhi was given a special yard in the prison, away from the other prisoners, and there he reclined on a cot to save his strength while his doctors, "Charlie" Andrews, Desai, and others looked after him. Gandhi was gay and cheerful,

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reaching now and then for a sip of soda water as he talked to reporters or visitors.

Day by day his disciples watched with increasing terror as Gandhi's strength grew less and less. After three days without food he was too weak to leave the cot at all. He had attacks of nausea and his joints ached. By the fifth day his doctors feared for his life. His blood pressure was rising dangerously. Though his physical suffering grew worse, his face continued to shine with happiness.

Gandhi's suffering forced the people of India to reflect on their own shortcomings. A wave of reform inspired by his supreme sacrifice swept over the country. Untouchables were allowed to enter Hindu temples, permitted to draw water from wells.

"A magic wave of enthusiasm running through Hindu society," Jawaharlal Nehru said in his book, *Toward Freedom*. "Untouchability appeared to be doomed. What a magician was this little man sitting in Yeravda Prison, and how well he knew how to pull the strings that move people's hearts. . . ."

Caste Hindus were determined to save Gandhi's life, and while reforms were going on all over India, they met and tried to solve the problem of communal awards. Dr. Ambedkar, leader of the Untouchables, met with them. He favored separate electorates but, on the other hand, couldn't see Gandhi die.

Many details about elections and representatives had to be worked out. India had a legislature, just as the United States has a Congress and England a Parliament. The difference was that the Indian legislature couldn't do anything or pass any laws without the approval of the Viceroy. Indians were elected to the legislature, but only about three per cent of the people were allowed to vote.

Gandhi agreed with Britain that the Untouchables should be allowed to vote and elect representatives to the

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legislature, but not in separate elections. They must be given equal rights with every other Indian.

The talks between leading Hindus and Untouchables dragged on. Gandhi weakened physically, but he stood his ground morally. His life was draining out.

On the fifth day of the fast, while Gandhi lay under the shade of a mango tree on his cot in the jail yard and Mrs. Gandhi, Sarojini Naidu, and Desai waited in suspense, an agreement was finally reached. Caste Hindus and Dr. Ambedkar compromised. They worked out a plan giving Untouchables an opportunity to vote equally with caste Hindus in the general elections.

"Now Gandhiji's life will be saved. Now he can end his fast!"

A copy of the agreement was brought to his bedside.

"I approve," he said in his gentle voice. "But Prime Minister MacDonald and his cabinet must also approve. No pact drawn up among ourselves means anything unless the British Government also agrees."

So the fast did not end as they had hoped. Gandhi grew weaker and reached the danger point.

"Mahatmaji has no reserve fat and he is living on muscle," said one of his doctors. "This is the stage when an attack of paralysis may intervene at any time. We are of opinion that he has entered into that stage that is bringing him nearer to his end. There is now danger even if the fast is broken."

Further delay in London could mean Gandhi's death. But it turned out that the British didn't want Gandhi to die either. The Prime Minister and his associates hurried to 10, Downing Street, London, for a quick meeting. They deliberated until long after midnight, and at last their answer came out. They would accept the new plan as a substitute for their own.

Victory!

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Tagore hurried to the prison when he heard the joyous news. Too overcome with emotion to speak, he knelt beside the cot and bowed his head on Gandhiji's bosom.

"I am so glad that I have come and that I have come in time," he said when he was able to control his voice.

Mrs. Gandhi raised her husband's head from the pillow while Desai read him the news. Gandhi was completely calm. He examined every word of the agreement and made certain that each detail of it was right and proper.

"My vow is fulfilled," he whispered. "Satyagraha has triumphed."

Gandhi's weight was down to ninety-two pounds. He was wasted, weak, and spent in body, but his spirit had grown and prospered.

Nearly two hundred persons assembled in the jail yard to see their leader break his fast. Tagore himself opened the prayer by singing a Bengali hymn in his deep, resonant poet's voice.

The worship finished, Kasturba approached his side and handed him a glass of orange juice. He took it in his weakened hand and sipped it slowly as he ended what is called his Epic Fast.

Gandhi's eyes twinkled. He had one more thing to say: "Don't think you're through dealing with me," he warned British, caste Hindus, and Untouchables. "If you don't live up to your agreement I'll go right back on my fast."

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18. *A NEW ASHRAM*

"Sequestered should he sit,
Steadfastly meditating, solitary,
His thoughts controlled, his passions laid away,
Quit of belongings." —GITA VI.

GANDHI had considerably disturbed jail routine, but he was still a prisoner and must remain so.

Life inside the jail became quiet once more, and Gandhi rested, taking small bits of food, sips of milk, until he was able to eat his usual amount again.

Life outside the prison was anything but quiet. The civil-disobedience campaign was still going on with its strikes, picketing, and parades.

At one point the government put out a feeler to Gandhi: "Call off your civil-disobedience campaign, and we'll let you out of jail."

"Impossible," was Gandhi's answer.

Mrs. Gandhi was arrested on a secret charge and sentenced to six months in jail. Her other sentences had been shorter, usually about six weeks. The British *raj* was losing patience. Each time they released her she went right back into the campaign, canvassing, distributing literature, making speeches to the women of India to arouse themselves in the name of freedom. The only safe place for such a persistent little troublemaker was back in jail.

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As months passed Gandhi began to feel like himself again, and he eagerly awaited his daily mail and visitors. News of the civil-disobedience campaign was not all good; violence was reported here and there. The good effects of his fast were wearing off, and caste Hindus were forgetting their pledge to the Untouchables.

As Gandhi sat in his tiny cell or walked about in the little yard, he realized that he must act again. Like naughty children, his people needed to be disciplined. So he made his shocking announcement:

"I intend to undergo another fast, this time for twenty-one days."

"Bapuji! Bapuji! You are not strong enough."

"This fast is because high-caste Hindus have neglected Untouchable problems. They have gone about their own lives and have forgotten their promises. This fast is to expiate the sins of the Hindus, to purify my soul and the soul of India. Somehow I must cure India of religious conflicts."

Objections fell about Gandhi like the spring rain. He had communed with God; he had received his guidance; he must fast for twenty-one days. He must endure the highest type of prayer there is: fasting.

Twenty-one days without food would probably prove fatal, the doctors predicted. True enough Gandhi had done it before, but he had been a much younger man.

As usual, Gandhi meant what he said.

On May 7, 1933, at exactly noon, he ceased to take anything but water. On the next day the government released him from jail, and he was taken to the hilltop villa of Lady Vittal Das Thackersey. Mrs. Naidu was with him as well as his doctors and disciples.

Still weak from his fast against communal awards, he was having attacks of nausea by the third day. He grew weaker rapidly; he could no longer spin his quota of

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thread. On the fifth day he gave up talking altogether to conserve every ounce of strength. Twenty-one days? Impossible!

All that India could do for him this time was pray for his survival. No decision, no political compromise could stop this fast because it was a fast of purification and must go on for the allotted time. Gandhi had taken upon himself the sins of all Hindus.

By the sixth day his weight was a scant ninety-three pounds, and his blood pressure rose dangerously. Mrs. Gandhi was released from Sabarmati Jail to be at his side. Gradually his family was gathering about his humble iron cot as if it were already a deathbed. His four sons, grown men with wives and children of their own, soon arrived. The oldest had never agreed with his father's ideas, but in the face of death there was no time for quibbling. The other three sons had always worked devotedly with their father.

Gandhi was too weak to move. He simply lay still in his suffering and prayer, his breathing slow and marked, his eyes closed, his life ebbing away.

The hours and days passed as the world watched and waited and prayed for his survival. Could one human soul endure the burden of the sins of an entire people? Vast silent crowds gathered — to wait.

The days ticked away: tenth, fifteenth, twentieth. Miraculously he still breathed.

On May 28, 1933, the twenty-first day, his head was raised from the pillow, and his wife's hand held a glass of orange juice to his lips. The fast of superhuman endurance had succeeded and Gandhi had survived!

"In God's name I began this fast, and in God's name I end it," he whispered to those who stood about his cot.

Again he required the slow and careful nursing back to health, while the doctors, Mrs. Gandhi, Mrs. Naidu

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watched over him, feeding him, massaging his limbs, checking his blood pressure.

Gandhi lived in his prayers and meditations. Let others worry about his body and his health.

"How shall I spend the rest of my life?" he was asking himself at the age of sixty-three.

Ought he to go back to Sabarmati Ashram? He had not been near his ashram since leaving it to go on the Salt March in 1930, more than three years before.

"I am never going back to Sabarmati," he announced. "I am going to discontinue my ashram altogether."

That was a big surprise to everyone. His "most precious possession" had been a going concern for almost eighteen years. Whole families lived there. It was an entire community with a large library and a school. Nevertheless, Gandhi brought it to an end. The children were provided for elsewhere; the library was donated to the city of Ahmedabad; and the buildings and land were given to the Untouchables.

"I am going to start a new mission in life," he told his disciples. "The civil-disobedience campaign has slowed down. It must be started up in a new way."

