I

DE_DESCENT FROM KASHMIR

"It is a hard and nice subject for a man to write of himself: it grates his own heart to say anything of disparagement, and the reader's ears to hear anything of praise for him."

—ABRAHAM COWLEY.

An only son of prosperous parents is apt to be spoilt, especially so in India. And when that son happens to have been an only child for the first eleven years of his existence there is little hope for him to escape this spoiling. My two sisters are very much younger than I am, and between each two of us there is a long stretch of years. And so I grew up and spent my early years as a somewhat lonely child with no companions of my age. I did not even have the companionship of children at school for I was not sent to any kindergarten or primary school. Governesses or private tutors were supposed to be in charge of my education.

Our house itself was far from being a lonely place, for it sheltered a large family of cousins and near relations, after the manner of Hindu families. But all my cousins were much older than I was and were students at the high school or the university and considered me far too young for their work or their play. And so in the midst of that big family I felt rather lonely and was left a great deal to my own fancies and solitary games.

We were Kashmiris. Over two hundred years ago, early in the eighteenth century, our ancestor came down from that mountain valley to seek fame and fortune in the rich plains below. Those were the days of the decline of the Moghal Empire after the death of Aurungzeb, and Farrukhsiar was the Emperor. Raj Kaul was the name of that ancestor of ours and he had gained eminence as a Sanskrit and Persian scholar in Kashmir. He attracted the notice of Farrukhsiar during the latter's visit to Kashmir, and, probably at the Emperor's instance, the family migrated to Delhi, the imperial capital, about the year 1716. A jagir with a house situated on the banks of a canal had been granted to Raj Kaul, and, from the fact of this residence, 'Nehru' (from nahar, a canal) came to be attached to his name. Kaul had been the family name; this changed to Kaul-Nehru; and, in later years, Kaul dropped out and we became simply Nehrus.
The family experienced many vicissitudes of fortune during the unsettled times that followed and the jagir dwindled and vanished away. My great grandfather, Lakshmi Narayan Nehru, became the first Vakil of the 'Sarkar Company' at the shadow court of the Emperor of Delhi. My grandfather, Ganga Dhar Nehru, was Kotwal of Delhi for some time before the great Revolt of 1857. He died at the early age of 34 in 1861.

The Revolt of 1857 put an end to our family's connection with Delhi, and all our old family papers and documents were destroyed in the course of it. The family, having lost nearly all it possessed, joined the numerous fugitives who were leaving the old imperial city and went to Agra. My father was not born then but my two uncles were already young men and possessed some knowledge of English. This knowledge saved the younger of the two uncles, as well as some other members of the family, from a sudden and ignominious end. He was journeying from Delhi with some family members, among whom was his young sister, a little girl who was very fair, as some Kashmiri children are. Some English soldiers met them on the way and they suspected this little aunt of mine to be an English girl and accused my uncle of kidnapping her. From an accusation, to summary justice and punishment, was usually a matter of minutes in those days, and my uncle and others of the family might well have found themselves hanging on the nearest tree. Fortunately for them, my uncle's knowledge of English delayed matters a little and then some one who knew him passed that way and rescued him and the others.

For some years the family lived in Agra, and it was in Agra on the sixth of May 1861 that my father was born. But he was a posthumous child as my grandfather had died three months earlier. In a little painting that we have of my grandfather, he wears the Moghal court dress with a curved sword in his hand, and might well be taken for a Moghal nobleman, although his features are distinctly Kashmiri.

The burden of the family then fell on my two uncles who were very much older than my father. The elder uncle, Bansi Dhar Nehru, soon after entered the judicial department of the British Government and, being appointed successively to various places, was partly cut off from the rest of the family. The younger uncle, Nand Lal Nehru, entered the service of an Indian State and was Diwan of Khetri State in Rajputana for ten years. Later he studied law and settled down as a practising lawyer in Agra.

1 A curious and interesting coincidence: The poet Rabindranath Tagore was also born on this very day, month and year.
My father lived with him and grew up under his sheltering care. The two were greatly attached to each other and their relation with each other was a strange mixture of the brotherly and the paternal and filial. My father, being the last comer, was of course my grandmother's favourite son, and she was an old lady with a tremendous will of her own who was not accustomed to be ignored. It is now nearly half a century since her death but she is still remembered amongst old Kashmiri ladies as a most dominating old woman and quite a terror if her will was flouted.

My uncle attached himself to the newly established High Court and when this court moved to Allahabad from Agra, the family moved with it. Since then Allahabad has been our home and it was there, many years later, that I was born. My uncle gradually developed an extensive practice and became one of the leaders of the High Court Bar. Meanwhile my father was going through school and college in Cawnpore and Allahabad. His early education was confined entirely to Persian and Arabic and he only began learning English in his early 'teens. But at that age he was considered to be a good Persian scholar, and knew some Arabic also, and because of this knowledge was treated with respect by much older people. But in spite of this early precocity his school and college career was chiefly notable for his numerous pranks and escapades. He was very far from being a model pupil and took more interest in games and novel adventures than in study. He was looked upon as one of the leaders of the rowdy element in the college. He was attracted to Western dress and other Western ways at a time when it was uncommon for Indians to take to them except in big cities like Calcutta and Bombay. Though he was a little wild in his behaviour, his English professors were fond of him and often got him out of a scrape. They liked his spirit and he was intelligent, and with an occasional spurt he managed to do fairly well even in class. In later years, long afterwards, he used to talk to us of one of these professors, Mr. Harrison, the principal of the Muir Central College at Allahabad, with affection, and had carefully preserved a letter of his, dating from the old student days.

He got through his various university examinations without any special distinction, and then he appeared for his final, the B.A. He had not taken the trouble to work much for it and he was greatly dissatisfied with the way he had done the first paper. Not expecting to pass the examination, as he thought he had spoiled the first paper, he decided to boycott the rest of the examination and he spent his time instead at the Taj Mahal. (The university examinations were held then at Agra.) Subsequently
his professor sent for him and was very angry with him for he said that he (my father) had done the first paper fairly well and he had been a fool for not appearing for the other papers. Anyhow this ended my father's university career. He never Graduated.

He was keen on getting on in life and establishing himself in a profession. Naturally he looked to the law as that was the only profession then, in India, which offered any opening for talent and prizes for the successful. He also had his brother's example before him. He appeared for the High Court Vakils' examination and not only passed it but topped the list and got a gold medal for it. He had found the subject after his own heart, or rather, he was intent on success in the profession of his choice.

