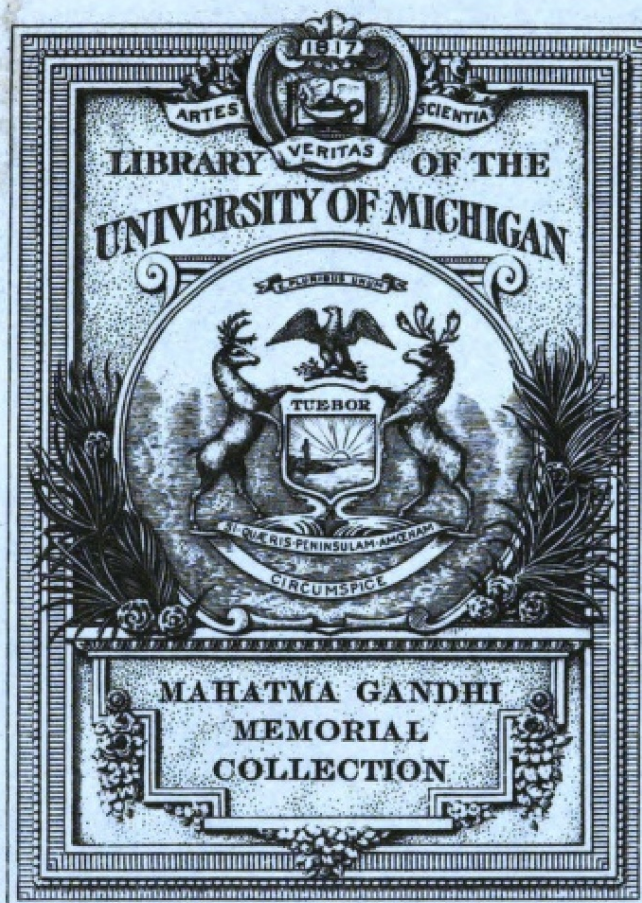


GANDHI'S STORY



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GANDHI'S STORY

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I. NEWS COMES TO SUNDERNAGAR.

Sundernagar, which means a beautiful place, is a little village just about ten miles from New Delhi, the capital of India. If you were to walk down the main lane of Sundernagar which winds past the clean mud huts where the villagers live, right past the village well, you would come to Paltoo's little hut. It is even smaller than the other huts for Paltoo is a very poor peasant. His field is tiny, but Paltoo loves and looks after it with great care, and when strangers come to Sundernagar, they always want to know to whom that neat little field belongs.

Paltoo has a grandson named Rama and a granddaughter named Sita who live with him and help him work in his field and take care of the village cows.

It was eight o'clock on a cold winter's night in January in the year 1948. The hush and silence of deep

sleep hung over Sundernagar for the villagers, tired after a long day's work in the fields, went to sleep soon after sunset and arose with the dawn.



The peace of the night was disturbed by a loud banging on the door of Munshiji, the village school master. Munshiji is a very important person in the village. Whenever anything unusual happens the villagers always go to him. Munshiji knows about everything. He can read and write English and he even reads newspapers from the big city. He has lived for some time in cities and understands the ways of the world.

It was through Munshiji that the inhabitants of Sundernagar first heard about India being ruled by the British and of the struggle for its independence. After the evening meal on cold winter nights, the villagers would cluster around the bonfire in the square right

in the heart of the village. They smoked the hukka, a big gurgling communal pipe, and chatted. Munshiji would then tell them how over two hundred years ago India, under the Moghul Emperor Aurangzeb, was weak and divided. The various princes who ruled in different parts of the country were always fighting each other and the Emperor was not strong enough to control them. Then came the foreigners, first to trade, then they began acquiring land and settling. They brought their soldiers with guns and cannons, and one by one they defeated the Indian princes and conquered their lands. Soon they became the rulers of India and they governed the country until 1947 when India at last got her freedom.

Before 1947, the country had become very poor, and the people had sunk very low, and there seemed to be no hope for gaining independence. Then came a man by the name of Mohandas Gandhi. He made the people of India take heart again. He showed them the way they could fight for their freedom against one of the most powerful empires that the world has ever known. He made the people of India believe in themselves. All this Munshiji had told them.

The loud knocking continued. Paltoo woke from his sleep and muttered to himself, "That must be Munshiji's door. I wonder who is trying to wake him at this hour? It must be urgent."

He could now hear excited voices outside, and then after a few minutes there was a loud knocking at his door. Lalloo's breathless voice shouted, "Wake up, Dada!" Dada is the Indian word for grandfather, and everybody in the village called Paltoo by that name.

Paltoo sprang up and opening the door asked anxiously, "What is it, Lalloo?"

Lalloo's face was pale in the lantern light he held in his hand. "They have killed our Gandhiji," he replied in a hushed voice.

"What are you saying, Lalloo?" Paltoo exclaimed.

"It is true, Dada. Krishna, the truck driver, brought us the news. He has just driven down from Delhi. He says it happened this evening. Here he comes. Let him tell you himself how it happened."

As Lalloo said this, Krishna emerged from the darkness. "Ram Ram, Dada," he said, saluting Paltoo with respect.

"Ram Ram," replied Paltoo. "What ill tidings do you bring us, son?"

"It is only too true, Dada. I wish it weren't."

"Tell us exactly how it happened," said Paltoo, his eyes wide with pain and horror.

"It was five o'clock this afternoon—the time for the prayer meeting. A large crowd had collected and was waiting for Gandhiji to start the prayers. He came out leaning on the shoulders of his two granddaughters

who walked on either side of him. Slowly they approached the crowd. Gandhiji smiled and greeted people as he walked to the platform on which he was to sit. As he was about to climb up the stairs to the platform, a young man sprang out from the side and stood facing him. His hands were raised as if in salutation. Gandhiji was about to acknowledge his greetings when three shots rang out in the air. Gandhiji folded his hands in prayer and fell to the ground with Ram Ram, the name of God, on his lips. For a few moments everybody was too stunned to realize what had happened. The murderer saw his opportunity and tried to get away, but somebody from the crowd leapt on him and held him fast. The people rushed to the spot where Gandhiji lay bleeding. They lifted him tenderly and carried him inside. He lay unconscious and never opened his eyes. After a few minutes he breathed his last."

There was silence. Nobody spoke for a while.

Paltoo sat with his face buried in his hands. He raised his head and sighed, "Ah, these are wicked times indeed if the life of one so holy is not safe. Surely the end of the world is near."

"They say Gandhiji knew he was going to die," continued Krishna. "He sent for all his papers and letters this morning and insisted that he should answer them and that no important matter be left undecided. He

also told somebody who came to see him that he did not think he was going to live long." Krishna paused and then added, "I must now hurry to the next village to break the news to them."

"Dada," said Lalloo, "we too must hurry. Krishna says that the funeral is tomorrow morning. We must start immediately if we want to get a last Darshan of our dear leader. Let me help you to get ready. Wake up, Sita! Wake up, Rama! We have a long journey ahead of us. I will get my bullock cart ready."

"Where are we going?" asked Rama and Sita in frightened voices heavy with sleep.

"To Delhi," replied Paltoo.

Outside there was a great deal of hurry and bustle and the sleepy village burst into activity. Lanterns were hurriedly lit and everyone hastily prepared for the journey. Soon the bullock carts were ready.

"We shall start now," said Paltoo. "Lalloo, lead the way and let the other carts follow behind yours."

Slowly the bullock carts moved forward in one long line.

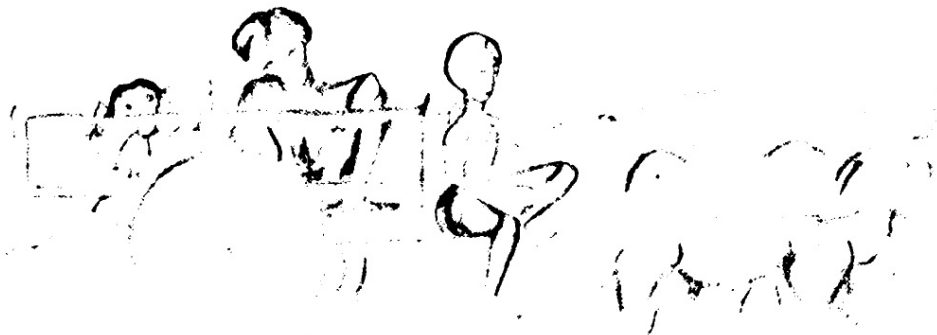
"You must be cold, little ones," said Paltoo to Rama and Sita. "Here, let me wrap these quilts around you and come closer to me. You must try and sleep as tomorrow will be a long and tiring day. What an evil day this is. Would that the sun had never risen on such a day."

“Dada,” said Sita, snuggling up to Paltoo, “we cannot sleep. Please tell us about Gandhiji. You say he was good and never hurt anyone. Why should someone want to kill him?”

“Ah, my little Sita,” said Paltoo sighing deeply, “in this wicked world it is the good who are in danger, for the evil are jealous of them.”

“Dada,” said Rama pressingly, “do tell us about Gandhiji. What was he like when he was little like Sita and me?”

Paltoo sighed another long sigh. “Very well,” he said, “I shall, for I see that both of you are wide awake and will not sleep. In our country few sleep tonight for our hearts are laden with sorrow.”



II. WHEN MOHAN WAS A CHILD

There once lived in the ancient town of Sudamapuri, which is now known as Porbandar (said Paltoo, clearing his throat), a man by the name of Kaba Gandhi. Kaba Gandhi was an important man in that state for he was Prime Minister there and helped the Maharaja or King to govern.

Kaba Gandhi had a little son whose name was Mohan. Mohan was a great favorite with his parents for he was their youngest child. His mother was a very saintly person. She observed all the religious festivals and spent a great deal of her time in prayer and fasting. Once she fasted every day of the Chaturmas, the four rainy months, vowing to take one meal a day only if she

saw the sun. Mohan often stood staring at the sky waiting anxiously for the sun to appear. As soon as it broke through the heavy black clouds, he would rush in to call his mother, but often by the time she came the sun had gone behind the clouds again. Mohan would look crestfallen. "Never mind," his mother consoled him cheerfully, "God did not want me to eat today," and with that she would return to her household duties.

As soon as Mohan was old enough he was sent to school, for his father wanted him to study hard and be a learned man.