Mahatma Gandhi himself would walk from village to village on a "sacred mission," teaching and preaching individual civil disobedience to every Indian. He and his wife and thirty-two chosen followers would begin their journey on foot, in utter poverty, carrying not a penny or possession with them, depending entirely upon the charity of the villagers, explaining the message of satyagraha and ahimsa.

Mahatma Gandhi believed that greed is what causes most of the troubles in the world. When a man wants too much, he begins to figure out how to take it away from someone else. Countries do the same thing. That was why he gave up everything and became poor, the poorest of the

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poor, when he could have been a rich man many times over. He could only be happy, truly happy, if he possessed nothing and wanted nothing.

"My workers and I will begin a new kind of civil disobedience," he said. "We will travel in poverty and teach wherever we go."

You can guess the result of that announcement.

The government cocked an ear when it heard the words "civil disobedience" again. Before Gandhi could even start on his new mission, he was taken into custody. He had been out of jail a little more than three months. Mrs. Gandhi, Desai, and thirty others were arrested at the same time. The sentence for the Mahatma was one year's imprisonment.

Gandhi didn't serve that year.

"I am of no value to myself or to anyone else when I'm idling my time away in jail," he said.

Within three weeks he began a new hunger strike.

"Absolutely no food, and absolutely no help from the outside," was Gandhi's statement.

This time he was alone, with no one to attend him but his secretary Desai. He would take no food until the government granted his unconditional release.

He became a hospital case almost immediately, because he had no flesh or vitality left. A serious kidney ailment soon developed. His weight dropped to ninety pounds.

The British *raj* knew it had arrested Gandhi once too often. After only three days of fasting Gandhi received his freedom.

That frail bundle of skin and bone housed a mighty spirit, a spirit mighty enough to back the roaring British lion into a corner.

The following spring Gandhi reviewed the situation in India. The Congress Party was still outlawed with one hundred and twenty thousand of its members in jail, but

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at the same time the British Government in London was busy writing a new constitution for India. Gandhi decided to give the British a sporting chance by calling off the civil-disobedience campaign.

"Let's wait and see what kind of constitution England will give us," he advised his followers.

Toward the end of the year Gandhi retired from the Congress Party, and many thought he was through, a spent force. Gandhi himself never worried about what other people thought.

He set out on a long journey through India, traveling to every nook and cranny, every remote corner of the country, teaching, persuading, guiding. He called his journeys Harijan Tours, Untouchable Tours, tours for his Harijans or children of God. He went about teaching caste Hindus that Untouchability is wrong and that they must help the Untouchables. He taught the Untouchables to help themselves. He wanted them to live in something better than one-room grass huts, to stop bowing their heads to the ground when a caste Hindu passed by, to go to school.

That was Gandhi's "retirement": traveling, working, praying, speaking, teaching.

Muriel Lester, his hostess at the Round Table Conference in London, came to India to visit him again. She went with him on one of his Harijan Tours, and, although she was younger and healthier than he, the pace exhausted her. There were prayers at four-thirty in the morning, breakfast at five-thirty, and the party started out on its journey at six-thirty. In the course of the day they traveled as much as eighty miles, and Gandhi spoke to as many as seven meetings. Indians traveled from far and wide, from meeting to meeting, to hear him. They crowded about, brought gifts and donations to the Harijan cause. When

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Miss Lester saw the crowds of adorers, the gifts, the excitement, she smiled and said,

"So Gandhi is a spent force!"

Indians didn't just adore him; they expected him to work miracles, so divine did he seem. In one village a crowd stood in the middle of the road so that his car could not pass. They wanted to talk to him.

"We have no well in our village, Mahatmaji. Please hear our prayer, help us to get a well. We have to go to another village for water, and even then we may not draw it ourselves. We can only take our vessels and wait while others fill them."

On he went like a messiah as the crowds milled about him, the naked and the clothed, the starving and the well fed, begging for favors and miracles.

At the end of 1934 the new constitution, for which India had been waiting seven years, was passed by Parliament and published.

This India Act of 1935, as it was called, was a bitter disappointment. It failed to give India freedom or even dominion status. If anything, it tightened British control and even extended control over the independent Princely States. It made some changes in the government of India and permitted more to vote than had in the past, but the Viceroy was still the big boss. His word was final, and he could rule India like a monarch.

"What shall we do, Gandhiji?"

"Shall we protest? Shall we refuse to co-operate?"

Gandhi, Nehru, other leaders, and the Congress Party chiefs talked it over with great care. Half a loaf was better than none, they decided.

"Let's co-operate with the British, accept this constitution, and then try to deserve a better one later on. Some day we will have our complete independence."

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They were wise to be patient, because other groups besides the Congress Party were beginning to campaign for India's independence. India was waking up. There was the Mahasabha, a religious group made up entirely of Hindus. There was Dr. Ambedkar's group of Untouchables called the Depressed Classes Federation. There was the Moslem League, led by Jinnah.

No man could have been more different from Gandhi than Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Jinnah lived in wealth in an elaborate house up on Malabar Hill in Bombay. He wore expensive European clothing and was called by some the best-dressed man in the British Empire. He cared little for religion. He was not surrounded by those who loved him, and there were no children clambering over him as they swarmed over Gandhi. Jinnah was a lonely man who kept to himself. Over six feet tall, he weighed a little more than one hundred fifteen pounds. Like Gandhi he was a lawyer educated in England, but unlike Gandhi, who worked for everyone, Jinnah worked for one group — the Moslems. Under his leadership the Moslem League flourished and grew and became a strong power in India.

While India was growing into a country with national feelings, nationalism was rising in many other countries of the world, too. In some of them it spelled danger. In Italy a cruel kind of nationalism was growing under the dictator Mussolini. In Germany an equally cruel kind of nationalism was rising under Hitler.

Gandhi had his own ideas about nationalism. He did not want it to be bloodthirsty and warlike. He wanted it to be peaceful and proud, devoted to the welfare of others. Once he wrote:

"I want the freedom of my country so that other countries may learn something from my free country, so that the resources of my country might be utilized for the benefit of mankind. Just as the cult of patriotism teaches us to-

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day that the individual has to die for the family, the family has to die for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province, the province for the country, even so a country has to be free in order that it may die, if necessary, for the benefit of the world. My love, therefore, of nationalism or my idea of nationalism is that my country may become free, that if need be the whole of the country may die, so that the human race may live. There is no room for race hatred there. Let that be our nationalism."

Gandhi made his retirement complete when he decided to found a new ashram. Deep into the interior of India he went to a village in the Central Provinces, an unknown little place called Segoan. Segoan was a cluster of huts and cottages on a barren stretch of land without a single shade tree to protect it from the heat and only scant patches of grass to keep down the dust. There wasn't even a post office in such a small place, and Gandhi's secretary had to walk five miles to Wardha each day for the mail.

"We shall call the place Sevagram, Place of Service," said Mahatma Gandhi, and over the years Sevagram became a place of holy pilgrimage for the high-born and the lowly, the rich and the poor. Men and women traveled from all over the world for the privilege of seeing and talking to the wise and holy Mahatma at Sevagram.

Gandhi's own cottage was small and simple, divided into three rooms by mud walls. He owned the cot on which he slept, two or three bamboo stands for his books and papers, some floor mats, and perhaps a basket for holding fruit. His personal belongings were his sandals, his dhoti, his bowl for food, his glasses; that was all. He wore a large dollar watch dangling from his waistline so that he could time his appointments to the split second. His years were running out and he had much to do, so not a minute dared be wasted.

Mahatma Gandhi was spotlessly clean; his house was

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immaculate. The members of the ashram obeyed strict rules of cleanliness. All bathed daily, brushed their teeth carefully, and washed their hands before touching food. Clothing was laundered after each wearing, for this was Gandhi's way of life and the way of life that he taught to the people of India.

With his magic touch Gandhi changed the impoverished and neglected little town of Sevagram into a model community. He taught the people to plant vegetable gardens, to keep their streets clean, to spin and weave. His workers opened a hospital, a school, and a dairy.

What of this holy man, this man who spent so much time in prayer and meditation? What was he really like? Was he dull and somber and depressing? Not Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi was sober and serious when it was necessary to be so, but he preferred to be gay and cheerful.

His smile cast a spell over everyone. His humor and wit were quick and original, and he could parry a remark with the youngest and cleverest. If a reporter asked him a question that he did not wish to answer, he could repay the man with a witty remark that left the reporter nothing more to ask. The children who swarmed around him loved his entertaining and humorous stories. The children were his "little birds."

Sushila Nayar, one of Gandhi's physicians, had fallen under his spell when she was only seven. The exciting news traveled about her village one day that Gandhi was speaking in a nearby town. Everyone was hurrying to the place. The distance was great, four or five miles, too far for a seven-year-old to walk.

"I'm going to see Gandhiji!" said the little girl, as excited as anyone else.

She clutched the hand of an aunt and walked all the way. Such a vast throng had gathered to hear and see Gandhi that it was impossible even to catch a glimpse of him. Even

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when her aunt held Sushila up, she wasn't able to see him, but the thrill of being that close to Mahatmaji enabled her to walk the five miles home again without tiring. In her child's mind she had seen Gandhi!