He started practice in the district courts of Cawnpore and, being eager to succeed, worked hard at it and soon got on well. But his love for games and other amusements and diversions continued and still took up part of his time. In particular, he was keen on wrestling and dangals. Cawnpore was famous for these public wrestling matches in those days.

After serving his apprenticeship for three years at Cawnpore, father moved to Allahabad to work in the High Court. Not long after this his brother, Pandit Nand Lal, suddenly died. That was a terrible blow for my father; it was a personal loss of a dearly loved brother who had almost been a father to him, and the removal of the head and principal earning member of the family. Henceforward the burden of carrying on a large family mainly fell on his young shoulders.

He plunged into his work, bent on success, and for many months cut himself off from everything else. Nearly all of my uncle's briefs came to him, and as he happened to do well in them the professional success that he so ardently desired soon came his way and brought him both additional work and money. At an early age he had established himself as a successful lawyer and he paid the price for this by becoming more and more a slave to his jealous mistress—the law. He had no time for any other activity, public or private, and even his vacations and holidays were devoted to his legal practice. The National Congress was just then attracting the attention of the English-knowing middle classes and he visited some of its early sessions and gave it a theoretical allegiance. But in those days he took no great interest in its work. He was too busy with his profession. Besides, he felt unsure of his ground in politics and public affairs; he had paid no great attention to these subjects till then and knew little about them. He had no wish to join any movement or organization
where he would have to play second fiddle. The aggressive spirit of his childhood and early youth had been outwardly curbed, but it had taken a new form, a new will to power. Directed to his profession it brought success and increased his pride and self-reliance. He loved a fight, a struggle against odds and yet, curiously, in those days he avoided the political field. It is true that there was little of fight then in the politics of the National Congress. However, the ground was unfamiliar, and his mind was full of the hard work that his profession involved. He had taken firm grip of the ladder of success and rung by rung he mounted higher, not by any one's favour, as he felt, not by any service of another, but by his own will and intellect.

He was, of course, a nationalist in a vague sense of the word, but he admired Englishmen and their ways. He had a feeling that his own countrymen had fallen low and almost deserved what they had got. And there was just a trace of contempt in his mind for the politicians who talked and talked without doing anything, though he had no idea at all as to what else they could do. Also there was the thought, born in the pride of his own success, that many—certainly not all—of those who took to politics had been failures in life.

An ever-increasing income brought many changes in our ways of living, for an increasing income meant increasing expenditure. The idea of hoarding money seemed to my father a slight on his own capacity to earn whenever he liked and as much as he desired. Full of the spirit of play and fond of good living in every way, he found no difficulty in spending what he earned. And gradually our ways became more and more Westernized.

Such was our home in the early days of my childhood.
II

CHILDHOOD

My childhood was thus a sheltered and uneventful one. I listened to the grown-up talk of my cousins without always understanding all of it. Often this talk related to the overbearing character and insulting manners of the English people, as well as Eurasians, towards Indians, and how it was the duty of every Indian to stand up to this and not to tolerate it. Instances of conflicts between the rulers and the ruled were common and were fully discussed. It was a notorious fact that whenever an Englishman killed an Indian he was acquitted by a jury of his own countrymen. In railway trains compartments were reserved for Europeans and however crowded the train might be—and they used to be terribly crowded—no Indian was allowed to travel in them, even though they were empty. Even an unreserved compartment would be taken possession of by an Englishman and he would not allow any Indian to enter it. Benches and chairs were also reserved for Europeans in public parks and other places. I was filled with resentment against the alien rulers of my country who misbehaved in this manner, and whenever an Indian hit back I was glad. Not infrequently one of my cousins or one of their friends became personally involved in these individual encounters and then of course we all got very excited over it. One of the cousins was the strong man of the family and he loved to pick a quarrel with an Englishman, or more frequently with Eurasians, who, perhaps to show off their oneness with the ruling race, were often even more offensive than the English official or merchant. Such quarrels took place especially during railway journeys.

Much as I began to resent the presence and behaviour of the alien rulers, I had no feeling whatever, so far as I can remember, against individual Englishmen. I had had English governesses and occasionally I saw English friends of my father’s visiting him. In my heart I rather admired the English.

In the evenings usually many friends came to visit father and he would relax after the tension of the day and the house would resound with his tremendous laughter. His laugh became famous in Allahabad. Sometimes I would peep at him and his friends from behind a curtain trying to make out what these great big people said to each other. If I was caught in the act I would be dragged out and, rather frightened, made to sit for a while on
father's knee. Once I saw him drinking claret or some other red wine. Whisky I knew. I had often seen him and his friends drink it. But the new red stuff filled me with horror and I rushed to my mother to tell her that father was drinking blood.

I admired father tremendously. He seemed to me the embodiment of strength and courage and cleverness, far above all the other men I saw, and I treasured the hope that when I grew up I would be rather like him. But much as I admired him and loved him I feared him also. I had seen him losing his temper at servants and others and he seemed to me terrible then and I shivered with fright, mixed sometimes with resentment, at the treatment of a servant. His temper was indeed an awful thing and even in after years I do not think I ever came across anything to match it in its own line. But, fortunately, he had a strong sense of humour also and an iron will, and he could control himself as a rule. As he grew older this power of control grew and it was very rare for him to indulge in anything like his old temper.

One of my earliest recollections is of this temper, for I was the victim of it. I must have been about five or six then. I noticed one day two fountain-pens on his office table and I looked at them with greed. I argued with myself that father could not require both at the same time and so I helped myself to one of them. Later I found that a mighty search was being made for the lost pen and I grew frightened at what I had done, but I did not confess. The pen was discovered and my guilt proclaimed to the world. Father was very angry and he gave me a tremendous thrashing. Almost blind with pain and mortification at my disgrace I rushed to mother, and for several days various creams and ointments were applied to my aching and quivering little body.

I do not remember bearing any ill-will towards my father because of this punishment. I think I must have felt that it was a just punishment, though perhaps overdone. But though my admiration and affection for him remained as strong as ever, fear formed a part of them. Not so with my mother. I had no fear of her, for I knew that she would condone everything I did, and, because of her excessive and indiscriminating love for me, I tried to dominate over her a little. I saw much more of her than I did of father and she seemed nearer to me and I would confide in her when I would not dream of doing so to father. She was petite and short of stature and soon I was almost as tall as she was and felt more of an equal with her. I admired her beauty and loved her amazingly small and beautiful hands and feet.
She belonged to a fresher stock from Kashmir and her people had only left the homeland two generations back.