When Mohan was seven the family moved to Rajkot, a nearby town, and he was sent to a new school there. Mohan was a very shy and timid child. He did not make friends easily and kept very much to himself at school. As soon as the lessons were over he would gather his books quickly and rush home. But in spite of this everybody liked him. He was a very truthful boy. He tried hard never to tell a lie or do anything deceitful. Once when the inspector was visiting the school he set a spelling test for the boys in Mohan's class. The teacher wanted to show the inspector what clever boys he had. He tried to tell the boys how to spell the words and made signs to them when the inspector was not looking to copy from each other's slates.

Mohan did not understand what the teacher was try-

ing to tell them. He was too simple and honest to cheat or to understand why somebody wanted him to cheat. The other boys did, however, and they received good marks while Mohan alone had mistakes.

When Mohan was still a young child he found a book telling the story of Shravana and his great love for his parents. The story of Shravana is well known in India and all children are told this story for it teaches them to love their mother and father—to serve them unselfishly. Both Shravana's parents were blind and he devoted his whole life to looking after them. Someone showed Mohan a picture of Shravana carrying his blind parents and he could not forget it. He decided to try and be like Shravana and serve his own parents unselfishly. His father gave him a harmonium, which is an instrument very like an organ, and Mohan soon learned to play the sad tunes telling Shravana's story.

Another legend that Mohan liked very much was the story of Raja Harishchandra. Harishchandra never told a lie and always kept a promise. He became known as a great saint of truthfulness. The gods wished to test him and did in many ways, and every time he proved his saintliness. They then had to accept his worthiness and the Lord Indra, the King of the Gods, came down to earth and carried him, his wife and child to Paradise.

Mohan got permission from his father to see a play

about Harishchandra. For days after that he acted each scene to himself over and over again. "I must try to be like Harishchandra and suffer endless hardships for truth," he told himself.

Now Mohan came from an old-fashioned and orthodox family and, when he was only a child, his father married him to a girl of his own age. Her name was Kasturbai. She was a sweet and simple girl. Mohan liked getting married only because everybody made a fuss of him and there was feasting and fireworks, but later on when he grew older he was to realize what an evil custom such child marriages were. Mohan's elder brother and a cousin were married at the same time, as a marriage in a Hindu home costs a lot of money and it was cheaper to have three weddings together.

The marriage took place in Mohan's former hometown, Porbandar, and the entire family had to go there some days ahead to make preparations. Kaba Gandhi, however, had important work and was delayed in Rajkot until three days before the marriage. In those days the journey from Rajkot to Porbandar took five days. Mohan's father had to do it in half the time in order to be on time for the wedding. He had therefore to drive very fast, and nearing Porbandar his coach toppled over and he was badly injured. But of course the wedding could not be put off and Kaba Gandhi had to attend it bandaged all over.

Mohan was now studying in the high school. Here he won prizes and was praised by the teachers. Mohan worked at his lessons but he did not like his gymnastic classes as that meant spending more time in school. He liked to get home as quickly as possible to his father who was not feeling well. His gymnastic teacher, however, was strict and insisted that Mohan attend these classes. One day Mohan was late for the class. He had no watch and had to judge the time by the sun, and that day it was cloudy. When he got to school, the class was over and the other boys had gone home. The next day the teacher sent for him and asked why he missed the class. Mohan explained to him, but the teacher thought he was lying and punished him for it. Mohan did not mind the punishment but he was very unhappy that the teacher had not believed him and had thought that he was lying.

Although Mohan did not like gymnastics, he took long walks in the open air and that is how he always managed to keep well.

III. BOYHOOD

As Mohan grew older he became a little less shy and made friends with the boys in his class. He had one special friend. They had a lot of fun together and were also up to mischief. At that time there were in Rajkot many young people who wanted to be modern and thought that they would be so if they imitated the ways of the Englishmen there. Mohan's friend, too, was full of these ideas and he said to Mohan, "We are a weak nation because we do not eat meat. Now look at these Englishmen. They are able to rule us because they are meat eaters. I eat meat and I am stronger than you. Why don't you also start eating meat?"

Mohan had always admired his friend very much for he was strong and daring. He was ashamed of his own fears of the dark, of ghosts and snakes and evil spirits. He longed to be like his friend and told him how he was afraid of these things.

"Once you start eating meat, all your fears will vanish," said his friend confidently. "Look at me," he boasted, "I can hold live serpents in my hand."

Mohan believed these stories and agreed to eat meat. One evening the two boys met at a lonely place by the river, and Mohan tasted meat for the first time. He tried hard to swallow it, but no sooner had he done that he was sick. That night he had the most frightening nightmares. He dreamed that live goats were bleating in his stomach.

His friend, however, was determined to make Mohan like meat. He coaxed him to try it again and he gave him some deliciously cooked delicacies. This time Mohan did not get sick. Soon he began liking meat and he and his friend had many such secret meetings when they feasted themselves by the lonely river bank. On these days his mother would wonder why he had no appetite for dinner, and Mohan would pretend that he was not well.

Mohan knew that his parents would be very upset if they ever learned that he had started eating meat, and the thought that he was deceiving them kept worrying him. One day he decided that while his parents were alive he would please them and not eat meat. His friend, of course, was disappointed by his decision but he realized that Mohan had made up his mind and would not change it easily.

Mohan had an uncle who was fond of smoking cigarettes. Mohan loved to watch him blow rings into the air. One day Mohan and his cousin, who was just about

his age, decided to smoke cigarettes like their uncle. They didn't have any money to buy the cigarettes so they picked up the stubs left behind by the uncle and smoked these. But the uncle became suspicious when he saw the stubs miraculously disappearing the moment he threw them away, so Mohan and his cousin had to think of another way to get cigarettes.

Why not take a few coppers from the box where Mother keeps the servants' pocket money, they thought. It was not difficult to creep into the room when no one was there and to take a few coppers out of the box. They began doing this quite often and felt proud of themselves for having at last broken away from the authority of their elders. It made them feel very important and brave.

Once when they were hiding behind a bush and smoking, the cousin said to Mohan, "Is it not an insult to our manhood that we cannot do anything without the permission of our parents? We are like slaves. Such a life is unbearable. Let us put an end to it."

"I agree," said Mohan solemnly, "but how shall we kill ourselves?"

For a while they sat and puzzled over the problem. Then the cousin said, "Listen, Mohan, there is a certain kind of berry which, if eaten in large quantities, can kill a person. Let us go to the forest and pick these."

So off they went to the forest and after collecting the berries they sat down to eat them. But they had only eaten one or two when their courage suddenly failed.

"Let us not do it," cried Mohan.

"I agree," said the cousin with much relief.

The two cousins ran back home feeling very ashamed of themselves and with firm resolves never to smoke or do anything against their parents' wishes.

Mohan had an elder brother who was quite different. He ate meat and spent a great deal of money on his pleasures. He soon got into debt. Mohan heard about this and he wondered how he could clear his brother's debt. His brother wore a gold armlet on his arm. Mohan decided to take a piece of gold from this armlet to pay back the debt. One day his brother left the arm-

let lying on a table, Mohan quickly removed a piece from it and later gave it to the person to whom his brother owed money.

No one, of course, knew what Mohan had done, not even the brother. But Mohan was troubled by the thought that he had deceived his father, so he decided to confess his guilt. He wrote a very touching letter telling his father the whole story and asking to be punished for stealing and also promising never to do it again.



Kaba Gandhi was not well at that time and was in bed. Mohan came into his room very timidly and handed him the letter. Kaba Gandhi sat up and opened it. Large tears filled his eyes as he read it. Without a word he tore the paper into pieces and lay back on his bed. Mohan watched his father anxiously. He

knew that Kaba Gandhi had a quick temper and Mohan expected him to get very angry. But when his father kept absolutely silent, Mohan saw that he had been forgiven. This peaceful and loving way of forgiving made a deep impression on him. It filled his boyish heart with remorse and great love. From his father's attitude Mohan learned his first lesson in Ahimsa—conquest through love.

As the days went by Kaba Gandhi became more and more ill, and after a time he could not leave his bed at all. Mohan was always near his father's bedside and became his loving and gentle nurse. He would hurry back from school to look after his father and in the evenings he would sit by his father's side massaging his tired and frail body until late in the night.

Late one night when he had finished massaging his father, his uncle persuaded him to get some rest. He had scarcely been in bed a few minutes when a servant knocked on the door. Mohan leaped up and asked what it was.

“Your father is no more.”

Mohan rushed to his father's room. He had died in his uncle's arms. Mohan couldn't forgive himself for not having been present.

Mohan had an old nurse who had looked after him ever since he was born. Her name was Rambha. Rambha loved Mohan as if he were her own child. She

was the one person from whom Mohan had no secrets. Even when he tried to keep back something from her Rambha's loving and watchful eyes would see it, and as soon as she could get him alone she would put her arms around him and say, "Come, Mohan, tell me what is troubling you," and Mohan would find himself pouring out his heart to her. After he had finished, Rambha would smile wisely and give him advice.

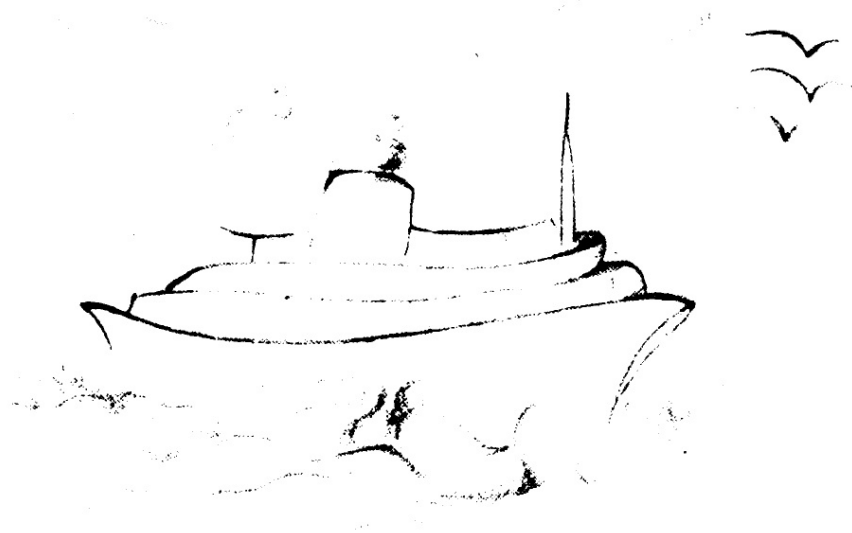
Mohan had told her about his fears of the dark and of evil spirits that roamed at night.