She did not meet him until she was much older, a student, in 1930, and from then on she spent her summer vacations at the ashram. One summer when Sushila decided to go to the ashram in spite of a high temperature, her mother objected directly to Gandhi.

"My daughter is too ill to come to your ashram this time," she said.

Gandhi laughed. "Don't you trust me?" he rebuked the mother. "Don't you think that I can be as good a mother as you?"

Gandhi looked after Sushila himself and saw to it that she received proper care until she was over her ailment.

Even after Sushila entered medical college, she spent her summers at the ashram, and in 1938 she became a permanent member of the group, devoting all of her skill and training to the care of Gandhiji's health and comfort.

Gandhi gave his personal attention to every detail of everyone's life at the ashram. No problem was too small or too big for him. When he was so deeply engrossed in national politics that every second of his careful schedule was taken up with affairs of state, two young boys who were students at the ashram came to him with a problem.

"We need an increase in our allowance, Gandhiji."

Gandhi patiently laid aside what he was doing. Why did they need a larger allowance?

"We are studying photography," they explained, "and that's expensive."

After some thought Gandhi granted them the extra funds.

Gandhi's compassion was unlimited. Anyone could come to him with any kind of difficulty, and he would not be

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turned away. Once a visitor came to the ashram in desperate need of help. He had come to Gandhi because he had nowhere else to turn. Gandhi recognized him as a man who had been a fellow prisoner several years before. Since then the man had contracted a terrible disease — leprosy. Even a leper could turn to Gandhi.

The sufferer was given a small cottage of his own in an isolated corner of the ashram grounds. For nearly two years the man remained there while Gandhi himself visited him daily, arranged for medical care, and read to him as he lay on his sick bed.

No wonder the people of India worshiped Gandhi!

A peasant couple came humbly to the ashram one day and asked if they could have the water in which Mahatmaji had washed his feet. Their son, they explained, was near death. The water from Gandhi's feet must be blessed and would surely cure the boy.

"Bring them to me," said Gandhi. When the worried parents were brought in, Gandhi assured them that he was not divine and the water in which he washed his feet was like anyone else's discarded bath water; it had no curative powers.

"Only God can cure your son," he told them. "You must pray directly to Him."

Even at his ashram Gandhi continued to worry about all of India's problems: her villages and cities, her schools, her food, her religions, her farms, her children. He had chosen a typical Indian village to be a model for all other villages to follow. What could be done at Sevagram could be done in every village in India.

"For the next two years I want to live in peace," he said. "I have my mission in life still to perform. I shall yet lead India to freedom, but I can never prepare my plans while I am surrounded by all the artifices of modern civilization. Henceforward my home will be a village."

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19. *TOP MAN IN INDIA*

"Happy the warrior
To whom comes joy of battle — comes, as now,
Glorious and fair, unsought; opening for him
A gateway unto Heav'n."

—GITA II.

WHILE Gandhi continued in retirement at Sevagram, he was thoroughly informed about what was going on in the world. His heart was deeply troubled by the barbarism that was taking possession of men.

In his weekly paper *Harijan* he wrote of Hitler in 1938: "If I were a Jew and were born in Germany and earned my livelihood there, I would claim Germany as my home even as the tallest Gentile may, and challenge him to shoot me or cast me into a dungeon. I would refuse to be expelled or to submit to discriminating treatment."

But speaking as a non-Jew, as a citizen of another land, he said, "If ever there could be a justifiable war in the name of humanity, a war against Germany — to prevent the wanton persecution of a whole race — would be completely justified."

Sorrowful words coming from the frail but mighty Mahatma who had proved that soul-force is more potent than physical force. What Gandhi thought, he said. If the next day he thought otherwise, he would say so.

Feelings in Europe grew tense and tempers mounted

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higher until, in September of 1939, they exploded. Hitler invaded Poland on the first day of the month. Within two days England declared war on Germany, and a few hours later France did the same. In a little more than two weeks Russia, at that time friendly with Germany, invaded Poland from the eastern side.

On the eleventh day of September the constitution of India was suspended; the war served as an excuse. In the name of emergency the India Act of 1935, for which the Indians had struggled for so many years, was canceled.

Great Britain made it clear that India's aid in the war would be most welcome. India's reply was exactly what you might expect after so many years of disappointment. What, its leaders asked, would become of India after the war? What promises would Great Britain care to make in return for India's help?

The official capital of India was in New Delhi with its government buildings and mansions, limousines and gold-braided footmen; but the real capital was the mud and thatched cottage at Sevagram with the design of a spinning wheel embossed on the wall. Gandhi had no official title or position of any kind; yet the mighty and the wealthy trudged over the dusty road to his door to hear his advice or to obtain his aid.

Gandhi was top man in India now; when he spoke, whole masses of Indian people did his bidding.

The Viceroy of India, of course, realized this and knew that he must first win Gandhi over before India would cooperate. So the Viceroy held a conference with Mahatma Gandhi.

"Will you persuade India to help Britain win the war, Mr. Gandhi?"

"Will you guaranty India her independence after the war?" Gandhi retorted.

"We will give you dominion status after the war, grad-

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ually," said the Viceroy. "Help us win the war, and we will hold meetings after the war to talk about making the necessary changes in the Indian constitution."

Gandhi shook his head. India wanted complete independence.

The Viceroy then held a conference with Jinnah, leader of the Moslems.

"Help Britain win the war," he pleaded.

Jinnah had his own ideas. "The Moslems do not want to live in a free India if it will be run by Hindus," he said. "We wouldn't be safe. Why not divide India into two countries: India for the Hindus and Pakistan for the Moslems?"

The Viceroy went to the Congress Party leaders, and they said the same thing:

"First, tell us why you are fighting this war. Are you just interested in saving your own possessions and holding onto your own colonies? If so, we are not interested in helping you. On the other hand, if you are fighting for democracy and the right of any nation to govern itself, then you won't object to giving us our freedom as a reward for helping you win the war. If you believe in democracy for the countries of Europe and for yourself, surely you believe in it for us."

The following year, March of 1940, the Congress Party leaders even talked about starting a new civil-disobedience campaign. Now was the time to act, they said.

Both Nehru and Gandhi disapproved of the idea of civil disobedience against Great Britain while she was at war.

Nehru said: "Launching a civil-disobedience campaign at a time when Britain is engaged in a life and death struggle would be an act derogatory to India's honor."

Gandhi agreed: "We do not seek independence out of Britain's ruin. That is not the way of non-violence."

Meanwhile Britain was receiving material help from In-

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dia: clothing, food, leather goods, and other woven stuffs such as blankets and tents from her mills. There was some industry in India, though Britain did not permit many big factories because that would make India too independent. Ships and airplanes and large armaments were made in England.

Feelings between Britain and Gandhi became more strained when the English elected Winston S. Churchill as their new Prime Minister.

A powerful man with a brilliant mind and an unshakable will, Churchill had to win a war for England, and he had little patience to waste on India. He had never been sympathetic to Gandhi and had once called him a "naked faquir."

In June, 1940, German troops marched into Paris. London was not far away from the enemy, just a short flight across the English Channel. Soon German planes would be dropping bombs on London, reducing whole sections of the city to rubble.

"Give us our independence after the war," said the Congress Party to England, "and we will help you."

"No," said Great Britain. "Not complete freedom."

"By your hesitation you are asking for civil disobedience," Gandhi warned.

And civil disobedience was exactly what happened next.

Tempers broke in India and patience vanished. The people were tired of being told they could have dominion status "some day."

Parades, strikes, hartals, satyagrahis arrested — mounted police, lathi charges, confusion — India was in turmoil.

Gandhi protested against the arrests. It did no good. In the middle of September Gandhi was elected generalissimo of the Congress Party in the new struggle for freedom against the British *raj*.

Mahatma Gandhi was seventy-one that October. His

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appearance had changed hardly at all except that the lines in his face were a little deeper. He still wore his dhoti and shawl and sandals, his steel-rimmed glasses on his large nose. His diet was still goat's milk, fruit, and vegetables. His schedule was just as severe except that he allowed himself a little more sleep: up at four A.M., prayers, breakfast, a walk of at least two miles, a body massage with herb oils by one of his attendants, probably Dr. Nayar, his big meal at eleven A.M., rest until two, visitors and reporters until five, last meal before sunset, evening walk, and to bed at nine P.M.

His disposition was still sweet and calm, his face wreathed with smiles. Nothing ruffled or upset him. Within himself Gandhi had complete peace, and when others talked to him they went away feeling calm and at peace.

"His smile is delightful, his laughter infectious, and he radiates lightheartedness. There is something childlike about him which is full of charm. When he enters a room, he brings a breath of fresh air with him which lightens the atmosphere," is what Jawaharlal Nehru once wrote about Gandhiji.