Another of my early confidants was a munshi of my father’s, Munshi Mubarak Ali. He came from a well-to-do family of Badaun. The Revolt of 1857 had ruined the family and the English troops had partly exterminated it. This affliction had made him gentle and forbearing with everybody, especially with children, and for me he was a sure haven of refuge whenever I was unhappy or in trouble. With his fine grey beard he seemed to my young eyes very ancient and full of old-time lore, and I used to snuggle up to him and listen, wide-eyed, by the hour to his innumerable stories—old tales from the Arabian Nights or other sources, or accounts of the happenings in 1857 and 1858. It was many years later, when I was grown up, that “Munshiji” died, and the memory of him still remains with me as a dear and precious possession.

There were other stories also that I listened to, stories from the old Hindu mythology, from the epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, that my mother and aunt used to tell us. My aunt, the widow of Pandit Nand Lal, was learned in the old Indian books and had an inexhaustible supply of these tales, and my knowledge of Indian mythology and folklore became quite considerable.

Of religion I had very hazy notions. It seemed to be a woman’s affair. Father and my older cousins treated the question humorously and refused to take it seriously. The women of the family indulged in various ceremonies and pujas from time to time and I rather enjoyed them, though I tried to imitate to some extent the casual attitude of the grown-up men of the family. Sometimes I accompanied my mother or aunt to the Ganges for a dip, sometimes we visited temples in Allahabad itself or in Benares or elsewhere, or went to see a sanyasi reputed to be very holy. But all this left little impression on my mind.

Then there were the great festival days—the Holi, when all over the city there was a spirit of revelry and we could squirt water at each other; the Diwali, the festival of light, when all the houses were lit up with thousands of dim lights in earthen cups; the Janmāśtami to celebrate the birth in prison of Krishna at the midnight hour (but it was very difficult for us to keep awake till then); the Dasehrā and Rām Līlā when tableaux and processions re-enacted the old story of Ramachandra and his conquest of Lanka and vast crowds assembled to see them. All the children also went to see the Mohurrum processions with their silken ālums and their sorrowful celebration of the tragic
story of Hasan and Husain in distant Arabia. And on the two Id
days Munshiji would dress up in his best attire and go to the big
mosque for prayers, and I would go to his house and consume
sweet vermicelli and other dainties. And then there were the
smaller festivals of which there are many in the Hindu calendar,
Rakshābandhan, Bhayya dūj, etc.

Amongst us and the other Kashmiris there were also some
special celebrations which were not observed by most of the
other Hindus. Chief of these was the Naoroz, the New Year's
Day according to the Samvat calendar. This was always a special
day for us when all of us wore new clothes, and the young people
of the house got small sums of money as tips.

But more than all these festivals I was interested in one annual
event in which I played the central part—the celebration of the
anniversary of my birth. This was a day of great excitement for
me. Early in the morning I was weighed in a huge balance
against some bagfuls of wheat and other articles which were then
distributed to the poor; and then I arrayed myself in new clothes
and received presents, and later in the day there was a party. I
felt the hero of the occasion. My chief grievance was that my
birthday came so rarely. Indeed I tried to start an agitation for
more frequent birthdays. I did not realize then that a time would
come when birthdays would become unpleasant reminders of
advancing age.

Sometimes the whole family journeyed to a distant town to
attend a marriage, either of a cousin of mine or of some more
distant relation or friend. Those were exciting journeys for us,
children, for all rules were relaxed during these marriage festivi-
ties and we had the free run of the place. Numerous families
usually lived crowded together in the shādi-khānā, the marriage
house, where the party stayed, and there were many boys and
girls and children. On these occasions I could not complain of
loneliness and we had our heart's fill of play and mischief, with
an occasional scolding from our elders.

Indian marriages, both among the rich and the poor, have had
their full share of condemnation as wasteful and extravagant
display. They deserve all this. Even apart from the waste, it is
most painful to see the vulgar display which has no artistic or
aesthetic value of any kind. (Needless to say there are excep-
tions.) For all this the really guilty people are the middle classes.
The poor are also extravagant, even at the cost of burdensome
debts, but it is the height of absurdity to say, as some people do,
that their poverty is due to their social customs. It is often for-
gotten that the life of the poor is terribly dull and monotonous,
and an occasional marriage celebration, bringing with it some feasting and singing, comes to them as an oasis in a desert of soulless toil, a refuge from domesticity and the prosaic business of life. Who would be cruel enough to deny this consolation to them, who have such few occasions for laughter? Stop waste by all means, lessen the extravagance (big and foolish words to use for the little show that the poor put up in their poverty!), but do not make their life more drab and cheerless than it is.

So also for the middle classes. Waste and extravagance apart these marriages are big social reunions where distant relations and old friends meet after long intervals. India is a big country and it is not easy for friends to meet, and for many to meet together at the same time is still more difficult. Hence the popularity of the marriage celebrations. The only rival to them, and it has already excelled them in many ways even as a social reunion, is the political gathering, the various conferences, or the Congress!

Kashmiris have had one advantage over many others in India, especially in the north. They have never had any purdah, or seclusion of women, among themselves. Finding this custom prevailing in the Indian plains, when they came down, they adopted it, but only partly and in so far as their relations with others and non-Kashmiris were concerned. That was considered then in northern India, where most of the Kashmiris stayed, an inevitable sign of social status. But among themselves they stuck to the free social life of men and women, and every Kashmiri had the free entrée into any Kashmiri house. In Kashmiri feasts and ceremonies men and women met together and sat together, though often the women would sit in one bunch. Boys and girls used to meet on a more or less equal footing. They did not, of course, have the freedom of the modern West.

So passed my early years. Sometimes, as was inevitable in a large family, there were family squabbles. When these happened to assume unusual proportions they reached my father’s ears and he was angry and seemed to think that all such happenings were due to the folly of women. I did not understand what exactly had happened but I saw that something was very wrong as people seemed to speak in a peculiarly disagreeable way or to avoid each other. I felt very unhappy. Father’s intervention, when it took place, shook us all up.

One little incident of those early days stands out in my memory. I must have been about seven or eight then. I used to go out every day for a ride accompanied by a sawar from a cavalry unit then stationed in Allahabad. One evening I had a
fall and my pony—a pretty animal, partly Arab—returned home without me. Father was giving a tennis party. There was great consternation and all the members of the party, headed by father, formed a procession in all kinds of vehicles, and set out in search of me. They met me on the way and I was treated as if I had performed some heroic deed!
III

THEOSOPHY

When I was ten years old we changed over to a new and much bigger house which my father named ‘Anand Bhawan’. This house had a big garden and a swimming pool and I was full of excitement at the fresh discoveries I was continually making. Additional buildings were put up and there was a great deal of digging and construction and I loved to watch the labourers at work.