"You will not be afraid if you read the *Ramayan* and take the name of the Lord," said Rambha. It was through Rambha that Mohan first started reading the *Ramayan*. He soon learned to recite many of its verses, and at night when he was afraid he said them to himself.

When Mohan's father was alive, the house was always full of visitors. Kaba Gandhi was very broad-minded and had many friends of different religions. He would invite them to his house and, after the fashion of the great Indian Emperor Akbar, he and his friends would have lively discussions about religion.

Mohan was sometimes allowed to be present in the room during these discussions. He would sit quietly in a corner and listen to them. Sometimes the words they used were difficult and some of the things they said were hard to understand. But Mohan took in every

word, and when the guests left he would ask his father to explain the things he could not understand. He remembered these talks when he was very much older, and they taught him to see the good in every religion and to respect other peoples' beliefs and faiths.



IV. ACROSS THE OCEAN

Mohan now passed his examinations and was ready to go to college. His mother and older brother wondered which college they should send him to, and they asked Mavji, a shrewd and learned Brahmin priest who was an old family friend, for his advice. Mavji suggested that Mohan be sent to England to study law. Mohan was excited at the idea of traveling to foreign lands, but his mother was upset for she did not want him to go to a country far away where he might easily be led astray. However, Mohan eventually persuaded her to let him go and in return promised never to drink wine or eat meat while he was away.

The news that Mohan was going to England created quite a stir in Rajkot, for very few Indians crossed the

seas in those days. Mohan's school friends gave him a big send-off party just before he left for Bombay to board the boat for England.

There were, however, a great many old-fashioned people who did not approve of Mohan going to England. They said it was against his caste and they tried to stop him from going. This did not weaken Mohan's decision, and one fine day he boarded a steamer from Bombay and sailed for England.

Mohan was on his own for the first time in his life and he was a little frightened and bewildered. He rarely came out of his cabin and even had all his meals there for he did not know the western way of eating at a table with a fork and knife. After some days he felt a little less shy and made friends with an Englishman who tried to persuade him to eat meat. But Mohan would not break his promise to his mother.

At last the voyage came to an end and Mohan reached London where he stayed with an English family. He was lost and confused in this enormous city, and the manners and customs of its people were strange to him.

In London, Mohan met a young Indian doctor and they soon became good friends. The doctor had been in England for some time and he was very smart and modern. He dressed in English clothes and Mohan tried to be like him. He started wearing English

clothes and imitating the manners and fashions of the English. He spent a great deal of time and money on all this. He also took lessons in dancing.

In spite of all these extra expenses Mohan was careful never to spend more than what his family sent him, and after a while he decided to give up these fashionable ways and to lead a simple life. He saved money by moving into a smaller room where he could cook his own meals on a stove. He decided it was more healthy as well as cheaper to walk to a place than to go by bus.

Although Mohan met many people he was still a very shy person. Once, he was asked to make a speech at a lunch party. He had prepared the speech some days ahead, but when the time came to make it he became very nervous and forgot every word of it.

After spending four years in England, Mohan took the law examination which he passed. He was now a full-fledged lawyer and he decided to return home to practice in the courts there.

On November twelfth in the year 1891, Mohan sailed home. At that time of year the sea is very rough and stormy. Mohan, however, was a very good sailor and while all the other passengers were sick and had to stay in their cabins Mohan did not mind it at all. Often he was the only one in the dining room. He liked standing on deck and watching the waves splash with fury against the side of the ship.

V. IN SOUTH AFRICA

Mohan's elder brother had come to Bombay to meet him. The doctor friend whom he had met in England had returned home earlier and was living in Bombay. He persuaded Mohan and his brother to come and stay with him for a few days.

Mohan was very glad to be back home, but bad news awaited him. His brother told him that his mother was dead. She had died when Mohan was in England, but the family had not told him the sad news as they knew how sad he would be alone in a foreign land.

After spending a few days in Bombay, Mohan and his brother went to Rajkot. Mohan was happy to be home again with his wife and his little son. But home-coming was not the same now that his mother was no more.

Soon after his return, Mohan started to work. He was determined to do well as a lawyer.

One day a big Indian firm asked him if he could go to South Africa as their lawyer. Mohan readily accepted the offer as he was promised a large fee. He was sad to leave his wife and family once again, but he thought that it would be for just a few months. Mohan did not know then that this trip to South Africa was not to be a short one and that it was going to change the course of his whole life.

During his stay in that country he saw the sufferings and hardships his fellow countrymen were enduring there. He was sad to see that the Indians in South Africa, instead of fighting unitedly against injustice, were divided among themselves. He decided that he would try and bring them together to fight for their rights. He organized them into a society which he called the Natal Indian Congress. He also appealed to the Indians at home to help their countrymen in South Africa by working in India.

His work in South Africa gave fresh hope to the downtrodden Indians there, and he became their leader. They called him by many affectionate names. Some addressed him as Gandhiji. In India when you want to be respectful, you add *ji* at the end of a person's name. He was also known as Bapu, which means Father. From now on we shall call him Gandhiji as

that is what he is called by most Indians. When Gandhiji wanted to return home, his countrymen in South Africa appealed to him to stay on, for without him they were lost. Gandhiji agreed and decided to go home only to bring his family to South Africa.

While he was in India, trouble broke out again in South Africa and Gandhiji hurried back with his wife and children. Some of the South Africans disliked him, for they knew that if it were not for him the Indians there would never have claimed their rights. When his ship came into Natal, a port in South Africa, a large and furious mob of people tried to prevent him from landing. They threw brickbats and stones at him and injured him very badly. They would have killed him had not a brave English woman come to his rescue. When this woman saw Gandhiji lying on the ground and the people beating him mercilessly, she rushed there and stood before him. With the help of others Gandhiji was then carried to a friend's house nearby. Soon the crowd of hooligans gathered round the house and demanded that Gandhiji should be handed over to them; otherwise they would set the house on fire.

Gandhiji was anxious for the safety of his friends and Kasturbai and his sons who were in this house with him. He agreed to disguise himself as a policeman. The disguise was so clever that when he slipped out of the house nobody was able to recognize him.

The South African government wanted to punish the people who had attacked Gandhiji, but Gandhiji asked them not to. He said they did not know what they were doing. In spite of the way he had been treated, Gandhiji spent many years in South Africa uniting the Indians, asking them to help each other and encouraging them to fight side by side for their rights.

He returned to India once after six years and there he met those who then led the Indian people. These men, too, seeing the suffering of their countrymen and the pitiable condition of the country, had formed a body called the Indian National Congress and were trying to persuade the British government to restore the country to its inhabitants. They had watched Gandhiji's work in South Africa with admiration and when he came home they welcomed him in their midst and he became a member of the Congress Party. He did not know then that he was in time to be its leader, and that this very National Congress Party was destined to become a very powerful organization which would gain India her freedom.

Gandhiji did not stay long in India. The Indians in South Africa needed him once again and he rushed back to them.

Although Gandhiji led a very busy life in South Africa, he always found time to read the holy scrip-

tures. To save time he wrote out some of the verses from the Bhagvad Gita, one of the famous books of the Hindu religion, on a piece of paper and pasted this paper on the wall in front of his wash basin. In the morning while he was washing and dressing he would learn these verses by heart. He soon memorized a great part of the book in this way.

It may surprise you to know that, although Gandhiji fought for the rights of Indians in South Africa, he remained loyal to the British who ruled there as in India. When the Dutch settlers in South Africa fought a war against the British, Gandhiji and his followers joined on the side of the British. Another time, when the Zulus, an African tribe, rebelled, Gandhiji helped the British and nursed those who had been wounded.

The Indians of South Africa now decided to have a paper of their own. They called it *Indian Opinion* and asked Gandhiji to be the editor. He thought it would be fine to have the offices of the paper on a farm where everyone who worked on the paper would also help with the farm. The idea was tried and worked so well that a friend gave Gandhiji a present of another farm very much larger. He named this "Tolstoy Farm" after the great Russian writer of those days who also believed in a simple and natural life.

The life on the farm was very, very simple. The people who lived there did all their own work. There were

many little children with their fathers and mothers and they too had to work. Among the children were Gandhiji's four sons. They, along with the other chil-



dren, helped to look after the orchards and the garden. Since there were no schools nearby, Gandhiji became their school master. These children were of different religions—Hindus, Christians, Parsis and Mohamme-

dans—but Gandhiji taught them to think of each other as brothers and sisters. They celebrated the festivals of the different religions. In the month of Ramzan, the Mohammedan festival, when the children had to fast till the sunset, the Hindu and the Parsi children would cook the evening meal and prepare all kinds of delicacies for the children who had to fast.

There were also some very naughty children living in the farm who were always up to mischief. Once a little boy refused to listen to Gandhiji and was very disobedient. Gandhiji got angry with him and rapped him on the knuckles with a ruler. Later Gandhiji was sorry that he had done this as he did not believe in punishing boys and girls in this way. He thought that if a teacher wanted his pupils to be good he must first make his own character blameless and set an example to them, and then they would follow him.

Once two people living in the farm behaved very badly, and Gandhiji decided to atone for their sins by fasting himself for a whole week. Gandhiji believed that as he was the father of all these people, it was his fault if they did anything wrong and that he was to blame. Everybody in the farm was, of course, very upset to see their leader not taking any food for seven whole days, and the two people who had behaved badly felt worst of all. They resolved never again to do anything which Gandhiji would consider wrong. Some

years later when Gandhiji returned to India and joined the struggle for his country's freedom, he went on many fasts for much longer periods, and these fasts played an important part in the achievement of India's freedom.

Just about this time the people who ruled in South Africa decided to pass laws which would make the lot of the Indian people there even harder. Gandhiji and his followers were determined to resist these laws peacefully, for Gandhiji did not believe in violence and he did not want his followers to believe in it either. It was here in South Africa that Gandhiji first tried his method of resisting one's opponents peacefully. This new way was later called Satyagraha. *Satya* means truth and *graha* means firmness, and the whole word means conquering the heart of the enemy by truth and love.

During this struggle Gandhiji was arrested and had his first taste of jail life. He was released after two months. He decided to go to England to appeal to the government there to help the oppressed peoples of South Africa, but nothing came of this trip. So he returned to South Africa and started preparing for another peaceful struggle. This time he asked the women to join too, and Kasturbai along with the other women joined the campaign and went to prison.

Gandhiji was arrested several times. In spite of all this the fight went on, and finally the rulers of South

Africa had to give in, and the unfair laws were abolished. Gandhiji's movement came to a victorious end. He had shown and proved to the world how it was possible to win without using force.