Gandhi hated no one. He believed in the doctrine of love and lived it, and through a lifetime of self-discipline he had succeeded in purifying his heart and mind of every trace of hatred and bitterness. An angry hostile audience could not upset him. Praise could not influence him. Those who worshiped him were scolded for their trouble. He could detach his mind from the most trying problem, put his head on his pillow, and fall asleep immediately. He lived as long as he did because he did not burn himself out with anger and emotions. He did not hate the British; he loved them; he wanted them to love India. His civil-disobedience campaigns were intended to draw Britain's attention to the wrongs in India.

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The arrests that he had protested went on. Mrs. Pandit, Nehru's sister, was put into jail for making an anti-war speech. In 1941 nearly thirty-seven thousand Indians were in jail.

While these arrests were going on, Prime Minister Churchill and President Franklin Roosevelt were meeting "somewhere in the Atlantic" on board a British battleship. They were writing the Atlantic Charter.

The Atlantic Charter promised freedom to the peoples of the world. It said that "they [the United States and Great Britain] respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live."

"What about us?" asked the people of India when they read the Atlantic Charter. "Do you mean that we may choose our own government, too?"

To that question Prime Minister Churchill made his answer quite clear. The Atlantic Charter was directed at the Nazis and the countries that the Nazis had conquered. It did not apply to India.

That was in August, 1941. In December, 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, and the European war became World War II with the United States as one of the allies.

What about India now, with the war spreading to the Pacific, with the Japanese forces invading Asia?

Would India be invaded from the east for the first time in her history? Over the centuries the tribes and peoples that had invaded India had come in through the northwest. The Aryans poured into the Indus Valley through Afghanistan; the Moghuls had done the same, driving their elephants through the Khyber Pass. But this war of tanks, airplanes, and bombs was coming from a different direction, from the east, coming closer and closer to Assam and Bengal.

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In March the Japanese captured the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal, excellent air bases within bombing range of Calcutta.

England and India were both worried about the situation. They both realized that they ought to agree before the Japanese invaded.

England sent Sir Stafford Cripps to India to talk to the Indian leaders. His special task was to persuade India to help Britain win the war in Asia.

Cripps was a slim, tight-lipped man, barely a head taller than Gandhi, and he was popular in India because he had long favored independence.

When he arrived there in March, 1942, the Japanese armies were penetrating deep into Burma, coming closer and closer to the eastern borders of India. Chinese and British troops were not strong enough to hold them back. Refugees were pouring into India, over the highways and trails, through the jungles, to escape the Japanese, bringing tales of horror with them.

Cripps, Nehru, Gandhi, and others worked desperately hard to reach an agreement. The situation was grave, horribly grave, and everyone knew it.

"Why can't we have our own Indian army to defend ourselves against the Japanese?"

"Oh, no!" said the British. "A British army of occupation will defend you."

"We want to run our own affairs," insisted the Indians.

"You can't do that. We must remain in control of the situation," insisted the British.

It was no use. They could not agree.

"For heaven's sake, leave India alone," Gandhi pleaded at one point. "Let us breathe the air of freedom. It may choke us, suffocate us as it did the slaves under emancipation, but I want the present sham to end."

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At last, on the 11th of April, 1942, Sir Stafford Cripps returned to England to report on the failure of his mission.

When Cripps left India, Bataan Peninsula had just fallen to the Japanese. In Burma the Japanese were moving ever westward to the borders of India.

Gandhi understood India, and he understood the British. For the next several months he tried to make the British understand how Indians felt. He wrote article after article in his paper *Harijan*.

"Conditions are worse in India than you realize," he warned in his articles. "The Indian people are in a dangerous mood."

Still Britain refused to understand.

"We want our freedom," Gandhi repeated. "It is a terrible tragedy that so many millions of people should have nothing to say in this war. If we have the freedom to play our part, we can arrest the march of Japan and save China."

The British stood pat until, by July, even Gandhi's patience was at an end. He and the Congress Party leaders decided to act. India must demand her independence now!

They called a meeting of the Congress Party in August, under a giant canvas tent. To that meeting came Indians from every walk of life: factory workers, farmers, high-caste Hindus, Moslems, Sikhs, shippers, college students — crowding in or waiting in throngs outside, filling the streets for blocks around, to hear Mahatmaji's message.

The August heat was intense, and the rain came down in torrents. Those inside the huge tent could keep cool with electric fans; those outside had to endure the heat and the rain. For their Bapuji they would suffer any discomfort. Gandhi's influence was terrific.

The chairman stepped to the platform and read the resolution they had all come to hear: civil disobedience! "The

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starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale. Such a struggle must be under the leadership of Gandhiji and the committee requests him to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken."

Revolution! Full-scale revolution, Indian style!

"Quit India!" was the cry on everyone's lips. "Quit India, and let her govern herself."

Gandhiji stood up and moved to the microphone, and a hush fell over the crowd. As Gandhi spoke so went India. Would he tell them to wait this time?

"Now is the occasion when we will have to rise!" said Gandhi.

He approved the launching of mass civil disobedience against the British, and he would act as leader of the movement. Great Britain must surrender India.

"Every man is free to go to the fullest length under ahimsa for complete deadlock by strikes and all other possible means."

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20. *DEATH IN PRISON*

"Thou grievest where no grief should be!
. . . for the wise in heart
Mourn not for those that live, nor those that die."
—GITA II.

WHEN Dr. Sushila Nayar heard that there was to be a Congress Party meeting and that a new civil-disobedience campaign would start, she was hard at work at medical college. She also heard rumors that Gandhiji might be arrested, so she left her studies and hurried to Bombay just in time to hear Gandhiji make his speech before the Congress Party. After the meeting she went home with him. That evening she and Mr. and Mrs. Gandhi sat talking, and he laughingly said he was sure the British Government would not arrest him this time.

That was at eleven o'clock in the evening, and soon everyone retired for the night. About five-thirty in the morning Mahadev Desai rushed into Gandhiji's room crying, "Bapu, Bapu, they have come!"

Gandhi remained calm.

"How long will they give us to get ready?" he asked.

A half hour, he was told.

Gandhi did not need much time to gather his few possessions together, but he did want to meet with his followers in prayer. Sadly they gathered about him once more as Desai began to intone a hymn.

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Gandhi, Desai, and Mirabehn were the three to be arrested.

"If you cannot live without me, you may accompany me," Gandhiji said to Kasturba. "But I would rather you and Pyarelal [Dr. Nayar's brother] stayed behind and carried on my work."

So Mrs. Gandhi remained behind, watching as her husband was led away by officials, hurried into a waiting car, and whisked off to jail. The next day she and Dr. Nayar started for a large meeting in Bombay park at which Gandhi had intended to speak. They never arrived. She and Dr. Nayar were arrested just as they were entering their automobile.

Ba had had a hard life, and it was not going to be any easier in prison. She had begun as a child bride, repaying Gandhi's youthful unkindnesses with devotion, waiting patiently for him while he went to England to study law, following him to Africa when he wished to go, bearing him four sons, caring for the entire family and for the whole ashram family, living in poverty instead of the comforts that his talent as a lawyer could have provided, following him in his political work, nursing him through sickness and fasts, going to prison.

Ba and Dr. Nayar were taken to a women's jail nearby and placed in a cell that was damp and smelling of sewer gas. It had only two cots with iron frames and planks of wood to lie on. A prison guard came in and handed them thin mattresses and dirty sheets. Dr. Nayar discarded the sheets and laid Ba's bedding on top of the mattress for her.

"Mrs. Gandhi isn't well," Dr. Nayar explained. "She needs a special diet."

"Very well," she was told. "Buy what you need."

But the two women had no money with them, and they were not allowed to get in touch with anyone.

Two days later the guard said, "Pack your things," but

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did not tell them where they were being taken. Actually they were to be in the same jail with Gandhiji.

How happy they were to see each other. Ba's health began to mend as soon as she was with her husband, and Sushila could now give Bapu the oil massages that he needed in his advanced years. Sarojini Naidu had been arrested and was there, too, making the family quite large.

They were being held in the Aga Khan's Palace, a dismal place that hardly deserved to be called a palace. The "palace" was a huge stone bungalow with a veranda around it and a garden outside. There were no screens on the windows, and the place was tormented with flies and mosquitoes. The prisoners were permitted the use of most of the palace including the veranda and the garden.

They didn't know how long they would be there, perhaps forever.

"They will never let us out alive this time," said Ba one day.

Ba tried to study school lessons, the Gita, or some history with Bapu's help; she was past seventy, and it was difficult for her to learn. She tried to spin, but her weakened condition prevented it.

Gandhi continued his strict daily schedule. Morning and evening he went for his walk in the garden, and Ba accompanied him when she felt equal to it. There were morning and evening hymns and prayers, and one day a week was Gandhi's day of silence.

The prisoners were allowed newspapers, and each had duties to fill up the long days. Gandhi had his meditations, his spinning, his writing. Dr. Nayar looked after the health of both Mr. and Mrs. Gandhi. Mrs. Naidu with her brilliant wit and her poetic talents could entertain them all. Sometimes, when he heard gales of laughter coming from the circle, Gandhi would scold Sarojini Naidu for making

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prison life too merry. She must not forget that they were in prison as a service to mother India.