There was a large swimming pool in the house and soon I learnt to swim and felt completely at home in and under the water. During the long and hot summer days I would go for a dip at all odd hours, many times a day. In the evening many friends of my father’s came to the pool. It was a novelty, and the electric light that had been installed there and in the house was an innovation for Allahabad in those days. I enjoyed myself hugely during these bathing parties and an unfailing joy was to frighten, by pushing or pulling, those who did not know how to swim. I remember, particularly, Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru who was then a junior at the Allahabad Bar. He knew no swimming and had no intention of learning it. He would sit on the first step in fifteen inches of water, refusing absolutely to go forward even to the second step, and shouting loudly if anyone tried to move him. My father himself was no swimmer, but he could just manage to go the length of the pool with set teeth and violent and exhausting effort.

The Boer War was then going on and this interested me and all my sympathies were with the Boers. I began to read the newspapers to get news of the fighting.

A domestic event, however, just then absorbed my attention. This was the birth of a little sister. I had long nourished a secret grievance at not having any brothers or sisters when everybody else seemed to have them, and the prospect of having at last a baby brother or sister all to myself was exhilarating. Father was then in Europe. I remember waiting anxiously in the verandah for the event. One of the doctors came and told me of it and added, presumably as a joke, that I must be glad that it was not a boy who would have taken a share in my patrimony. I felt bitter and angry at the thought that any one should imagine that I could harbour such a vile notion.
Father's visits to Europe led to an internal storm in the Kashmiri Brahman community in India. He refused to perform any prayashchit or purification ceremony on his return. Some years previously another Kashmiri Brahman, Pandit Bishan Narayan Dar, who later became a President of the Congress; had gone to England to be called to the Bar. On his return the orthodox members of the community had refused to have anything to do with him and he was outcast, although he performed the prayashchit ceremony. This had resulted in the splitting up of the community into two more or less equal halves. Many Kashmiri young men went subsequently to Europe for their studies and on their return joined the reformist section, but only after a formal ceremony of purification. This ceremony itself was a bit of a farce and there was little of religion in it. It merely signified an outward conformity and a submission to the group will. Having done so, each person indulged in all manner of heterodox activities and mixed and fed with non-Brahmans and non-Hindus.

Father went a step further and refused to go through any ceremony or to submit in any way, even outwardly and formally, to a so-called purification. A great deal of heat was generated, chiefly because of father's aggressive and rather disdainful attitude, and ultimately a considerable number of Kashmiris joined father and so a third group was formed. Within a few years these groups gradually merged into one another as ideas changed and the old restrictions fell. Large numbers of Kashmiri young men and girls have visited Europe or America for their studies and no question has arisen of their performing any ceremonies on their return. Food restrictions have almost entirely gone, except in the case of a handful of orthodox people, chiefly old ladies, and inter-dining with non-Kashmiris, Muslims and non-Indians is common. Purdah, the seclusion of women, has disappeared among Kashmiris even as regards other communities. The last push to this was given by the political upheaval of 1930. Inter-marriage with other communities is still not popular, although (increasingly) instances occur. Both my sisters have married non-Kashmiris and a young member of our family has recently married a Hungarian girl. The objection to inter-marriage with others is not based on religion; it is largely racial. There is a desire among many Kashmiris to preserve our group identity and our distinctive Aryan features, and a fear that we shall lose these in the sea of Indian and non-Indian humanity. We are small in numbers in this vast country.

Probably the first Kashmiri Brahman in modern times to visit
Western countries was Mirza Mohan Lal 'Kashmerian' (as he called himself) about a hundred years ago. He was a bright and handsome young man, a student of the Mission College at Delhi, and he was chosen to accompany a British mission to Kabul as Persian interpreter. Later he travelled all over Central Asia and Persia and wherever he went he managed to take a new wife unto himself, usually marrying in the highest circles. He became a Muslim and in Persia married a girl of the royal family, hence his title of Mirza. He visited Europe also and was presented to the young Queen Victoria. He has written delightful memoirs and accounts of his travels.

When I was about eleven a new resident tutor, Ferdinand T. Brooks, came and took charge of me. He was partly Irish (on his father's side) and his mother had been a Frenchwoman or a Belgian. He was a keen theosophist who had been recommended to my father by Mrs. Annie Besant. For nearly three years he was with me and in many ways he influenced me greatly. The only other tutor I had at the time was a dear old Pandit who was supposed to teach me Hindi and Sanskrit. After many years' effort the Pandit managed to teach me extraordinarily little, so little that I can only measure my pitiful knowledge of Sanskrit with the Latin I learnt subsequently at Harrow. The fault no doubt was mine. I am not good at languages, and grammar has had no attraction for me whatever.

F. T. Brooks developed in me a taste for reading and I read a great many English books, though rather aimlessly. I was well up in children's and boys' literature; the Lewis Carroll books were great favourites, and *The Jungle Books* and *Kim*. I was fascinated by Gustave Dore's illustrations to *Don Quixote*, and Fridtjof Nansen's *Farthest North* opened out a new realm of adventure to me. I remember reading many of the novels of Scott, Dickens and Thackeray, H. G. Wells's romances, Mark Twain, and the Sherlock Holmes stories. I was thrilled by the *Prisoner of Zenda*, and Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* was for me the last word in humour. Another book stands out still in my memory; it was Du Maurier's *Trilby*, also *Peter Ibbetson*. I also developed a liking for poetry, a liking which has to some extent endured and survived the many other changes to which I have been subject.

Brooks also initiated me into the mysteries of science. We rigged up a little laboratory and there I used to spend long and interesting hours working out experiments in elementary physics and chemistry.

Apart from my studies, F. T. Brooks brought a new influence
to bear upon me which affected me powerfully for a while. This was Theosophy. He used to have weekly meetings of theosophists in his rooms and I attended them and gradually imbibed theosophical phraseology and ideas. There were metaphysical arguments, and discussions about reincarnation and the astral and other super-natural bodies, and auras, and the doctrine of \textit{Karma}, and references not only to big books by Madame Blavatsky and other Theosophists but to the Hindu scriptures, the Buddhist \textit{“Dhammapada”}, Pythagoras, Apollonius of Tyana, and various philosophers and mystics. I did not understand much that was said but it all sounded very mysterious and fascinating and I felt that here was the key to the secrets of the universe. For the first time I began to think, consciously and deliberately, of religion and other worlds. The Hindu religion especially went up in my estimation; not the ritual or ceremonial part, but its great books, the \textit{“Upanishads”} and the \textit{“Bhagavad Gita”}. I did not understand them, of course, but they seemed very wonderful. I dreamt of astral bodies and imagined myself flying vast distances. This dream of flying high up in the air (without any appliance) has indeed been a frequent one throughout my life; and sometimes it has been vivid and realistic and the countryside seemed to lie underneath me in a vast panorama. I do not know how the modern interpreters of dreams, Freud and others, would interpret this dream.