Gandhiji's work in South Africa had been successful so he told the people there to carry on, and he decided to return home. He first went to London, and while he was there a great war broke out. This war, which was later called World War I, was cruel and bloody, and many people on both side were wounded and killed.

Gandhiji asked all Indians to help on the side of the British. He himself helped to nurse the wounded. For the brave work he did, the British Government gave him a medal. After a few months in England, Gandhiji returned to India.



VI. LIFE IN AN ASHRAM

Gandhiji was very happy to be back in India after so many years away from home. He felt that India would need every one of her sons in the struggle for her rights and her freedom. He decided, however, not to take any part in politics at first, but to wait for the right time and opportunity. So he started an Ashram, or abode of rest, on the outskirts of a big industrial city named Ahmedabad near the west coast of India. This Ashram was somewhat like the settlements and farms he had in South Africa. He knew that the greater number of people in India live the simple life of villagers. He thought that if he led the same life he would be near to the people and become one of them. In his Ashram everybody learned to make themselves useful and do things for themselves.

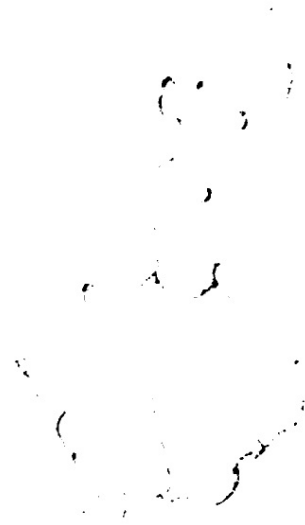
In the Ashram there were no luxuries whatsoever. Here the poor and the rich were treated absolutely alike, and everyone had to work. As on the farms in South Africa, there were also children living in the Ashram and they were taught to work and to spin yarn

on a wheel called the charkha so that they could make their own clothes. In addition to learning how to spin, he wanted the boys and girls to learn other useful things like carpentry and farming so that when they grew up they would be able to earn their own living.

The people who lived in the Ashram had to promise that they would always tell the truth, that they would not hurt anybody, even their enemies, but try instead to win the hearts of all with love and understanding and, most important of all, that they would treat all men as equals. Now in India there were a number of people called untouchables. These people did the great and noble work of keeping the towns and villages clean but because they did the work of scavengers many people, especially the high caste Hindus, had come to think that these people were unworthy of mixing with others. Gandhiji told them that this was not right. In his Ashram he insisted that everybody also do this work, so that people realized that by doing a particular kind of work one does not change, or become inferior.

One day a man, a woman and a little girl called Laxshmi, who belonged to the scavenger class, came to stay with Gandhiji in the Ashram. Gandhiji and his followers became very fond of this family, especially of little Laxshmi, and treated them just like themselves. This had never been done before and a great many

people were shocked, including some rich men of Ahmedabad who had liked the idea of Gandhiji having an Ashram nearby and had given him money for the Ashram. These men became so angry with Gandhiji that they refused to give him more money.



Gandhiji and the other inmates of the Ashram were worried, as they did not know how they could carry on their work and look after and feed everybody who lived there without the help of these rich men. They were determined, however, that no matter what happened they would not give in to these prejudices and ask Laxshmi and her father and mother to leave. One day, as Gandhiji sat in his room wondering how he could manage without any money, one of the children came and told him that an unknown man had come in a car to see him. Gandhiji went out to see who it was,

but it was nobody he knew. The strange man said to him, "I want to help your Ashram. Will you accept some money?"

"Oh, most certainly," replied Gandhiji, hardly believing his ears.

"Good," said the stranger, "I shall return just about this time tomorrow and will bring the money with me." Having said that, he drove away in his big car.

The next day at exactly the same time the strange man returned to the Ashram as he had promised. He sent for Gandhiji again and without saying anything handed him an enormous packet of currency notes. Before Gandhiji could thank him for it or even ask him his name, he drove away in his car and Gandhiji never saw him again. There was great joy and celebration in the Ashram that day, and everybody assembled in the place of prayer to offer thanks to God for the help he had sent in this unexpected way. And now little Laxshmi could stay on in the Ashram and have enough food and clothes and learn to read and write no matter what the rich men of Ahmedabad might do.

Gandhiji could not, however, remain for very long in the peace and shelter of his Ashram. His country needed him, and he had to travel all over India trying to persuade the rich to help the poor.

On these journeys Gandhiji always travelled third class, which was the cheapest way. He said that since

most of the people of India could only travel third class he too must do the same. This meant a great deal of discomfort. A third class compartment in India is most uncomfortable and not too clean. There are always too many people in it, and often it is impossible to get room even to sit. Sometimes, it is so overcrowded that there are people hanging out of the doors and windows. Gandhiji insisted that what was good enough for other people was good enough for him. Everywhere he went he tried to improve the lot of the poor and the lowly. He was so loved that people began calling him the Mahatma or Great Soul, and this is what he is still called by some in India.

Gandhiji also asked the Indian people to help the British in the great World War that was being fought in Europe. He believed that the British were fighting for the rights and freedom of the world and of all men, and it was India's duty to help them. One day the Viceroy of India, who represented the King of England and was an exceedingly important person, asked Gandhiji to address a meeting where he was going to be present himself. This meeting was being held to persuade the people of India to help in the war and to join the army. Gandhiji accepted the Viceroy's invitation but when he got up to make his speech he spoke, not in English, but in Hindustani, the national language of India. This was the very first time that any Indian had the

courage to speak in his own language when the Vice-roy was present.

Gandhiji worked so hard to get more and more young men to join the army and fight that he fell very ill and the doctor who was looking after him became worried. He wanted him to drink plenty of milk and to put on weight. Some time earlier Gandhiji had taken a vow that he would not drink cow's milk as he loved animals and felt it was cruel the way the poor cows in India were drained of the last drop of milk.



Kasturbai, his wife, heard the doctor tell Gandhiji to drink milk and she knew that he would never break his vow. She wondered what could be done. Suddenly it struck her Gandhiji had vowed never to take cow's milk. It would therefore not be breaking his vow if he drank goat's milk!

Eagerly, she asked the doctor, "Goat's milk would do, would it not, doctor?"

"Yes, of course," replied the doctor.

Gandhiji smiled at Kasturbai's cleverness and he had to admit that he would not be breaking his vow that way, and that is how Gandhiji began taking goat's milk which soon made him well and strong. From then onwards, Kasturbai insisted that he always drink goat's milk.



Although Kasturbai loved Gandhiji dearly, she had a will of her own and often quarreled with him but, if she found that she was in the wrong, she was not afraid to admit it and change her views. In her father's home she was used to a very different kind of life from that she led with her husband. At first she found it difficult

to live the simple and hard life and she missed the luxuries of her father's house. Like every young girl, she liked beautiful clothes and jewelry. Gandhiji believed it was wrong for people to have these things when there were so many people in the world who starved. One day he gave away Kasturbai's jewelry, and when Kasturbai found what he had done she wept like a child. Later on, when Gandhiji explained to her why he had done it, she realized that he was right and she herself gave away the rest of her jewelry to the poor and the needy.

Kasturbai was the mother of four sons. She adored her children and wanted them to have the best of everything. She was hurt when she saw that Gandhiji made no difference between them and anybody else's children, but gradually she came to realize what a good and beautiful thing it was to love everybody alike.

VII. THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

In 1918, World War I came to an end. All the Indians who had helped the British in the war and the many soldiers who returned after fighting bravely felt that as a reward for their loyal support their country should be given its freedom. But they found the British were not yet willing to do this. The soldiers found that conditions at home were even worse than before, and that they did not have any jobs to which to turn. Indians now began agitating for Home Rule, and all over the country meetings were held where fiery speeches were made and the British asked to give India her freedom. Now, instead of the British government trying to understand India's troubles, they tried to force on the country a very harsh law.

Once again the people turned to Gandhiji to show them the way to oppose this law. Gandhiji himself felt that the British government had gone too far and that the time had come for action. He was not sure what should be done and was puzzled. One morning he woke up earlier than usual and while he was still doz-

ing an idea came to him. Why not ask Indians all over the country to have a general strike on a chosen day? On this day every shop, office, factory and mill should be closed. The workers should refuse to work and normal life should cease. The people should collect in public places and declare their displeasure at the law peacefully and without violence. The strike would be called a Hartel.

On the day that Gandhiji chose for this strike, however, something terrible happened in a town in the north of India called Amritsar. Responding to Gandhiji's instructions, thousands of people had gathered in a park surrounded by a high wall. British soldiers fired on these defenseless people who could not escape, for the only way out was blocked by a firing squad of soldiers. Large numbers of innocent people were mowed down by British guns. Then a wave of terror spread over the Punjab which was now under martial law. The news of what had happened made Indians want their freedom more than ever. Hindus and Mohammedans rallied round Gandhiji.

When Gandhiji heard of the terrible happenings in the Punjab and of the cruel way in which the agitation was being suppressed there, he felt that he must go immediately and explain to those who had suffered that all their sacrifices had not been in vain, even though the future looked dark. When the government

heard that Gandhiji was thinking of going to the Punjab, they issued an order forbidding him to do so. Gandhiji, however, decided to take no notice of this order and he started for the Punjab. As his train neared the borders of the province he was arrested by the police and brought back to Bombay where he was set free.

The news of Gandhiji's arrest strengthened the determination of the people to resist. But in some places they forgot about his message of peace and they attacked officials. When Gandhiji heard of these incidents he was very unhappy and he wondered if he had not started the fight too soon. He now realized that the people did not understand completely what he meant by satyagraha or peaceful resistance, so he decided to tell them more about it through his writings. He started two papers called *Young India* and *Navjivan* which means new life. His writings in these papers greatly helped the people and gave them fresh hope and understanding.

It was at this time Gandhiji returned the medals to the British government that he had received for his work with the wounded during the Boer War and World War I. He felt he could not accept any honors from a government that he had decided to fight. Other people followed his example and returned whatever honors, titles and medals they had received.

Gandhiji now decided to give India a flag of her own. So far the Union Jack, the flag of England, had been flown in India, but Gandhiji saw that now that India was fighting for her independence she must have a flag which would become the symbol of her fight. The

colors he chose for the flag were orange, white and green. Each one of these colors stood for something. The white stood for the minorities, the orange for the majority community, the Hindus, and the green for the Mohammedans. Right in the center of the flag there was a charkha or spinning wheel. Gandhiji believed that it was through the charkha that the poor

would have enough to eat and wear and therefore he insisted on having it on the flag. Thousands of such flags were flown all over the country.