One evening as they sat talking Mahadev Desai slumped to the floor, his eyes closed. Dr. Nayar rushed to his side, and when she felt his pulse and found none she knew that he was dead.

"He has had a heart attack," she told the others who crowded around.

Carefully they picked him up and laid him on his cot, and Gandhi looked at him closely.

"Is he dead?" he asked Dr. Nayar.

"Yes," she said.

Mahadev Desai had joined the ashram shortly after Gandhi returned to India from Africa, during World War I, and from then on his life was a record of service and devotion. He worked long hard hours as Gandhi's secretary and companion. He went to the Round Table Conference in London; he was at Gandhi's side in almost every difficulty, even in prison.

A sad and shocked group of mourners gathered in the yard of the Aga Khan's Palace for Desai's funeral fire, for Hindus cremate the dead. A huge stack of wood was arranged and on top of it was a flat platform on which Desai's body was laid. More wood was laid all around. Much would be needed, because a funeral burning takes all day.

As the flames mounted up around Desai, Mrs. Gandhi held the palms of her hands together and chanted, "May God bless you, wherever you are."

For many days afterward they felt depressed by their grief; such a loss was hard to shake off. Gandhi went back to his duties and found some comfort in his work. From now on Pyarelal would be his secretary.

By the time December rolled around, Gandhi had been quiet as long as he could bear to be. He was accomplishing

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did not tell them where they were being taken. Actually they were to be in the same jail with Gandhiji.

How happy they were to see each other. Ba's health began to mend as soon as she was with her husband, and Sushila could now give Bapu the oil massages that he needed in his advanced years. Sarojini Naidu had been arrested and was there, too, making the family quite large.

They were being held in the Aga Khan's Palace, a dismal place that hardly deserved to be called a palace. The "palace" was a huge stone bungalow with a veranda around it and a garden outside. There were no screens on the windows, and the place was tormented with flies and mosquitoes. The prisoners were permitted the use of most of the palace including the veranda and the garden.

They didn't know how long they would be there, perhaps forever.

"They will never let us out alive this time," said Ba one day.

Ba tried to study school lessons, the Gita, or some history with Bapu's help; she was past seventy, and it was difficult for her to learn. She tried to spin, but her weakened condition prevented it.

Gandhi continued his strict daily schedule. Morning and evening he went for his walk in the garden, and Ba accompanied him when she felt equal to it. There were morning and evening hymns and prayers, and one day a week was Gandhi's day of silence.

The prisoners were allowed newspapers, and each had duties to fill up the long days. Gandhi had his meditations, his spinning, his writing. Dr. Nayar looked after the health of both Mr. and Mrs. Gandhi. Mrs. Naidu with her brilliant wit and her poetic talents could entertain them all. Sometimes, when he heard gales of laughter coming from the circle, Gandhi would scold Sarojini Naidu for making

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prison life too merry. She must not forget that they were in prison as a service to mother India.

One evening as they sat talking Mahadev Desai slumped to the floor, his eyes closed. Dr. Nayar rushed to his side, and when she felt his pulse and found none she knew that he was dead.

"He has had a heart attack," she told the others who crowded around.

Carefully they picked him up and laid him on his cot, and Gandhi looked at him closely.

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"Yes," she said.

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nothing just sitting in prison, and the news that came to him from the outside was not good.

Violence had followed his arrest, the kind of violence that Gandhi did not like: riots, derailed streetcars, broken shop windows. At the same time the people were revolting against British rule with civil disobedience and strikes.

"My patience is at an end," said Gandhi, and he wrote to the Viceroy.

"Unless you release me from jail, I will start another twenty-one-day fast," his letter said among other things.

The Viceroy was not a man to be threatened easily, and he wrote back reminding Gandhi that he himself was responsible for much of the trouble in India. For that reason he must remain in jail.

"I have spent a lot of time thinking about this," Gandhi wrote to the Viceroy. "I have tried to avoid taking this step, but you have left me no loophole for escape from the ordeal that I have set before myself. I begin it February 10 with the clearest possible conscience."

Inside the Aga Khan's Palace there was genuine fear for his life.

"He cannot possibly survive a long fast," said Dr. Nayar.

"He must not undertake a fast at his age," said Mrs. Naidu. "In his weak state of health he won't survive."

Kasturba had lived with him longest of any of them, sixty-two years; she knew that if he had received guidance from God to fast he would fast. Her faith in him surpassed everyone else's.

"Of course, he must fast," she said. "How can Bapuji be silent witness to all the lies and falsehoods that are being spread about? How else can he protest against the government except by going on a fast?"

Gandhi had always been stronger than other men, and that was why he rose to a position of leadership. He could walk for miles in the broiling tropical sun without feeling

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faint. Others with him, younger men, would fall to the ground with sunstroke. He could work longer hours and do with less sleep than other men. He could make more demands upon his body than other men because his constant religious devotion and discipline made his mind complete master over his body.

True to his promise, on the morning of February 10, 1943, Gandhi's breakfast was his last meal for three weeks to come. His prison family gathered around him in prayer, palms of their hands together, feeling that this time they must surely lose their Bapuji. Mrs. Gandhi remained near him as she always did, spending most of her day at his bedside.

This time the strain showed quickly on his system, and in only three days he became nauseous. Even water would not stay down after he had swallowed it. No use arguing with him to take a little fruit juice in the water because argument only tired him and wasted his energy.

His health became worse as each day passed. Ba, Mirabehn, Dr. Nayar were afraid to leave him alone for a moment. Even more wearing upon him was the fact that during his fast the authorities opened the gates of the Aga Khan's Palace and allowed visitors. All day long devotees streamed in to pay their respects to the Mahatma, filing past his cot, pausing to say a prayer, staring down at him. Of course they came out of love for him, but they tired him, too. He didn't have enough strength to talk to anyone.

"The 22nd of February was the thirteenth day of the fast," wrote Dr. Nayar. "Gandhiji had become so weak that only after much effort could he drink hardly half an ounce of water. It had exhausted him and he fell back in bed in an almost semi-conscious state. The pulse became very feeble and he was cold and clammy. He had not the strength to speak or express himself by making signs."

"It will be a miracle if he lives," said all the doctors in

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attendance, some of whom had been admitted to watch over Gandhi.

As Gandhi approached closer to death, the newspapers all over the world were writing about him, and people all over the world were worrying about him. Letters, telegrams, protests began to deluge the government in London and the Viceroy in India.

"Let Gandhi out of jail!" they protested. "He has committed no crime. He is being held without trial."

Great Britain knew that if Gandhi died almost any kind of violence could be expected in India.

But the Viceroy in India and Churchill in London stood their ground. They were not giving in to the little brown rascal this time. In 1943 they were beginning to win the war. They had had victories in the Pacific; they were gathering their strength to invade Europe. Gandhi and other Indian leaders were being held in jail for reasons of safety.

The little man with the great soul lay on his cot, motionless except for his slow breathing, determined to complete his twenty-one days of fasting.

On the twentieth day the gates were swung shut and no more visitors were allowed. The government wanted no fanfare, no rabble-rousing, on the day the fast was broken. None but Gandhi's immediate prison family was permitted to take part in the ceremony.

Dr. Nayar knelt beside his cot and held his hand.

"Bapuji?" she said softly.

Gandhiji opened his eyes and smiled. He had succeeded again, and he was supremely happy, even though he had not made the government set him free. On his other side Kasturba slid her hand under his head and placed the glass of orange juice in his hand. He sipped it, and the twenty-one-day fast was broken.

His health would remain in danger for several days until he could once more be allowed solid food. Only then

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would he dare rise from his bed and walk about. In spite of his advanced years, he recovered rapidly.

This fast had failed because Gandhi had not achieved his freedom with it. The British Government had taken a big chance on the fact that he would survive. It was the first time that Gandhi had failed to get what he wanted by fasting, and his defeat was a feather in the Viceroy's cap.

The excitement that Gandhi had stirred up with his fasting soon died away, and the world turned its attention to the war in Europe and the Pacific. Gandhi continued to be a prisoner in the Aga Khan's Palace.

Exactly thirteen days after his fast was ended, when Gandhi was barely strong enough to walk around, a new tragedy visited the prison.

Kasturba was still taking care of her husband, bringing him his food, making certain that he rested properly, and on this day as she entered his room the dish she was carrying clattered to the floor. She held her hand to her heart and slumped down, gasping for breath. Weak though he was, Gandhi hurried to her side; so did Sushila and Mrs. Naidu, for they realized that she had had a heart attack, and they carried her to her bed.

"Lie perfectly still," said Dr. Nayar, stroking her forehead.

"Sushila?"

"Don't try to talk now."

A week later Mrs. Gandhi had another heart attack. The long strain, the worry, the imprisonment, after a lifetime of hardship, had at last proved too much for her, and from that day on she was never well again.