Mrs. Annie Besant visited Allahabad in those days and delivered several addresses on theosophical subjects. I was deeply moved by her oratory and returned from her speeches dazed and as in a dream. I decided to join the Theosophical Society, although I was only thirteen then. When I went to ask father’s permission he laughingly gave it; he did not seem to attach importance to the subject either way. I was a little hurt by his lack of feeling. Great as he was in many ways in my eyes, I felt that he was lacking in spirituality. As a matter of fact he was an old theosophist, having joined the Society in its early days when Madame Blavatsky was in India. Curiosity probably led him to it more than religion, and he soon dropped out of it, but some of his friends, who had joined with him, persevered and rose high in the spiritual hierarchy of the Society.

So I became a member of the Theosophical Society at thirteen and Mrs. Besant herself performed the ceremony of initiation, which consisted of good advice and instruction in some mysterious signs, probably a relic of freemasonry. I was thrilled. I attended the Theosophical Convention at Benares and saw old Colonel Olcott with his fine beard.
It is difficult to realise what one looked like or felt like in one's boyhood, thirty years ago. But I have a fairly strong impression that during these theosophical days of mine I developed the flat and insipid look which sometimes denotes piety and which is (or was) often to be seen among theosophist men and women. I was smug, with a feeling of being one-of-the-elect, and altogether I must have been a thoroughly undesirable and unpleasant companion for any boy or girl of my age.

Soon after F. T. Brooks left me I lost touch with Theosophy, and in a remarkably short time (partly because I went to school in England) Theosophy left my life completely. But I have no doubt that those years with F. T. Brooks left a deep impress upon me and I feel that I owe a debt to him and to Theosophy. But I am afraid that theosophists have since then gone down in my estimation. Instead of the chosen ones they seem to be very ordinary folk, liking security better than risk, a soft job more than the martyr's lot. But, for Mrs. Besant, I always had the warmest admiration.

The next important event that I remember affecting me was the Russo-Japanese War. Japanese victories stirred up my enthusiasm and I waited eagerly for the papers for fresh news daily. I invested in a large number of books on Japan and tried to read some of them. I felt rather lost in Japanese history, but I liked the knightly tales of old Japan and the pleasant prose of Lafcadio Hearn.

Nationalistic ideas filled my mind. I mused of Indian freedom and Asiatic freedom from the thraldom of Europe. I dreamt of brave deeds, of how, sword in hand, I would fight for India and help in freeing her.

I was fourteen. Changes were taking place in our house. My older cousins, having become professional men, were leaving the common home and setting up their own households separately. Fresh thoughts and vague fancies were floating in my mind and I began to take a little more interest in the opposite sex. I still preferred the company of boys and thought it a little beneath my dignity to mix with groups of girls. But sometimes at Kashmiri parties, where pretty girls were not lacking, or elsewhere, a glance or a touch would thrill me.

In May 1905, when I was fifteen, we set sail for England. Father and mother, my baby sister and I, we all went together.
IV

HARROW AND CAMBRIDGE

On a May day, towards the end of the month, we reached London, reading in the train from Dover of the great Japanese sea victory at Tsushima. I was in high good humour. The very next day happened to be Derby day and we went to see the race. I remember meeting, soon after our arrival in London, M. A. Ansari, who was then a smart and clever young man with a record of brilliant academical achievement behind him. He was a house surgeon at the time in a London hospital.

I was a little fortunate in finding a vacancy at Harrow for I was slightly above the usual age for entry, being fifteen. My family went to the Continent and after some months they returned to India.

Never before had I been left among strangers all by myself and I felt lonely and homesick, but not for long. I managed to fit in to some extent in the life at school and work and play kept me busy. I was never an exact fit. Always I had a feeling that I was not one of them, and the others must have felt the same way about me. I was left a little to myself. But on the whole I took my full share in the games, without in any way shining at them, and it was, I believe, recognised that I was no shirker.

I was put, to begin with, in a low form because of my small knowledge of Latin, but I was pushed higher up soon. In many subjects probably, and especially in general knowledge, I was in advance of those of my age. My interests were certainly wider, and I read both books and newspapers more than most of my fellow-students. I remember writing to my father how dull most of the English boys were as they could talk about nothing but their games. But there were exceptions, especially when I reached the upper forms.

I was greatly interested in the General Election, which took place, as far as I remember, at the end of 1905 and which ended in a great Liberal victory. Early in 1906 our form master asked us about the new Government and, much to his surprise, I was the only boy in his form who could give him much information on the subject, including almost a complete list of members of Campbell-Bannerman’s Cabinet.

Apart from politics another subject that fascinated me was the early growth of aviation. Those were the days of the Wright
Brothers and Santos Dumont (to be followed soon by Farman, Latham and Blériot), and I wrote to father from Harrow, in my enthusiasm, that soon I might be able to pay him a week-end visit in India by air.

There were four or five Indian boys at Harrow in my time. I seldom came across those at other houses, but in our own house—the Headmaster's—we had one of the sons of the Gaekwar of Baroda. He was much senior to me and was popular because of his cricket. He left soon after my arrival. Later came the eldest son of the Maharaja of Kapurthala, Paramjit Singh, now the Tikka Sahab. He was a complete misfit and was unhappy and could not mix at all with the other boys, who often made fun of him and his ways. This irritated him greatly and sometimes he used to tell them what he would do to them if they came to Kapurthala. Needless to say, this did not improve matters for him. He had previously spent some time in France and could speak French fluently but, oddly enough, such were the methods of teaching foreign languages in English public schools, that this hardly helped him in the French classes.

A curious incident took place once when, in the middle of the night, the house-master suddenly visited our rooms and made a thorough search all over the house. We learnt that Paramjit Singh had lost his beautiful gold-mounted cane. The search was not successful. Two or three days later the Eton and Harrow match took place at Lord's, and immediately afterwards the cane was discovered in the owner's room. Evidently some one had used it at Lord's and then returned it.

There were a few Jews in our house and in other houses. They got on fairly well but there was always a background of anti-Semitic feeling. They were the 'damned Jews', and soon, almost unconsciously, I began to think that it was the proper thing to have this feeling. I never really felt anti-Semitic in the least, and, in later years, I had many good friends among the Jews.