The national party was determined that it would not rest until it had achieved complete freedom for India. No matter what the government did, it could not stop the agitation which kept gathering force day by day and soon spread throughout the length and breadth of India, right to the smallest village. It seemed as if India was on the verge of achieving her freedom. Gandhiji wrote an open letter to the Viceroy in which he gave him just seven days to announce a change of government by which India would rule herself.

Everybody now waited in suspense for the Viceroy's reply. In the meantime in a little village called Chauri Chaura a crowd of peasants set fire to the police station and burned to death thirty-three policemen. When Gandhiji heard of this, he called a halt and suspended the campaign. "If we are going to get our freedom by violence," he said, "then it is not worth having."

Many people were dismayed by Gandhiji's decision, but he had made up his mind. He felt that since he had started it all, he was to blame for what had just happened and so he decided to go on a twenty-one day fast as a form of penance.

The people of India had still not completely understood Gandhiji's message of love and peace, and even

the men of the Congress were shaken in their unquestioning faith in his judgment. They were still to see how wise Gandhiji was. Gandhiji believed very sincerely that the only victory that was worth having was when one won the heart of one's enemy through love and self-sacrifice. He also realized that for a disarmed country like India this was the only way she could win her freedom, for Britain was so much more powerful. He knew that Hinduism, the religion of the majority of Indians, taught the beauty and greatness of suffering and he realized that this moral strength that came so naturally to Indians was his strongest weapon. However, Gandhiji was a very fair person and when he saw that even the men of the Congress disagreed with his decision he felt that he must not force his own views on the people and so he left politics and went back to his Ashram.

No sooner had he done this than the government saw its chance and arrested him. They put him into prison for six years. The jail officials wanted to treat Gandhiji as a special prisoner and to let him have privileges which the other prisoners did not, but Gandhiji refused to be treated any differently from the others. The only privilege he did accept was that he should have goat's milk to drink, and so some goats were specially brought and kept in the jail for this purpose.

Gandhiji used his time in jail to dictate to a fellow prisoner his autobiography which was later published and read all over the world, for by now his fame had spread to the four corners of the earth. The helpless and the downtrodden everywhere looked to him as



their savior. Gandhiji dictated his book first in the language spoken in his own province, and it was then translated into English and many other foreign languages.

In this manner two years went by. Gandhiji always said that when he was in jail he got a chance to think deeply and to meditate and did not mind the hardships of prison life at all. One night he fell very ill and when the doctor was sent for he said that Gandhiji had to be

operated upon immediately for appendicitis. Since there were no lights in the hospital where he was taken, the doctor had to do the operation by torch light. Half way through the operation the torch failed and the rest of the operation had to be done with the nurse holding a hurricane lamp for the doctor to see. It was by a miracle that Gandhiji survived. He was very weak after it, and the British government decided to release him.

On coming out of prison, Gandhiji found that Mohammedans and Hindus had drifted apart and were again squabbling amongst themselves. This broke his heart and, in spite of his poor health, he went on a twenty-one day fast. As the days went by and he continued his fast, his strength started failing and his life was in danger. When people saw how he was prepared to give his life to bring them together, they felt ashamed of their actions and promised not to let religious differences come in the way of their unity and their country's freedom.

VIII. BACK TO THE VILLAGE

All this made Gandhiji realize that he must turn away from politics and go back to the people in the villages. He knew that his real work lay there. Before India could achieve her freedom, her people must first be worthy of it. He left it to the men of the Congress Party to fight for India's freedom through politics. He saw the sad state of the masses and the poverty; the degradation and the suffering of his people made his heart bleed. He sought desperately to weld them into a fine and noble people. He became a champion of the poor and lowly. He appealed to the rich to show more fellow feeling for their poorer brethren. And it was for these downtrodden people that he worked, and "out of dust he made them men."

He first set out to make the people forget that they belonged to different religions, for how could India ever be a nation if the Hindus and Mohammedans were always quarreling over their religious difference and killing each other? Gandhiji had learned from his father that there was good in every religion for all

religions led to God, and he wanted to make the people of India see this. Hindu-Mohammedan unity now became Gandhi's life mission. He implored the Hindus to show more tolerance and friendliness to the Mohammedans, for they could afford to since there were almost four times more Hindus in India than Mohammedans. He went from village to village wherever there was trouble between the Hindus and Mohammedans, and he asked them to unite and be one. Once some Hindus accused him of being too much for the Mohammedans and he said to them, "It should be a matter of pride to you Hindus to think that there was amongst you at least one mad Gandhi who was not only just to the Mohammedans but even went out of his way in giving them more than their due."

He tried to point out to the Hindus the true spirit of their religion which taught forgiveness, sacrifice and tolerance. He asked them to follow their religion more closely and to show the same tolerance to other classes of society such as the untouchables or scavengers. He said that no true Hindu should treat the scavenger class as untouchables, and that doing a particular kind of work did not make a man different or inferior. He thought the others should be grateful to these people for keeping their homes, towns and villages clean. He called the scavengers, Harijans, which means the peo-

ple of God, because their life and work was one of service, love and sacrifice. He asked the Hindus to treat them as equals and to open their temples to them. They must all try to be good Indians and not feel that any one of them was superior or inferior.



Kasturbai also shared this prejudice against the scavengers. She came from an orthodox Hindu family and had been brought up to believe that these people were lower than she. Gandhiji tried hard to make Kasturbai overcome her prejudice and sometimes he

was a little harsh with her. He made her do the work of a scavenger just to prove that she was wrong. At first Kasturbai wept many bitter tears, but eventually she realized that she was wrong, and she not only treated untouchables like everybody else, but she also adopted a little untouchable girl as her daughter.

Hindus all over the country listened to Gandhiji's appeal to come together, and in some places the temples where the scavengers had not been allowed to enter were open to them. Gandhiji saw that the Harijans, unless they were educated, would remain backward. He therefore asked the rich to give him money for the Harijans and with the money he built schools and hospitals. Even little children saved their money and gave it to Gandhiji to buy things for the children of the scavengers.

Gandhiji next turned to help the women of India. He tried to make them feel that they too had an important role to play in shaping the future of their country. The Indian woman had lost the honored and respected position she had held in ancient India. She too had become one of the forgotten and unwanted. She was weak and helpless. Gandhiji, who was always a friend of the downtrodden, stretched out his hand to raise her and restore her to her rightful place in society.

A young girl complained to him about the difference of treatment between the sons and daughters in

an Indian home. She ended by saying, "Would not you be wild if you were a girl?"

Gandhiji sympathized with her and smilingly said that he did not have to be a girl to feel strongly against the unfair way Indian women were treated.

Once when he was addressing a gathering he noticed that on one side of the hall there was a large screen behind which the women sat, for in India then many women wore the veil and could not appear in public without it. This is called the purdah. Because of this, Indian women remained backward for they could not mix freely with other people and they could not go to school and college. Therefore, Gandhiji wanted to abolish the veil, and the sight of the screen made him very sad. That day when he spoke to the people who had come there he said, "Why do not our women enjoy the same freedom that men do? Why should they not be able to walk out and have fresh air? What we are doing to our women and what we are doing to the untouchables partly accounts for our weakness, indecision, narrowness and helplessness. Let us then tear down the purdah with one mighty effort."

He asked the women of India to cast aside their shackles and to raise their heads. On them depended the future of India. They must educate themselves first of all, and they must come out in the world and demand their rights. They must not be just ornaments

to decorate the home. He asked them to throw in their lot with the other oppressed people of India—with the starving millions. They adorned their bodies with gold and silver ornaments worth a great deal of money. Was it right for them to do this when so many of their countrymen and women went hungry and died of starvation? "Give me your ornaments," he said, "so that with them I can buy food for the poor. Your real ornament is your character, not the jewels that you put on."

Many women who came to listen to him took off their jewels and gave them to him. A young girl sent him her few and only valuables and she wrote, "I cannot wear these jewels any more, not after what you said about the starving masses of India when you were here. Are not these jewels made out of the people's money? Use them to help some of the starving."

Once when he had finished speaking to a large gathering of people a girl of sixteen shyly walked up to him and, taking off her gold bangle from her hand, she asked him, "Will you give me your autograph for this?"

Gandhiji said "Yes" and was writing it when the girl, whose name was Kaumudi, began removing the gold bangle from her other hand. Gandhiji said to her, "You do not have to give me both. I shall give you my signature for one bangle only."

Kaumudi did not reply but silently handed him the

second bangle, and then removed her gold necklace and earrings and gave them to Gandhiji. Gandhiji drew Kaumudi to him and said with great affection, "This is very generous of you, Kaumudi, but have you your parents' permission, for without that I cannot accept your ornaments?"

"Yes," she replied softly, "I got my father's permission before I came here."

"But will not your decision not to wear ornaments make your mother sad?" asked Gandhiji, for in India every young girl wears ornaments.

"Yes," replied Kaumudi, "my mother is sad but she will not forbid me to give them to you."

"And when you grow older and get married, will not your husband also want you to wear them?" asked Gandhiji.

Kaumudi's big black eyes became thoughtful and then she replied, "I will select a husband who will not compel me to wear ornaments."

Gandhiji's face glowed with delight at her reply. He put his arm around her and said, "I had Annapurna, another girl like you. She was married and she discarded all her jewelry. She even gave me her wedding ring. She devoted her life to the poor and worked for them, but the work was too hard for her frail little body. She died but a few weeks ago, and I lost my most valiant worker. Now I have you."

Another time Menakshi, a girl of seventeen, came to see him. She was wearing a great number of ornaments. "Who are you?" Gandhiji asked her.

"I am a little girl," she replied.

"What has a little girl to do with jewelry?" he asked her.

Menakshi promptly replied, "Because I want to remain a girl."

Gandhiji then told her all about Annapurna and Kaumudi. After listening to him, Menakshi said, "I too would like to give my jewelry to the poor. Will you take it?"

"Yes," said Gandhiji, "but you must first get your parents' permission."

That day Menakshi went back home and told her parents that she would like to give her jewelry to Gandhiji. Her father then explained to her that she could not do this. The family was in debt. They had not sold Menakshi's jewels so far only because it was considered unlucky for a girl to be without any ornaments, but if Menakshi was not going to wear these ornaments any more they must be sold to clear the debts.