Through the heat and humidity of the summer, Dr. Nayar and Mirabehn watched over her, supervised her diet, made her rest. Kasturba — Ba — had been a mother to everyone who ever came to the ashram. She had raised her own children, watched them grow up and marry and

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have children of their own. When her sons had come to visit her during their father's fast, they had brought Ba's grandchildren with them. The prison gates were closed once more, and her children and grandchildren were gone from her. She knew she would never leave the prison alive, and the letters she was allowed to receive from her sons were precious.

She grew weaker and weaker. By December she had to be given oxygen to ease her breathing.

It was Gandhi's turn to sit at *her* bedside and try to cheer her up, but the big, bare stone rooms depressed her. She had been there so many months! Sometimes her companions gathered around her bed and played a four-handed game called Karrom, and that helped to raise her spirits.

"Please let our sons visit us once more," Gandhi wrote to the government. "My wife does not have long to live."

After a long, long delay the authorities consented to weekly visits and allowed another doctor to enter the prison to help Sushila Nayar look after her.

Ba was no longer able to leave her bed, and they gave her a short-legged table to place across her lap on the bed. When it was too much of a strain on her heart to lie back on the pillows, she could lean her head on her arms on the little table and nap.

As her husband watched by her side in the gloomy Aga Khan's Palace, her strength grew less and less, and at last on February 22, 1944, her life ebbed away.

Word of her death was the saddest news that India had heard in many a day, and the whole nation mourned her passing. Kasturba was loved throughout the country as much as her husband. In every village, every home, her name was spoken with reverence and respect. The stories of her sacrifices and devotion to the cause of Indian freedom, her social work, her courage and faith, were legends told and retold in her own lifetime. Less than five feet tall,

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in her sari of hand-spun, hand-woven khadi, she had walked with the dignity of a royal queen.

"Do not sorrow after my death," she had said to Gandhiji a short while before. "It should be an occasion for rejoicing."

Kasturba was wrapped in a sari woven of Gandhiji's own yarn, her forehead was covered with sandalwood paste, and flowers were twined in her hair. As she lay in state, gifts of flowers began to arrive, and relatives and friends were allowed to attend the funeral. Gandhi sat beside his wife, head bowed.

"It will not be easy to get adjusted to life without Ba," he said humbly. "We were together sixty-two years. What faith she had in me! If I had to choose a million times over I would choose Ba again and again as my wife and comrade."

The next morning her body was placed on a funeral pyre in the prison yard, and her son Devadas lighted the fire. It was then that Gandhi's grief was greater than even he could master, and he wept for the first time in years. He stayed by the fire the entire day, from early morning until late evening, when the burning was at last finished.

Sad and alone, Gandhi returned to his imprisonment. Would he, too, find his only freedom in death, he wondered. Would this prison be his last place on earth? Would the government deny him, as it had denied his wife, the dignity of a proper funeral outside of the prison walls?

March and April passed quietly for him, but his health was not good, and his resistance was low. The mosquitoes that flew in and out of the prison, with more freedom than Gandhi enjoyed, finally took their toll, and he was stricken with malaria. This time the government was really worried about him. If Gandhi died in prison, British prestige in India would suffer severely, and the war was not yet won.

Word flew around that Gandhi might be released from

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prison. The rumor became a fact, and on the sixth day of May, 1944, he was given his unconditional freedom and taken to Lady Thackersey's house to recover.

The authorities made it quite clear that Gandhi had been let out of prison for medical reasons only.

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21. *A DIVIDED NATION*

"Arjuna sank upon his chariot-seat,
And let fall bow and arrows, sick at heart."
—GITA I.

GANDHI came out of prison to find that war, cyclones, and drought had made India an unhappy land. The war had cut off food supplies so that millions were starving. More food crops had been destroyed by droughts. In the east, in Bengal, a cyclone had swept over the land, leaving destruction in its wake.

Violent winds had uprooted giant banyan trees and destroyed houses; rains swelled the rivers and flooded the land. Acres of rice were destroyed, tens of thousands of people drowned; cattle were killed, railway tracks torn up. Cholera and smallpox broke out.

Bengal was overcrowded with refugees from Burma, and the food shortages meant hunger and death from starvation. Rice that used to come into the country from Burma was in the hands of the enemy. Nearly a million and a half persons died in Bengal before the tragedy ended; it was a common sight to see a person drop dead on the streets of Calcutta.

Gandhi found, too, that the Viceroy of India was an army general, and India was being ruled like one great big army. Human freedom had completely disappeared.

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"India today is one vast prison containing four hundred million souls," he said sadly.

Mahatma Gandhi was a frail old man of seventy-four years, and he gathered his shawl tightly around him against the chilly air as he strolled about the veranda or gardens of Mrs. Thackersey's home. He was not yet strong enough to travel, but he could keep track of the war news and news of India's other problems.

World War II was coming to an end in Europe. June 6, 1944, five A.M. London time was D-Day, and the Allied forces crossed the English Channel to begin their invasion of Europe at Normandy. Slowly they advanced and penetrated deeper and deeper into France until, by September, Paris was freed, Brussels and Antwerp had been captured, and the invading armies had met the Siegfried Line.

In the Pacific theater that same winter General MacArthur's troops recaptured the Philippines.

These victories did not thrill Gandhi.

"When the war is over, we must make a real peace," he said, "based on the freedom and equality of all races and nations."

May 8, 1945 was VE-Day, victory of Europe.

A few weeks after VE-Day something happened in English politics that was good news for India. England held an election, and Prime Minister Churchill's government was defeated by a landslide. The people of England had put up with bitter hardships during the war, and Churchill had been a courageous leader. But when the war was over they decided they would like a different group of men in office. The Labour Party led by Clement Attlee won, and Clement Attlee was made the new Prime Minister.

Churchill had been opposed to freedom for India; Clement Attlee had long been in favor of it. When Gandhi heard the results of the election, he knew that India could begin to hope once more. Perhaps he *would* live long

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enough to see India win her freedom. If only Kasturba had lived to see it, too!

Three months after VE-Day came victory in the Pacific for the Allies. The first atomic bomb was dropped over the city of Hiroshima, spreading its death and destruction for miles around and bringing the war to a quick end. On Sunday, September 2, 1945, Foreign Minister Mamoru Shigemitsu came aboard the *U.S.S. Missouri* anchored in Tokyo Bay and signed the terms of surrender on behalf of Emperor Hirohito. General Douglas MacArthur signed on behalf of the United Nations.

Throughout the world there was unspeakable misery created by six years of global conflict. Millions of Europeans were left homeless and had to live in the unheated cellars of bombed-out buildings. Orphaned children roamed the streets in gangs, stealing what they needed. Long after the actual fighting stopped, thousands continued to die of starvation and disease. In Asia the story was the same. China had been a battleground since 1937. The Philippines, New Guinea, Burma all had to be restored. India, although she had had no actual fighting, felt the war deeply.

The new Prime Minister of England lived up to India's hopes, and soon he said, "India will be given self-government, and the people of India themselves will decide what kind of government they want."

After so many years of disappointment, after so much time spent in prison by Indian leaders, freedom was at last to be theirs.

During the same summer Jawaharlal Nehru was let out of prison along with seven others. Vast crowds waited outside as the prison doors swung open. When the prisoners emerged, the people cheered, hung wreaths of flowers about their necks, followed their automobiles in triumph through the streets, still cheering and shouting. Someone

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handed Nehru a telegram. It was from his daughter Indira, and it said, "Welcome home, darling. The world has been dark without you."

That was the happy side of India in 1945 and 1946; there was a sad side, too. Famines, floods, epidemics took their toll. Hunger makes the human mind work differently. A starving man does not think the same way as a man who has plenty to eat. When he sees his children dying and can't do anything about it, and knows he will starve to death himself, he grows angry and upset. He forgets his upbringing. Strikes, riots, disorders, killings, and brutality result.

In eastern India, in Assam and Bengal, the rioting was the worst, but actually times were bad all over the country. There had been no rainfall and crops had dried up in the fields. Ships had not been able to bring food into the country because of the war. The result: famine! A famine worse than the famine of 1943 swept over the land in 1946. Millions were starving. They walked along the edges of the roadways, begging for a morsel of food. Or they sat limply on their doorsteps because they were too weak to move.

Hunger makes hatred. Violent riots and killing broke out, especially between Hindus and Moslems. Village after village was raided, burned out, its people killed or beaten. Hindus fled from Moslem areas; Moslems fled from Hindu areas. The government itself was in a state of confusion and could not keep order. Black markets sprang up, and the price of what little rice there was went sky-high.

Both Gandhi and Jinnah tried to make peace.

It was Mahatma Gandhi who really took upon himself the Himalayan task of calming the people. He was in Calcutta at the time.

"I shall go in person," he said, "and speak to every Indian that I meet. I will remind him of ahimsa."

Like a ministering angel of peace, dressed in white

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homespun, sandals on his feet, walking stick in hand, he set out on foot through Bengal, on a peace march. This peace march was as epochal as his Salt March had been in 1930.