I got used to Harrow and liked the place, and yet somehow I began to feel that I was outgrowing it. The university attracted me. Right through the years 1906 and 1907 news from India had been agitating me. I got meagre enough accounts from the English papers; but even that little showed that big events were happening at home, in Bengal, Punjab and the Maharashtra. There was Lala Lajpat Rai's and S. Ajit Singh's deportation, and Bengal seemed to be in an uproar, and Tilak's name was often flashed from Poona, and there was Swadeshi and boycott. All this stirred me tremendously; but there was not a soul in Harrow to whom I could talk about it. During the holidays I met some of
my cousins or other Indian friends and then had a chance of relieving my mind.

A prize I got for good work at school was one of G. M. Trevelyan's Garibaldi books. This fascinated me and soon I obtained the other two volumes of the series and studied the whole Garibaldi story in them carefully. Visions of similar deeds in India came before me, of a gallant fight for freedom, and in my mind India and Italy got strangely mixed together. Harrow seemed a rather small and restricted place for these ideas and I wanted to go to the wider sphere of the university. So I induced father to agree to this and left Harrow after only two years' stay, which was much less than the usual period.

I was leaving Harrow because I wanted to do so myself and yet, I well remember, that when the time came to part I felt unhappy and tears came to my eyes. I had grown rather fond of the place and my departure for good put an end to one period in my life. And yet, I wonder, how far I was really sorry at leaving Harrow. Was it not partly a feeling that I ought to be unhappy because Harrow tradition and song demanded it? I was susceptible to these traditions for I had deliberately not resisted them so as to be in harmony with the place.

Cambridge, Trinity College, the beginning of October 1907, my age seventeen, or rather approaching eighteen. I felt elated at being an undergraduate with a great deal of freedom, compared to school, to do what I chose. I had got out of the shackles of boyhood and felt at last that I could claim to be a grown-up. With a self-conscious air I wandered about the big courts and narrow streets of Cambridge, delighted to meet a person I knew.

Three years I was at Cambridge, three quiet years with little of disturbance in them, moving slowly on like the sluggish Cam. They were pleasant years, with many friends and some work and some play and a gradual widening of the intellectual horizon. I took the Natural Sciences Tripos, my subjects being chemistry, geology and botany, but my interests were not confined to these. Many of the people I met at Cambridge or during the vacations in London or elsewhere talked learnedly about books and literature and history and politics and economics. I felt a little at sea at first in this semi-highbrow talk, but I read a few books and soon got the hang of it and could at least keep my end up and not betray too great an ignorance on any of the usual subjects. So we discussed Nietzsche (he was all the rage in Cambridge then) and Bernard Shaw's prefaces and the latest book by Lowes Dickinson. We considered ourselves very sophisticated and talked of sex and morality in a superior way, referring casually
to Ivan Block, Havelock Ellis, Kraft Ebbing or Otto Weininger. We felt that we knew about as much of the theory of the subject as anyone who was not a specialist need know.

As a matter of fact, in spite of our brave talk, most of us were rather timid where sex was concerned. At any rate I was so, and my knowledge for many years, till after I had left Cambridge, remained confined to theory. Why this was so it is a little difficult to say. Most of us were strongly attracted by sex and I doubt if any of us attached any idea of sin to it. Certainly I did not; there was no religious inhibition. We talked of its being amoral, neither moral nor immoral. Yet in spite of all this a certain shyness kept me away, as well as a distaste for the usual methods adopted. For I was in those days definitely a shy lad, perhaps because of my lonely childhood.

My general attitude to life at the time was a vague kind of cyrenaicism, partly natural to youth, partly the influence of Oscar Wilde and Walter Pater. It is easy and gratifying to give a long Greek name to the desire for a soft life and pleasant experiences. But there was something more in it than that for I was not particularly attracted to a soft life. Not having the religious temper and disliking the repressions of religion, it was natural for me to seek some other standard. I was superficial and did not go deep down into anything. And so the aesthetic side of life appealed to me, and the idea of going through life worthily, not indulging it in the vulgar way, but still making the most of it and living a full and many-sided life attracted me. I enjoyed life and I refused to see why I should consider it a thing of sin.

At the same time risk and adventure fascinated me; I was always, like my father, a bit of a gambler, at first with money and then for higher stakes, with the bigger issues of life. Indian politics in 1907 and 1908 were in a state of upheaval and I wanted to play a brave part in them, and this was not likely to lead to a soft life. All these mixed and sometimes conflicting desires led to a medley in my mind. Vague and confused it was but I did not worry, for the time for any decision was yet far distant. Meanwhile, life was pleasant, both physically and intellectually, fresh horizons were ever coming into sight, there was so much to be done, so much to be seen, so many fresh avenues to explore. And we would sit by theireside in the long winter evenings and talk and discuss unhurriedly deep into the night till the dying fire drove us shivering to our beds. And sometimes, during our discussions, our voices would lose their even tenor and would grow loud and excited in heated argument. But it was all make-believe. We played with the problems of human life in a mock-
serious way, for they had not become real problems for us yet, and we had not been caught in the coils of the world's affairs. It was the pre-war world of the early twentieth century. Soon this world was to die, yielding place to another, full of death and destruction and anguish and heart-sickness for the world's youth. But the veil of the future hid this and we saw around us an assured and advancing order of things and this was pleasant for those who could afford it.

I write of cyrenaicism and the like and of various ideas that influenced me then. But it would be wrong to imagine that I thought clearly on these subjects then or even that I thought it necessary to try to be clear and definite about them. They were just vague fancies that floated in my mind and in this process left their impress in a greater or less degree. I did not worry myself at all about these speculations. Work and games and amusements filled my life and the only thing that disturbed me sometimes was the political struggle in India. Among the books that influenced me politically at Cambridge was Meredith Townsend's Asia and Europe.

From 1907 onwards for several years India was seething with unrest and trouble. For the first time since the Revolt of 1857 India was showing fight and not submitting tamely to foreign rule. News of Tilak's activities and his conviction, of Aravindo Ghose and the way the masses of Bengal were taking the swadeshi and boycott pledge stirred all of us Indians in England. Almost without an exception we were Tilakites or Extremists, as the new party was called in India.