Menakshi was tearful and her father, seeing her unhappy, told her that she could take a gold bangle and a necklace to give to Gandhiji. The next day when Menakshi went to Gandhiji with the bangle and neck-

lace Gandhiji, who knew of the debt, returned them and said, "Let your father pay his debts first, Menakshi. It is enough for me to know that you will never wear any ornaments while there are hungry and poor people in your country."



IX. "THE LAND BELONGS TO GOPAL"

Gopal is the name of a peasant. Gopal lives on the soil. It is a hard life indeed for, no matter how hard Gopal toils, he can barely get enough money to feed his family. When the rains are poor and the crop fails, Gopal and his family are faced with starvation for they have no other way of earning their living. As it is, the little field that Gopal owns yields very little for it has been cultivated over and over again and the soil has lost its richness. The landlord is hard on Gopal. He insists on his paying all the taxes even when it has been a poor harvest. The rents and taxes are heavy indeed. Gopal has no fun and laughter in his life. Worries make him old before his time. The months of sowing, reaping and harvesting pass quickly enough for then Gopal works in the field, but the long summer days when the strong sun parches the land and it is not possible to cultivate it—these days drag heavily. Gopal has nothing to do. The boredom of these days is terrible.

Gopal is not just one peasant in India. There are

millions of people like Gopal. They lead exactly the same kind of life.

Gandhiji went from village to village and saw the peasants and he said, "The land belongs to Gopal. So does India belong to Gopal and people like him, for India is not living in her ten or twenty cities but in her 600,000 villages, and yet these villages have been forgotten. We think of the privileged few and are neglecting the poor. We must think in terms of the teeming millions. I cannot be happy," he added, "without the humblest of us being happy."

Gandhiji asked the students, the women, the rich men and the workers to go out to the villages and help Gopal and millions of other peasants like him. India had been a very rich and prosperous country. She fed and clothed many other countries of the world. That was the time when India consisted of millions of little villages which more or less ruled themselves and were self-governing republics. "Let us revive the ancient republics," said Gandhiji. "Let us make India's villages prosperous again and, when we have done that, we shall be truly free."

In the past, India's gossamer-like muslins and brocades were famous. The world had never seen anything like them—their richness, texture and beauty of design. These had all been spun and woven in the homes of the villagers. The modern machines of today

cannot produce anything as beautiful. Gopal's great-grandparents wove cloth like this, but Gopal had never heard the music of the spinning wheel. In the big cities the shops were stocked with materials made abroad. The government wanted Indians to buy the foreign cloth. That is why Gopal never learned to weave and spin, and that is why he dreaded those long summer months when there was nothing to do and nothing to eat.

Gopal must be taught to spin again. Gandhiji said that not only Gopal but every man, woman and child must spin. He thought to himself that if everyone learned to spin and weave his own clothes, even the very poor people would have something to wear. Gandhiji also persuaded the members of the Congress Party to take a vow to wear only handspun cloth and they asked all patriotic Indians to do the same. Gandhiji said to them, "Every home must turn into a spinning wheel, every village a weaving mill, and with it will once again revive the ancient rustic art and the rustic song." The spinning wheel became a symbol of India's freedom for it seemed to say, "Spin me and you can find a crust of bread for yourself."

The people of India responded with great enthusiasm to the appeal not to buy or wear foreign clothes, and all over the land huge bonfires were lit and much cloth burned to cinders. It was not enough not to wear

foreign cloth. The people of India must wear only handspun materials. If they did that, the Indian villager would not have to leave his village and go and work in large cities in noisy and smoky factories. He could earn a living by spinning his wheel in his own house.



By the spinning wheel the women of India too could earn a living; in their spare hours they too could spin in their homes. Gandhiji was told about a Swiss peasant woman of seventy who lived high up in the mountains which are covered by snow for nearly half the year. In the summer she worked in the fields and in the winter she spun. She was the happiest person in the whole village because she was never idle. Gandhiji thought to himself if this old woman found happiness in spinning, how much greater was the need in India where very few women reach the age of seventy and

where millions of women needed to spin, not just to occupy their idle hours, but to keep the wolf from the door?

That is why he said, "It is for the women of India, a large number of whom do not earn even one anna a day, that I am going about the country with my spinning wheel and my begging bowl."

Gandhiji made everyone in his Ashram spin for a few hours each day, and once a year he had a whole week which he called The National Week. During these seven days everybody was to spin as a national duty. One little nine-year-old girl in the Ashram loved to spin and during the National Week she spun more yarn than any one else in the Ashram. She actually spun three thousand yards of yarn every day of the week. Gandhiji saw how much children enjoyed spinning and he wanted the schools of India to allow poor children to pay for their tuition by spinning.

The great Indian poet, Tagore, who admired Gandhiji very much but disagreed with him when he said that everybody should spin, wrote and told him so. Gandhiji replied to him saying, "When a house is on fire, all must go out and take a bucket to quench the fire. India is a house on fire. It is dying of hunger because it has no work to buy food with. Hunger is drawing India to the spinning wheel."

In one Indian city some of the washermen decided

that, after Gandhiji had talked to them, they would not wash anything but handspun cloth. These men were the very best washermen in town. All the rich people liked to have their clothes washed by them and they offered the washermen more money but they refused the money.

In India many people wanted to build big mills. They wanted all kinds of machines to do the work instead of men doing it with their hands. But Gandhiji said, "India is different from these countries. Here we have lots and lots of people who need employment. We do not want machinery to replace these people, for then they will starve. Certain kinds of things can only be done by machinery, and for those things only should we have machinery."

He once visited a little village near a rice mill. Before this mill had been built, the villagers husked the rice themselves. Then came someone who said husking could be done much quicker by a machine, and he set up the mill. Now all the villages took their rice to the mill and it was husked there. The result was that the people who used to do the husking were unemployed and had to leave their village and go to the big towns to find work. Apart from that, the machine-husked rice was not nearly as good as the hand-husked rice. The din, the smoke and the dust of the mill near the village had spoiled the beauty of the countryside.

When Gandhiji saw this he was sad. India, he thought, does not need labor-saving devices. "Men go on saving labor until thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. We are destroying the matchless living machines—our own bodies—by leaving them to rust and trying to substitute lifeless machinery for them." Machinery has a deadening effect on the character of the people who use it. They too become parts of a machine. They cease to be human. To Gandhiji handspun cloth represented lasting human values like goodness, truth and simplicity, while mill-made cloth stood for worldly things like wealth and selfishness.

When people asked him why he was against machinery, he said that he was not against machinery—the spinning wheel was an exquisite machine. He was against the kind of machinery which merely helped a few to ride on the backs of the poor. He wanted wealth not to be in the hands of the few but in the hands of all.

Gandhiji did not want India to be an armed country with a large army and navy and air force. If India were true to the greatest number of her people, she would be a country of villages and simple homes from which there was little to take away. These villages and houses would not require any policing, for it is only the palaces of the rich that must have strong guards to

protect them. Huge factories must be protected with arms.

Spinning was but one way of helping the villagers. Other useful crafts like tanning, leather work, paper making, extracting gums, resins and oils, pottery, carpentry and brick making could all be done in the smallest villages of India and did not require machines. Men and women must go to the villages and teach all this to the villager. He must be taught how to cultivate his field by planting different kinds of crops at different times. He must be shown how to keep a poultry farm and fruit orchards and, most important of all, he must be taught how to read and write, for if he does not learn to do so he will always be ignorant and backward. It was the duty of every Indian who had been lucky enough to go to school and college to try to teach at least ten other people to read. By showing the ordinary people how they could help, Gandhiji made everyone feel that he too could play a part in achieving India's freedom and that going to jail was not the only way of doing this.

The government must help by removing the officials who governed the villages and allowing the people to elect their own men. These men must see that the people of their village eat healthy food and have sufficient clothing, that every child go to school, and, if any fall ill, he be treated by a doctor and taken to a

hospital where he would be looked after free of charge.

Gandhiji taught his followers that they must be clean and live cleanly, for he knew that if all Indians took great pains to see that their houses and their villages and cities were clean, so many people would not die each year of disease. He wished them to show the people how, even if they were poor, they could be clean.

The villager after a hard day's work must have a way of amusing himself. The ancient songs and dances which were dying out must be revived. The villager had no way of enjoying himself. He had no pastimes and that is why he took to drinking. Gandhiji wanted to stop the poor from wasting their money on liquor, so he worked to fight the evils of drink.

Gandhiji did not forget the laborers in the factories. He taught them to organize themselves in trade unions and to fight unitedly for better conditions of work and higher wages. He told them to what they were entitled and asked them to fight for these rights. He appealed to their employers to be more human and to treat the workers as men and not as machines.

The people of India adored him. When he visited a village, the people of the surrounding villages would walk miles and miles just to see him. He ruled the masses by love. He won their hearts by being one of them. They called him the Mahatma—great soul.

Gandhiji did not like to be called by this name. He said that he was no saint but an ordinary man who had made truth and goodness his religion. "I will not sacrifice truth even for the deliverance of my country and religion," he told the people of India.

An admirer once wrote to him calling him a saint who had entered politics, and praised him for holding fast to truth in spite of many trials and difficult circumstances. He replied, "I myself do not feel a saint in any shape or form. I am but a servant of God. I have committed Himalayan blunders, but I have the courage to admit them."

Never had a man held so much power and been so humble. One word from him could sway the masses of India. One fifth of the world's population was at his feet and they followed him blindly. He could make them do anything he wanted, yet he remained untouched by all this. He was always kind, humble, gentle and full of love. "There is room in my heart," he said, "for the humblest of God's creation, for I see God everywhere and in everything. If I am to take part in politics, it is only because politics today encircle us like the coils of a snake from which one cannot get out no matter how one tries. I wish to wrestle with the snake. I am trying to introduce religion into politics."

In his Ashram he would not let anyone call him Mahatma. "I am just an erring mortal and like any

one of you I am full of shortcomings," he said. "I beseech you to reject my shortcomings and simply make the best of my capacity for service. Turn my good points to account and reject the base ones."

He himself was most understanding of people's failings. He never judged them. He knew that the people around him were far from perfect, but he tried to get the best out of them and put their good points to the fullest use. He showed this tolerance not only to his followers but also to people who did not hold his views.

In the Congress Party there was a group of young men who called themselves Socialists. These men were full of new ideas from the west about industrializing the country. They thought Gandhiji, when he talked of the village republics and cottage industries, was old-fashioned and behind his time. Gandhiji took this very good-naturedly and he would spend hours talking to the young men and trying to understand their point of view. Once a follower asked, "Why do you waste so much of your time with these young men when in return for all your patience they go about the country criticising and opposing you?"