Frail and aged, he walked fearlessly through stricken villages where the burning, stealing, maiming, and killing had taken place. When he saw the results of violence, his discouragement was almost more than he could bear. For years and years he had taught non-violence, love, tolerance. Where were they now?

"I would prefer not to live to see the day when non-violence was thus beaten," he said.

On he walked, from one village to the next, past rice fields and betel-nut groves. His party carried with them a movable thatched hut that was made of straw and weighed less than two hundred pounds. That was all the shelter Gandhi had during his entire tour. He talked, he preached, he pleaded; sometimes he would walk directly into a mob of rioters and bid them stop their violence. He cared nothing for his own safety. His life was worth nothing if he could not bring peace to India.

"If need be, I will leave my bones in East Bengal, for if I fail at East Bengal, I will not succeed anywhere else."

Mahatmaji was seventy-six years old, and his life had not been lived in vain. His people had not forgotten his teaching altogether, he discovered. Great crowds, so typical of India, gathered about him wherever he traveled, cheering him, demanding that he speak to them. His message was always the same: peace and non-violence.

"Stop your killing. You must learn to live together in peace," he told them.

Then, out of London, in February, 1947, came the announcement for which India had waited so many years:

"The British intend to withdraw from India not later than June, 1948."

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India was to be free! Prime Minister Attlee and his government had lived up to their promise. They had sent a group of men to India to talk to leaders about giving the country independence, and now India was to be allowed to govern herself. All the suffering, imprisonment, death were to be rewarded at last.

India's leaders were to write their own constitution! They had written their declaration of independence eighteen years before.

England appointed a new Viceroy to carry out her plans. She sent the dashing, handsome naval hero, Rear Admiral Viscount Mountbatten. Mountbatten would be Great Britain's last Viceroy of India, and he would supervise the withdrawal of the British Government and help India set up a government of her own.

On March 22, 1947, he and his wife and daughter stepped from the plane in New Delhi, and his snow-white, gold-braided naval uniform gleamed in the blazing sun. There had to be much fanfare, inspection of troops, and attending of formal gatherings before he could settle down to real work.

Shortly after Mountbatten's arrival the Indian legislature adopted a provision for its future constitution which demonstrated clearly India's ability to govern herself. It outlawed Untouchability with the words: "Untouchability in any form is abolished and the imposition of any disability on that account shall be an offense."

Gandhi's Harijans, his children of God, more than fifty millions of them, were to be free at last. It would take a long time before they could fully enjoy their new freedom. People cannot change their thinking overnight. But when the law was at last on the books, it could be enforced as soon as India had her own government in running order.

While plans for the new government were being worked out, Jawaharlal Nehru was appointed Prime Minister of

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India. Eventually, he would have to be elected to office, like responsible government officers in the United States and England.

The leaders came together to write the new constitution — Gandhi, Nehru, Jinnah, and many others.

Once again Jinnah spoke up.

"I want a separate country for the Moslems," he insisted.

"No," said Gandhi. "We must have a united India."

Jinnah would not give in, and Gandhi realized that Indians would have to agree among themselves if India was to be a great nation.

"Very well," said Gandhi. "For the sake of peace, I will give in on this point."

So, instead of one country, there were to be two: India and Pakistan. India for the Hindus and other minorities, Pakistan for the Moslems. The word Pakistan is made out of the names of the provinces that Jinnah hoped would belong to it: P stands for the Punjab, A for Afghanistan, K for Kashmir, S for Sind, *tan* for Baluchistan.

But what about the princely states? They were the independent little countries scattered all through India. Some joined India and some joined Pakistan, the way new states joined the United States.

Dividing India into two countries was not easy, and it led to trouble. There were Hindus and Moslems living all over the country. In panic the Hindus began to flee from Moslem territory, and the Moslems fled in the same way from Hindu sections. They ran from their homes, carrying what belongings they could and rushed toward the borders. Long trains of refugees started out. Whole sections of population had to be transplanted. Anger, hatred, violence broke out once more.

Crowds waited desperately at railroad stations for a train to carry them. Sometimes they were able to struggle aboard and travel under armed guard. Sometimes they traveled

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on foot, carrying their children and old folk on their backs, in bullock carts, on poles across their shoulders. On the way they might be attacked by robbers or religious fanatics, so at night for safety they huddled together in squalid refugee camps.

There were still British troops in India to help keep order and give some protection to the trainloads of refugees, but would it be worse or better after the British troops withdrew? Could India keep her own house in order after all?

Gandhi believed that she could, and once more his deep influence was felt.

He had finished his walking tour of Bengal and was back in Calcutta. Just as peace was beginning to settle down, there came the dividing of India into two countries, and that started the trouble all over again.

Gandhi had given so many years to India! His strength was running out. What could he do now to bring about peace between Hindus and Moslems?

Out of his prayers and meditations again came the answer, the same answer:

"I am going to fast," he said. "I shall touch no food until sanity returns to my people."

Gandhi had to fast for five days before the results began to show. The news traveled about that he was close to death, that he would take no food until the killing stopped. Both Hindus and Moslems began to come to their senses when they realized what was happening. Gandhiji must not die.

Young men came to him, they came to his very bedside, and promised to stop their violence.

"Gandhiji, here are our clubs, our swords; we will leave them with you to prove that we do not intend to use them again. Please end your fast."

"You must promise me that you will return to the ways

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of ahimsa. You must promise me that you will try to live together peacefully without hatred and killing."

"We promise, Gandhiji! We promise!" they insisted as they hung their heads.

"Very well," said Gandhi. "I will end my fast."

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22. *WHERE THE SACRED RIVERS MEET*

"Birthless and deathless and changeless remaineth the spirit forever;
Death hath not touched it at all, dead though the house of it seems!"

—GITA II.

GANDHI'S heart and soul and life were dedicated to the task of freeing India from foreign rule and from her own shortcomings. He wanted to purify his country of religious hatred, of opium and alcohol, of child marriage, of Untouchability, of poverty, and of foreign government. He wanted to bring her peace and security, love and prosperity, courage and self-respect.

He succeeded in so many of these that his life reads like an unbelievable tale. Mohandas K. Gandhi, the Great Soul, was one of the greatest men who have ever lived and one of the holiest.

When India received her freedom in August, 1947, Gandhi had been working and living in India for thirty-three years, and he was seventy-eight years old. He had grown-up grandchildren who were his "walking sticks" when he took his daily stroll. He still wore his dollar watch dangling from his waistline, still timed his daily schedule to the split second, still worked nineteen hours a day.

Every minute of his day was a public record. His disciples and doctors were always with him, looking after

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every little need, watching his health and his comfort. Even all night while he slept there was someone nearby.

Time did not seem to change his face or his appearance. He still radiated happiness and good cheer, joking and laughing with those around him, holding children on his lap. He had no teeth of his own at all any more, and he kept several sets of false teeth in a bowl. While talking to a reporter, he might take out of his mouth the pair he was wearing, examine them as he chatted, toss them into the bowl, try another pair, call in his dentist, and ask him to make the bite more perfect on the pair he had just removed. As soon as Gandhi was rested enough after his five-day fast, he went on a motor tour of the refugee camps, and the sights were horrible. The rioting and killing and robbing, the hatred, had made people lose their reason. Victims had been clubbed and stabbed, sometimes left to die in the terrible sun with flies swarming about. Some had been burned to death when their villages were set on fire.

Gandhi shook his head as he traveled about. This sort of thing must never happen again, and yet by all reports it was not finished. He still heard news of Hindus and Moslems killing each other. His five-day fast had brought an end to the worst of it, but there was still much that he must do.

After his tour he did not go back to his ashram at Sevagram. He stayed in a small house in the city of Delhi to be close to everything that was going on. As usual, he had no position in the government, but government men and women came to him for advice and guidance. The men who were writing India's new constitution especially needed his help.

His house was a one-room affair of mud and plaster with a dirt floor, almost completely lacking in furniture. He slept on a bed of rope, or sat on it cross-legged while one of

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his followers called everyone to evening prayer by blowing on a conch shell or beating a gong.

"I must pray. We must pray together."

How could he teach Hindus and Moslems to trust each other? With Pakistan a Moslem country and India a predominantly Hindu country they had to trust each other, or the hatred might lead to war between the two new countries. Would he be able once more to bring them his message of ahimsa?

Gandhi had lived very close to God for many, many years, and he had obeyed God's will in all things. When evening prayer meeting gathered about Mahatma Gandhi on January 12, 1948, he announced that he had received guidance from his "voice," his "inner light," and that the "light" had told him to fast. He would begin the next morning and fast unto death, if necessary, to bring peace and harmony among Hindus, Moslems, and Sikhs. He would end his fast, he told the group, when peace was restored.

The followers who sat cross-legged on the floor about him, holding their palms together in prayer, stared at their teacher. He was too old, too frail!

"Let no friend or foe, if there be one, be angry with me," said Gandhi. "There are friends who do not believe in the method of fast for the reclamation of the human mind. A pure fast, like duty, is its own reward."