The Indians in Cambridge had a society called the 'Majlis'. We discussed political problems there often but in somewhat unreal debates. More effort was spent in copying Parliamentary and the University Union style and mannerisms than in grappling with the subject. Frequently I went to the Majlis but during my three years I hardly spoke there. I could not get over my shyness and diffidence. This same difficulty pursued me in my college debating society, "The Magpie and Stump", where there was a rule that a member not speaking for a whole term had to pay a fine. Often I paid the fine.

I remember Edwin Montagu, who later became Secretary of State for India, often visiting "The Magpie and Stump." He was an old Trinity man and was then Member of Parliament for Cambridge. It was from him that I first heard the modern definition of faith: to believe in something which your reason tells you cannot be true, for if your reason approved of it there could be no question of blind faith. I was influenced by my
scientific studies in the university and had some of the assurance which science then possessed. For the science of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, unlike that of to-day, was very sure of itself and the world.

In the Majlis and in private talks Indian students often used the most extreme language when discussing Indian politics. They even talked in terms of admiration of the acts of violence that were then beginning in Bengal. Later I was to find that these very persons were to become members of the Indian Civil Service, High Court judges, very staid and sober lawyers, and the like. Few of these parlour-firebrands took any effective part in Indian political movements subsequently.

Some of the noted Indian politicians of the day visited us at Cambridge. We respected them but there was also a trace of superiority in our attitude. We felt that ours was a wider culture and we could take a broader view of things. Among those who came to us were Bepin Chandra Pal, Lajpat Rai and G. K. Gokhale. We met Bepin Pal in one of our sitting-rooms. There were only a dozen of us present but he thundered at us as if he was addressing a mass meeting of ten thousand. The volume of noise was so terrific that I could hardly follow what he was saying. Lalaji spoke to us in a more reasonable way and I was impressed by his talk. I wrote to father that I preferred Lalaji's address to Bepin Pal's and this pleased him for he had no liking in those days for the firebrands of Bengal. Gokhale addressed a public meeting in Cambridge and my chief recollection of this meeting is of a question that was put by A. M. Khwaja at the end of it. Khwaja got up from the body of the hall and put an interminable question, which went on and on, till most of us had forgotten how it began and what it was about.

Har Dayal had a great reputation among the Indians but he was at Oxford a little before my time at Cambridge. I met him once or twice in London during my Harrow days.

Among my contemporaries at Cambridge there were several who played a prominent part in Indian Congress politics in later years. J. M. Sen Gupta left Cambridge soon after I went up. Saifud-Din Kitchlew, Syed Mahmud and Tasadduk Ahmad Sherwani were more or less my contemporaries. S. M. Sulaiman, who is now the Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court, was also at Cambridge in my time. Other contemporaries have blossomed out as ministers and members of the Indian Civil Service.

In London we used to hear also of Shyamji Krishnavarma and his India House but I never met him or visited that house. Some-
times we saw his Indian Sociologist. Long afterwards, in 1926, I saw Shyamji in Geneva. His pockets still bulged with ancient copies of the Indian Sociologist, and he regarded almost every Indian who came near him as a spy sent by the British Government.

In London also there was the student centre opened by the India Office. This was universally regarded by Indians, with a great deal of justification, as a device to spy on Indian students. Many Indians, however, had to put up with it, whether they wanted to or not, as it became almost impossible to enter a university without its recommendation.

The political situation in India had drawn my father into more active politics and I was pleased at this although I did not agree with his politics. He had, naturally enough, joined the Moderates whom he knew and many of whom were his colleagues in his profession. He presided over a provincial conference in his province and took up a strong line against the Extremists of Bengal and Maharashtra. He also became president of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee. He was present at Surat in 1907 when the Congress broke up in disorder and later emerged as a purely moderate group.

Soon after Surat, H. W. Nevinson stopped with him at Allahabad as his guest for a while and, in his book on India, he referred to father as being "moderate in everything except his generosity." This was a very wrong estimate; for father was never moderate in anything except his politics, and step by step his nature drove him from even that remnant of moderation. A man of strong feelings, strong passions, tremendous pride and great strength of will, he was very far from the moderate type. And yet in 1907 and 1908 and for some years afterwards, he was undoubtedly a moderate of Moderates and he was bitter against the Extremists, though I believe he admired Tilak.

Why was this so? It was natural for him with his grounding in law and constitutionalism to take a lawyer's and a constitutional view of politics. His clear thinking led him to see that hard and extreme words lead nowhere unless they are followed by action appropriate to the language. He saw no effective action in prospect. The swadeshi and boycott movements did not seem to him to carry matters far. And then the background of these movements was a religious nationalism which was alien to his nature. He did not look back to a revival in India of ancient times. He had no sympathy or understanding of them and utterly disliked many old social customs, caste and the like, which he considered reactionary. He looked to the West and
felt greatly attracted by Western progress, and thought that this could come through an association with England.

Socially speaking, the revival of Indian nationalism in 1907 was definitely reactionary. Inevitably, a new nationalism in India, as elsewhere in the East, was a religious nationalism. The Moderates thus represented a more advanced social outlook but they were a mere handful on the top with no touch with the masses. They did not think much in terms of economics, except in terms of the new upper middle class which they partly represented and which wanted room for expansion. They advocated also petty social reforms to weaken caste and do away with old social customs which hindered growth.

Having cast his lot with the Moderates, father took an aggressive line. Most of the Extremists, apart from a few leaders in Bengal and Poona, were young men and it irritated him to find that these youngsters dared to go their own way. Impatient and intolerant of opposition, and not suffering people whom he considered fools, gladly, he pitched into them and hit out whenever he could. I remember, I think it was after I left Cambridge, reading an article of his which annoyed me greatly. I wrote him rather an impertinent letter in which I suggested that no doubt the British Government was greatly pleased with his political activities. This was just the kind of suggestion which would make him wild, and he was very angry. He almost thought of asking me to return from England immediately.

During my stay at Cambridge the question had arisen as to what career I should take up. For a little while the Indian Civil Service was contemplated; there was a glamour about it still in those days. But this idea was dropped as neither my father nor I were keen on it. The principal reason, I think, was that I was still under age for it, and if I was to appear for it I would have to stay three to four years more after taking my degree. I was twenty when I took my degree at Cambridge and the age-limit for the I.C.S. in those days was 22 to 24. If successful an extra year had to be spent in England. My people were a little tired of my long stay in England and wanted me back soon. Another reason which weighed with father was that in case I was appointed to the I.C.S. I would be posted in various distant places far from home. Both father and mother wanted me near them after my long absence. So the die was cast in favour of the paternal profession, the Bar, and I joined the Inner Temple.

It is curious that in spite of my growing extremism in politics, I did not then view with any strong disfavour the idea of joining the I.C.S. and thus becoming a cog in the British Government's
administrative machine in India. Such an idea in later years would have been repellent to me.