Gandhiji smiled and replied, "They are as much a part of me as any of you who are my closest followers." The precept that guided his life was of the three monkeys in the Chinese legend who spoke no evil, saw no evil, heard no evil.

To the impatient young Socialists he would say, "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible, but I refuse to be blown off my feet by any of them."

He used to tell them that he was a Socialist before any of them were born. He liked critics and was always willing to see the other man's point of view. As the years passed, many of the young Socialists came to recognize how advanced Gandhiji's views were and how in reality he was ahead of his time.

X. GANDHIJI SHOWS THE WAY

Exciting times followed. To add to the unrest the government tried to enforce a law which raised the price of salt so high that the poor people could no longer afford it. The poor people asked Gandhiji to help them, and Gandhiji told them to break this law by making their own salt. The breaking of this law became a part of India's struggle for freedom. Salt became a magic word. Gandhiji and a few followers started on March 12, 1930, to march down to the sea to collect salt water with which to make salt in defiance of the government order. Every place he passed through on his way to the sea, he spread the fire of revolt. The inhabitants of these villages joined him and soon there were thousands and thousands of people marching with him. At last they reached the sea. They filled their

pitchers with the sea water and went back and made their own salt. Gandhiji had once again shown how it was possible to refuse to obey laws in a peaceful way.

This Salt March, as it was called, added still more strength to the struggle for freedom, and the government, seeing its position threatened, arrested Gandhiji and other Congress Party leaders. They thought that by doing this they would frighten the people, but they were mistaken for more and more people courted arrest and gladly went to prison. Soon the jails were overflowing. The government became desperate. It did not know what to do when the people themselves wanted to be imprisoned. This was a part of Gandhiji's plan. He wanted the people to defy the laws peacefully and go to prison willingly. He knew that sooner or later the government would tire of arresting people and eventually it would have to give in. And this is what happened.

Early in 1931, Gandhiji was released from prison and invited by the British Viceroy, Lord Irwin, to discuss things. After many talks they signed an agreement which was known as the Gandhi-Irwin pact. As a result the British government invited the Congress to send someone from their midst to discuss with them and other Indians the way of solving India's problems. The Congress selected Gandhiji to go to England for this conference, which was called the Round Table Con-

ference. But nothing came of it, and Gandhiji returned home disappointed.

While he was in England, the King invited him to a party at Buckingham Palace. It is considered a very great honor to be invited to the King's party, and everybody goes wearing their very best suits and gowns and



jewels. As the day of the party drew near, people began wondering in what dress Gandhiji would attend the party. The newspapers asked, "Is he going to wear his usual loin cloth or will he wear something else?"

Gandhiji had not even thought about his dress. He attended the party in what he always wore. As he stood beside the King who wore a beautifully embroidered

uniform and glittering medals, Gandhiji's simple dress made a great contrast. After the party someone asked Gandhiji if he did not feel awkward so scantily dressed, but Gandhiji laughed and replied, "The King had enough on for both of us."

While he was in England he also met Charlie Chaplin, and when a friend of his heard that he had gone to

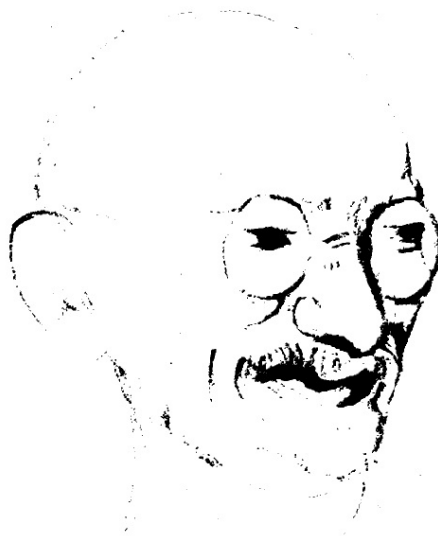


see Charlie Chaplin she said, "Mickey Mouse went to visit Charlie Chaplin." She called him Mickey Mouse because he was so small and had such big ears.

While Gandhiji was in England, the British government insisted that two detectives follow his movements and watch him. Gandhiji soon became quite friendly with these two men and he used to feel rather sorry for them because they too had to get up at half-past four every morning and accompany him on his walk. When

he was leaving he wished to give them each a present to make up for this, but he could not decide what to give them. Gandhiji had vowed never to buy British-made goods. He searched and searched for something suitable and eventually he chose two Swiss watches and gave these to the detectives.

Gandhiji had not yet returned home when the British government, seeing that the Round Table Conference had failed, started to suppress the nationalists. The leaders were again arrested and thrown into jail. As soon as Gandhiji reached Bombay on January 4, 1932, he too was taken to prison and was not released until May 1933.



XI. IN THE HEART OF INDIA

The Congress Party now met to decide its future program. At this meeting Gandhiji realized that the other members did not believe as ardently in peaceful resistance as he did, and when he saw this he resigned from the Congress Party. From then onwards, although he was not a member of the Congress Party, he continued to guide and influence its leaders. It was to him that they always turned for advice even on the smallest matters.

After resigning from the Congress Party, Gandhiji returned to his Ashram at Sabarmati. He stayed there only a short time. He took a vow not to return until freedom had been won. When the people of India heard of his decision they took fresh heart, for they

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said if Gandhiji had decided not to return to the Ashram until India was free, he must believe that freedom was not very far away. He now made his home in a little village in the heart of India. This village was named Sevagram or the village-of-service. The other leaders of Congress moved to a nearby town called Wardha to be near Gandhiji, for they could not do without him.

A simple life and a useful one was what Gandhiji taught all his followers who lived with him at Sevagram. They lived in small mud huts exactly like those used by the poor villagers in India. In his own hut Gandhiji refused to have anything that a villager could not afford to have or make for himself. The food eaten at Sevagram was also very plain. Everyone had to learn spinning and other useful village crafts. They even had a small hospital.

Gandhiji was the life and spirit of Sevagram. To the people he was not just a saint, but a near and very dear person. He laughed and joked with them. There was always a smile on his face and his laughter was infectious. His presence always created a cheery atmosphere. There was a freshness and charm about him that won the hearts of all. His friendly gaze and disarming laughter made people feel at home immediately. His followers, describing his smile, said that he knew how to use it "as a magician knows how to use his wand."

He had a magic way of getting close to others. Even his enemies could not resist his simplicity and warmth. He liked to crack jokes and enjoyed anything funny. A friend had written about Gandhiji in a book called *Among the Great*. The author was telling Gandhiji how well the book was selling and Gandhiji laughingly asked him, "Do you insinuate that it was my giant frame which did the trick?" and looking at his frail little body he burst into peals of laughter.

Gandhiji knew of the smallest things that happened in Sevagram. There was nothing too small to interest him. A disciple of his, Pandit Nehru, the present Prime Minister of India, was once in prison. He received a telegram from Gandhiji in which he mentioned that he had met Nehru's daughter and that she had put on weight. Nehru was greatly touched by this and said, "He never forgets the seemingly little things in life which mean so much." People came to him with their smallest domestic problems, and Gandhiji would listen to them patiently and guide and help them.

He showed this same consideration to strangers and foreigners when he was discussing his political views. If he saw that they were getting a little tired he would break the heaviness of a discussion by joking and make them relax by talking of lighter things. He himself never showed signs of fatigue no matter how strenuous a day he had. His will power amazed everyone. He

would say that he was going to sleep for twenty-five minutes and he would promptly fall asleep. After exactly twenty-five minutes he would wake up by himself.

Any one at all could walk into his hut and see him, for there were no guards at the door. Gandhiji said he belonged to the people and every minute of his life was theirs. He loved children and young folks and he would surround himself with them. The children thought him a very funny old man with large ears and they loved teasing him. There was a little girl who lived in the Ashram and came to see him every day. Gandhiji would draw her near him and rub noses with her. This was a kind of game, and they would both enjoy it and laugh a lot.

Every morning and evening in rain and sunshine—no matter what the weather—Gandhiji took a walk. This was a habit he had kept up since he was a child. He walked very briskly and while walking he liked to lean on the two people who walked on either side of him, and usually they were children. Soon the children in Sevagram began competing with each other to be Gandhiji's walking stick, as he called it.

Twice a day prayers were held in Sevagram. Everybody assembled in the courtyard, and Gandhiji sat facing them. They would sing the simple prayer songs sung throughout India, and Gandhiji would read a passage from the scriptures, then talk to the people

about the meaning of life and death, of truth and peace. At his prayer meetings Gandhiji had the people sing Mohammedan and Christian hymns and read passages from the Koran, the religious book of the Mohammedans, and from the Bible.

On Mondays, Gandhiji kept his day of silence. On these days he would not speak at all. If there was something important to be said, he would write on a slip of paper. He said this day of silence gave him a chance to look deep into himself and think.

Gandhiji's charm of manner and childlike simplicity was irresistible. Once when the British sent out a new Viceroy he was told by his government to negotiate with the Congress Party, but he was asked not to meet Gandhiji for he might fall a victim to his charm and get poor terms for Britain! Part of his charm was that Gandhiji trusted people. He used to say that he liked to believe a person is good until he proved himself to be otherwise.

Gandhiji's days were crowded with many things. In order to get everything into the day, Gandhiji got up at half-past-four every morning. He was extremely punctual and insisted that everything be done to schedule. A lot of his time was spent replying to letters from people all over the world. Although he lived in this village which was cut off from the rest of the world, he kept in touch with things that were happen-

ing outside. A foreign writer said that wherever Gandhiji was became the capital of India.



XII. GANDHIJI IMPRISONED

In the year 1939, the world was again plunged into a terrible war. In Germany, Italy and Russia, dictators had seized power and oppressed the people. Some of these dictators began gobbling up smaller countries by force and became a menace to world peace. At last democratic countries like Britain, France and the United States decided to fight the German dictatorship.

Gandhiji did not believe in war but he was of course on the side of the democracies, because he believed in liberty and freedom. Britain needed India's help and, without even consulting the men of the Congress Party, she announced that India too was at war with Germany. The leaders of the Congress Party told Britain that unless India was free she could not fight for the freedom of others. They refused to help in the war. They resigned from the governments of the states and launched a campaign of resistance.