That night, after prayer meeting, he went to the home of G. D. Birla, a wealthy Indian textile manufacturer, who had long been an admirer of Gandhi's. Gandhi had decided to remain there for his fast. At Birla House the next morning Gandhi had his usual breakfast of goat's milk, vegetables, and fruit, and that was the last food he took, although he followed his usual program as long as his strength lasted: prayers, callers, letter writing.

Deep alarm traveled through India when the fast was

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announced, and there was a rush of people of every religious faith to persuade Gandhi not to risk his life. Some came weeping to his very bedside. Hindus, Moslems, Sikhs — they all loved Gandhi. Six days, said the doctors; six days was the longest the aged Gandhi could possibly survive without food.

So tremendous an effect did the news of his fast have that the stock exchanges in Calcutta and Bombay closed down, offices closed, windows were shuttered. India became a land of gloom and worry.

"Peace," said Gandhi.

"Six days at the most," the doctors said.

Suddenly there was a passionate burst of effort to make peace. All haste was necessary to save the Mahatma's life. There were peace parades, peace rallies, joint Hindu-Moslem meetings, prayers in mosques and temples.

By the fourth day of his fast, Gandhi was too weak to walk; crowds gathered outside of Birla House, some friendly, some hoping for his recovery, others shouting, "Let Gandhi die!" But those who cried for his death were not many; and those who worked feverishly to restore peace in India to save Gandhi's life were the great majority.

"Six days at the most," had been the doctors' verdict, and the miracle was happening. India was making peace with herself. Mobs stopped running through the streets smashing store windows and stealing merchandise. Hindus could enter their temples without being set upon by Moslems. Moslems could do the same. Refugees began to come timidly back to their villages from which they had fled in terror.

On the fifth day Gandhi gave out a statement of what he expected. He wanted Hindus and Moslems to guarantee each other's safety; he wanted them to respect the sanctity of each other's churches; he wanted them to grant each

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other the right to choose freely the city or village where they wished to live without fear of segregation. That was plain enough for anyone to understand.

On the sixth day of the fast, the last day the doctors believed he could live, a committee of Hindus, Moslems, and Sikhs came to Gandhi's bedside and promised harmony. They promised that they would do everything in their power to repair the terrible damage that had already been done to homes, mosques, and temples; they promised that they would help the refugees return to their homes; they promised that they would do their utmost to restore peace between Hindus and Moslems, between India and Pakistan.

"I believe you," said Gandhi.

With that he ended his fast by sipping his usual glass of orange juice.

"Don't forget your promises!" he warned them.

"No, no! Bapuji, there will be peace this time."

"I could not disbelieve their pledge," said Gandhiji later. "As I write, comforting telegrams are deluging me. How I wish that God will keep me fit enough and sane enough to render the service of humanity that lies in front of me! If the solemn pledge made today is fulfilled, I assure you that it will revive with redoubled force my intense wish and prayer before God that I should be enabled to live the full span of life doing service to humanity till the last moment. That span, according to learned opinion, is at least one hundred twenty-five years, some say one hundred thirty-three."

Immediately after the fast both India and Pakistan agreed to let the United Nations mediate their differences. Throughout India, peace and co-operation did begin to settle down.

The fast left Gandhi extremely weak, and he remained at Mr. Birla's house to recover. As soon as he was able to

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leave his bed he resumed his schedule. At first his followers had to carry him to prayer meeting in a chair, where he would sit huddled in homespun while hymns were sung. There before him was a microphone to carry his message everywhere. About the grounds of Birla Estate were crowds of worshipers who came every evening to hear him. Back to Birla House he would be carried when the prayer meeting was finished.

His fast had ended on the 17th of January, and by the end of the month he was strong enough to walk a short distance. He could stroll out into the beautiful gardens of the Birla Estate, leaning on the shoulders of two of his granddaughters, while world correspondents walked respectfully along with him, or photographers took pictures. Gandhi was world history, and every record, every picture, every spoken word was precious.

On the evening of the 30th of January, a few minutes past five o'clock, Mahatma Gandhi came out of Birla House. His sandaled feet moved over the green lawns and past the flower beds of Birla gardens toward the terrace where he usually conducted his prayer meetings. The terrace was really on the roof over the first-floor corridors, and Gandhi sat up there so that he could be seen by those who came to pray.

He walked slowly up the few steps leading to the terrace, and as he reached the top a young Indian approached him, making the usual sign of respectful greeting, holding the palms of his hands together and nodding his head forward. Gandhiji smiled and nodded to the young man. In the next instant the visitor had drawn a gun from beneath his clothing and fired three shots into Gandhi's body.

His palms together, a prayer on his lips — Hai Ram! — Gandhiji crumpled to the ground. Twenty-five minutes later he was dead.

The shots that struck Gandhi down stunned the hun-

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dreds that crowded the gardens for the prayer meeting and left them dazed and confused. The young Hindu who had assassinated their leader was seized and taken off to prison. He was a member of a radical organization, and he had never been able to understand Gandhi's teachings. His identity, even his fate, seemed unimportant when compared with the tragedy his hand had wrought.

Grief, deep sorrow, seized everyone who heard the news of Gandhi's death. Those who seldom or never wept were shaken with sobs and could do nothing but sit and mourn.

"Is it true? Can it be true? Has our Bapu been shot?"

Crowds gathered about Birla House; they filled the gardens, the terraces, the halls, and the staircases inside the house because they wanted one last glimpse of Gandhiji. He lay on his cot completely still, an expression on his face of supreme happiness, as though he had already gone on to the greater destiny that the Hindu scriptures promised to those who lived dutiful lives in this world. His disciples sat about him on the floor, unable to do anything but weep and wonder what would become of India.

After grief came fear, fear that the people of India would forget Gandhi's last message of peace, fear that the rioting and hatred would rise up again. It did not, though. The effect of Gandhi's death was to make both Hindus and Moslems want to keep the peace that he had created.

According to custom, Gandhiji's body was banked with flowers — red and white roses, jasmine blossoms, marigolds — and taken to the Jumna River, about six miles from Delhi, to be cremated. The Jumna River is as sacred as the Ganges, and where the two rivers unite near the city of Allahabad, Gandhi's ashes would be scattered on the waters.

A million people came to watch the procession that carried Gandhi to his funeral pyre. They waited reverently for his funeral to pass; some bowed their heads to the

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ground; some held their hands together in a gesture of prayer; some blew on conch shells or shouted, "Mahatma Gandhi ki jai!"

Gandhi's body was placed on a brick burning ghat (platform) at the river's edge, and under and around him were logs of sandalwood. As Moslem and Hindu hymns were chanted, Ramdas Gandhi, his third son, lighted the fire, for the fire must be lighted by a son of the dead man. Devadas Gandhi, the youngest son, attended the burning. As the flames mounted and enfolded India's liberator, the anguish of the great masses of people burst forth. Jawaharlal Nehru wept openly; so did Viscount and Lady Mountbatten.

Twelve days later Gandhi's ashes were carried in a flower-decked funeral train from Delhi to Allahabad. The journey was slow, and millions waited along the way to catch a last inspiration from their beloved Bapuji's spirit.

When the funeral train arrived at its destination where the Ganges and Jumna Rivers flow together, the jar of ashes was taken aboard a barge that put out into the center of the river. All along both banks waited more thousands and thousands of every faith and dress. The river banks were red-brown; the waters of the river were green-brown; the hot sky was slate blue.

About twenty chosen persons rode on the barge as it moved upstream, among them Pandit Nehru and Devadas and Ramdas Gandhi. Other boats followed with other guests.

Ramdas Gandhi tilted the urn and scattered his father's ashes upon the water. As he did so the thousands and thousands who waited upon the banks for this ceremony moved forward and waded out into the river to bathe themselves in its holy waters. Some scooped the water up in their hands and drank.

After the immersion of the ashes, Prime Minister Nehru came to the microphone and spoke:

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"The last journey is ended. The final pilgrimage has been made. . . . In his life as in his death there has been a radiance which will illumine our country for ages to come. Why then should we grieve for him? Let us grieve rather for ourselves, for our own weaknesses, for the ill will in our hearts, for our dissensions and for our conflicts. Remember that it was to remove all these that Mahatmaji gave his life. . . . He brought us freedom and the world marveled at the way he did it. . . . We shall never see Gandhiji again. . . . All of us felt as if we were his children. Rightly he was called the Father of our Nation and in millions of homes today there is mourning as on the passing away of a beloved father. . . . It was not for a few privileged persons that Gandhiji strove for and died for. We have to strive for the same ideal and in the same way. Then only shall we be worthy to say, 'Mahatma Gandhi ki jai!' "

The boats moved on; the ceremony was finished; and those who had traveled miles and miles to pay their last respects solemnly returned to their cities and villages, determined to follow Gandhi's teaching of love and nonviolence.

Mohandas K. Gandhi, the Mahatma, made many great gifts to India. The greatest of all his gifts was peace.

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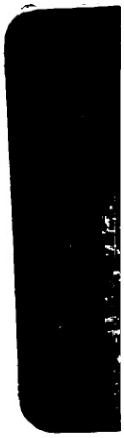

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