Soon the war spread to the East. The island country of Japan joined on the side of the dictators. Japanese

armies swept through Asia until they reached the frontiers of India. The Congress Party again turned to Gandhiji and asked him to leave Sevagram and come forward and lead the country in this hour of danger of foreign invasion. Gandhiji saw that unless the British left India the people would never throw themselves heart and soul in defending their country, so he asked the British government to quit India. The people took up the cry of 'Quit India' until every part of the land resounded with it.

In the early hours of August 9, 1942, Gandhiji and the other national leaders were arrested and put into jail once again. The government kept all the other leaders locked up in an old and historic fort at a place called Ahmednager.

They put Gandhiji, his wife Kasturbai and his closest disciples in a prison in another town called Poona. This prison was an enormous old mansion belonging to a fabulously rich prince called the Aga Khan. Kasturbai, who never complained and was happy in the humblest little village hut so long as she was near Gandhiji, hated this country mansion prison. Its atmosphere seemed to stifle her and filled her heart with fears and foreboding. Gandhiji saw how unhappy she was as she moved about listlessly from room to room. He tried to occupy her mind with other things.

The efforts of the British government to repress the

Congress Party, which was declared an illegal and unlawful body, led to another upheaval. The people rose with one accord against the government. The ruthless acts of the government only made the people burn with zeal and heroism. They rebelled and often they were violent in their enthusiasm. Gandhiji heard of the revolution that swept through India and of the blood that was spilled. He blamed the government for driving the people to desperation. When he saw the sufferings of the people, he decided to fast again for twenty-one days.

Day by day as his fast continued, Gandhiji became frailer and weaker and after a while he could not even lift himself up from his bed. The doctors now gave up hope of his life. The people of India waited in awful suspense and with a heart heavy for news of him. In the temples and in every Indian home there were prayers to save the Mahatma.

The days passed slowly. Kasturbai was at his bedside night and day nursing him, and nothing could persuade her to leave him. At last the twenty-one days were over. Gandhiji still lived. It was a miracle. Indians breathed again. Their joy knew no bounds, but this was no time for celebrations. There was work to be done. The revolution must not be allowed to die out. The government continued to rule with an iron hand. To add to the sufferings of the people, there was

famine in the province of Bengal in the east of India and over three millions died of starvation. There was utter misery and distress. The foreign government did nothing about it. Gandhiji heard of this in his prison and he appealed to the government to enlist the support of the Congress Party and send immediate relief to the people of Bengal. His appeal fell on deaf ears.

Other sorrows awaited Gandhiji. His secretary and friend who was with him in prison, died. A few months later his devoted and loyal wife Kasturbai also passed away. Her life had been one of sacrifice. She had won Gandhiji's love and admiration as she had proved herself to be a worthy daughter of India. Kasturbai had become a vital part of him. She had helped him loyally and staunchly in all his social and political work. She had put up with untold hardships and privations without a murmur. She went in and out of jail several times and, when Gandhiji was worried about her weak health, Kasturbai said to him, "If you and our sons can endure hardships, why can't I?" She considered herself blessed in following in Gandhiji's footsteps.

Kasturbai's death was mourned throughout the country. The people of India had lost their Ba, or mother, which was what she was called by all. The women of India had lost one of their greatest women leaders, for it was by following her brave example that

they had participated in the fight for Indian independence and for their own rights.

In 1944, Gandhiji himself fell very ill and was released from prison. He had become so frail that he had to take a long rest near the seaside. He spent some weeks there with his closest followers. He was always surrounded by children and he spent a lot of his time with them. In the mornings when he went out for his usual walk along the beach the children went with him. There was a great deal of playing and romping and the air rang with laughter as Gandhiji joked and teased. Amongst them was also little Kana Gandhi, Gandhiji's grandson. Often Gandhiji would let Kana hold the other end of his walking stick and pull him along the beach. The watchers by would laugh and say, "Now the leader is being led."

XIII. APOSTLE OF PEACE

At last in 1945 the war came to an end with the victory of the Allies. In India the government decided to release those it had imprisoned during the war, and so the Congress Party leaders were set free.

Once again there were elections in England, and a new party came into power that was determined to give India her freedom. In the meantime in India, the Mohammedans had formed a party of their own, under the leadership of a brilliant lawyer named Mohammad Ali Jinnah. This party was called the Muslim League. Jinnah wanted to divide India into two countries, one part for the Mohammedans, and the other for the Hindus. Gandhiji and the Congress were opposed to this. They wanted India to remain one and united. Soon after the leaders of the Congress came out of prison, the Viceroy invited them and the leaders of the Muslim League to a conference to discuss how to make India free. Gandhiji attended this meeting. Jinnah and his followers insisted that the Mohammedans should have a country of their own

which they would name Pakistan, the land of the pure. The Congress, however, would not agree to this. So once again nothing came of these talks, but this time through no fault of the British.



Throughout the country Mohammedans and Hindus began fighting each other. When Gandhiji heard of this he walked from village to village in the blazing sun appealing to the people to come together and live peacefully. The sun was so strong that it was not possible to go bareheaded. So Gandhiji wore a hat made of palm leaves like those worn by the peasants themselves. He spent many days in each village and would not leave until peace and quiet had been restored.

The Congress now thought that the religious hatred

between Hindus and Mohammedans was spreading and growing and that unless they agreed to divide India into two, as the Muslim League wanted, India would never get her freedom. So, very reluctantly, they agreed to partition. Gandhiji, however, who had all his life believed in the unity of India, did not want this. He would rather give the whole of India to the Mohammedans than cut it in two; but he knew that the others did not agree with him on this point, so he did not stand in the way.

On August 15, 1947, India was declared free, and the two new dominions of India and Pakistan came into existence as free and equal members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. There was nationwide celebration on that day. ~~But Gandhiji~~ was a sad and disappointed man. His dream had been lost. Gandhiji let his followers form the new government, but he himself would not accept any high office. He was not interested in power and high position. He wanted to be with the people and near their hearts. He continued to live as simply as he had always done.

The independence that India had got was not what he had wanted. This was not the kind of freedom he had stood for and what he thought the Congress Party should have stood for. This was only semi-freedom. He had wanted a united India and real freedom of the masses from poverty and hunger.

On the eve of India's becoming independent, a foreign correspondent approached him through his secretary to say a few words on India's freedom. Gandhiji refused and said that the correspondent should go to Nehru, the Prime Minister. "I have nothing to do with it," he added.

The correspondent, however, persisted in his request. Gandhiji was asked again if he would not give a short message. Indignantly he said to his secretary, "I do not know anything. This is no independence."

The correspondent still would not give up and made the same request a third time. Gandhiji was as adamant as ever. He said, "Ask him to forget I know English at all."

Eventually the correspondent had to leave India without the message from Gandhiji which he had tried so hard to get.

Gandhiji was right. Instead of the religious hatred dying out after the division of the country, it became stronger. In Pakistan, Mohammedans started killing the Hindus that still lived there, and in India the Hindus retaliated. Hatred and frenzy gripped the people of both countries. They burned, looted and murdered. Even little children and women were not spared. Terror struck the hearts of all. The shadow of suffering and death hung over the country and fear stalked the land. The people had sunk into an abyss.

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There was but one man who could dispel the darkness that surrounded them and show them the way, and that was Gandhiji. The people of India were lost and floundering. They needed him and once again he did not fail them. He saw that suffering and bitterness had clouded their vision and had made them do many wrong things. He took on the unpleasant task of showing them where they had erred although he knew that by doing so he was incurring their anger. He went from place to place wherever there was trouble. He did not care for his own safety but hurried to the rescue of the weak and the defenseless. He tried to explain to the people that by retaliating with violence they were only destroying themselves and their country. He fasted to atone for their sins, until at last they listened to him and peace was gradually restored. He stayed in Delhi, the capital of India, which had been the scene of rioting and killing, where he had at last restored law and order.

In this brave fight for justice and truth, Gandhiji stood out a solitary figure—an apostle of peace and love. He saw many things that he had worked and lived for crumbling round him and, although it hurt him, it made him even more determined to fight the forces of evil and darkness which seemed to have overcome the masses. Day after day he pleaded with them to show a little more tolerance. He said to them, "We all derive

from one God who resides in us all no matter under what name we choose to worship him.”

But what he saw happening around him broke his heart. He tried not to let others see the sadness and loneliness he felt. His cheerful face and childlike



laughter made the despondent take courage again. A close friend, however, who was visiting him at this time was quick to see that behind this bright exterior was a very heavy heart. Writing about his visit to Gandhiji he said, “I saw his face lonely and wistful; caught the echo of his laughter fraught with pain. I had a feeling that with all his brave attempt to hide it, he was weary to the bone—world weary and longing for sleep.”

This friend was paying a short visit. Gandhiji had hoped he could stay on longer and was sad to let him leave so soon. The friend, seeing how much Gandhiji

wanted him to stay on, changed his plans and told Gandhiji that he would be staying on for a few more days. On hearing this news, Gandhiji's eyes lit up.

"Do you know I wished fervently that this would happen," he said with childlike glee.

"And how could anything not happen in our country which you wish to happen?" joked the friend.

At this remark a shadow came over Gandhiji's face and lowering his gaze he said sadly, "How I wish what you say in irony were true!"

There were many Hindus who believed that, since Hindus were being killed in Pakistan, the only way to stop these killings was to kill Mohammedans in India. They were angry with Gandhiji for trying to put an end to this. They believed that he was an enemy of the Hindu religion and they wanted to kill him. They first tried to do this by throwing a bomb at one of his prayer meetings, but they were unsuccessful. It seemed to the people of India that the Mahatma had a charmed life and nothing could touch him. But they were wrong. They were not aware of the danger that lurked around the corner. Gandhiji himself knew of it. He sensed it but he was not afraid. Undaunted he carried on his work and he refused to have any guards or policemen to protect him. He said that he lived for the people and if at any time they did not want him he was ready to die for them.

XIV. THE WORLD MOURNS

Paltoo's voice gradually faded away. The tears trickled down his wrinkled weather-beaten cheek. "And so they did kill him," he added after a pause.

Dawn was breaking in the east and a warm rosy glow lit up the sky and the tree tops as they entered the city of Delhi. The streets were already thronged with people. They walked in silence with their heads hanging low with shame. From the refugee camps where the homeless Mohammedans were kept under protection by the government, there rose a wailing cry of distress. Their friend and protector was no more. In the heart of every decent Indian there was sadness and repentance.

In the city of Delhi, in the country of India, in the

whole world this was a day of mourning. "Another Lincoln has been assassinated," they said in hushed voices; "another Christ crucified."