I left Cambridge after taking my degree in 1910. I was only moderately successful in my science tripos examination, obtaining second class honours. For the next two years I hovered about London. My law studies did not take up much time and I got through the Bar examinations, one after the other, with neither glory nor ignominy. For the rest I simply drifted, doing some general reading, vaguely attracted to the Fabians and socialistic ideas, and interested in the political movements of the day. Ireland and the woman suffrage movement interested me especially. I remember also how, during a visit to Ireland in the summer of 1910, the early beginnings of Sinn Fein had attracted me.

I came across some old Harrow friends and developed expensive habits in their company. Often I exceeded the handsome allowance that father made me and he was greatly worried on my account fearing that I was rapidly going to the devil. But as a matter of fact I was not doing anything so notable. I was merely trying to ape to some extent the prosperous but somewhat empty-headed Englishman who is called a ‘man about town.’ This soft and pointless existence, needless to say, did not improve me in any way. My early enthusiasms began to tone down and the only thing that seemed to go up was my conceit.

During my vacations I had sometimes travelled on the Continent. In the summer of 1909 my father and I happened to be in Berlin when Count Zeppelin arrived flying in his new airship from Friedericshafhen on Lake Constance. I believe that was his first long flight and the occasion was celebrated by a huge demonstration and a formal welcome by the Kaiser. A vast multitude, estimated at between one and two millions, gathered in the Tempelhof Field in Berlin, and the Zeppelin arrived to time and circled gracefully above us. The Hotel Adlon presented all its residents that day with a fine picture of Count Zeppelin, and I have still got that picture.

About two months later we saw in Paris the first aeroplane to fly all over the city and to circle round the Eiffel Tower. The aviator’s name was, I think, Comte de Lambert. Eighteen years later I was again in Paris when Lindbergh came like a shining arrow from across the Atlantic.

I had a narrow escape once in Norway where I had gone on a pleasure cruise soon after taking my degree at Cambridge in 1910. We were tramping across the mountainous country. Hot and weary we reached our destination, a little hotel, and
demanded baths. Such a thing had not been heard of there and there was no provision for it in the building. We were told however that we could wash ourselves in a neighbouring stream. So, armed with table napkins or perhaps small face towels, which the hotel generously gave, two of us, a young Englishman and I, went to this roaring torrent which was coming from a glacier near by. I entered the water; it was not deep but it was freezing and the bottom was terribly slippery. I slipped and fell and the ice-cold water numbed me and made me lose all sensation or power of controlling my limbs. I could not regain my foothold and was swept rapidly along by the torrent. My companion, the Englishman, however, managed to get out and he ran along the side and ultimately, succeeding in catching my leg, dragged me out. Later we realized the danger we were in for about two or three hundred yards ahead of us this mountain torrent tumbled over an enormous precipice, forming a waterfall which was one of the sights of the place.

In the summer of 1912 I was called to the Bar, and in the autumn of that year I returned to India finally after a stay of over seven years in England. Twice, in between, I had gone home during my holidays. But now I returned for good, and I am afraid, as I landed at Bombay, I was a bit of a prig with little to commend me.
V

BACK HOME AND WAR-TIME POLITICS
IN INDIA

Towards the end of 1912 India was, politically, very dull. Tilak was in gaol, the Extremists had been sat upon and were lying low without any effective leadership, Bengal was quiet after the unsettling of the partition of the province, and the Moderates had been effectively "rallied" to the Minto-Morley scheme of councils. There was some interest in Indians overseas, especially in the condition of Indians in South Africa. The Congress was a moderate group, meeting annually, passing some feeble resolutions, and attracting little attention.

I visited, as a delegate, the Bankipur Congress during Christmas 1912. It was very much an English-knowing upper class affair where morning coats and well-pressed trousers were greatly in evidence. Essentially it was a social gathering with no political excitement or tension. Gokhale, fresh from South Africa, attended it and was the outstanding person of the session. High-strung, full of earnestness and a nervous energy, he seemed to be one of the few persons present who took politics and public affairs seriously and felt deeply about them. I was impressed by him.

A characteristic incident occurred when Gokhale was leaving Bankipur. He was a member of the Public Services Commission at the time and, as such, was entitled to a first class railway compartment to himself. He was not well and crowds and uncongenial company upset him. He liked to be left alone by himself and, after the strain of the Congress session, he was looking forward to a quiet journey by train. He got his compartment but the rest of the train was crowded with delegates returning to Calcutta. After a little while, Bhupendra Nath Basu, who later became a member of the India Council, came up to Gokhale and casually asked him if he could travel in his compartment. Mr. Gokhale was a little taken aback as Mr. Basu was an aggressive talker, but naturally he agreed. A few minutes later Mr. Basu again came up to Gokhale and asked him if he would mind if a friend of his also travelled in the same compartment. Mr. Gokhale again mildly agreed. A little before the train left, Mr. Basu mentioned casually that both he and his friend would find it very uncomfortable to sleep in the upper berths, so would Gokhale mind occupying an upper berth so that the two lower berths
might be taken by them? And that, I think, was the arrangement arrived at and poor Mr. Gokhale had to climb up and spend a bad night.

I took to the law and joined the High Court. The work interested me to a certain extent. The early months after my return from Europe were pleasant. I was glad to be back home and to pick up old threads. But gradually the life I led, in common with most others of my kind, began to lose all its freshness and I felt that I was being engulfed in a dull routine of a pointless and futile existence. I suppose my mongrel, or at least mixed, education was responsible for this feeling of dissatisfaction with my surroundings. The habits and the ideas that had grown in me during my seven years in England did not fit in with things as I found them. Fortunately my home atmosphere was fairly congenial and that was some help, but it was not enough. For the rest there was the Bar Library and the club and the same people were to be found in both, discussing the same old topics, usually connected with the legal profession, over and over again. Decidedly the atmosphere was not intellectually stimulating and a sense of the utter insipidity of life grew upon me. There were not even worthwhile amusements or diversions.

G. Lowes Dickinson is reported by E. M. Forster, in his recent life of him, to have once said about India: "And why can't the races meet? Simply because the Indians bore the English. That is the simple adamantine fact." It is possible that most Englishmen feel that way and it is not surprising. To quote Forster again (from another book), every Englishman in India feels and behaves, and rightly, as if he was a member of an army of occupation, and it is quite impossible for natural and unrestrained relations between the two races to grow under these circumstances. The Englishman and the Indian are always posing to each other and naturally they feel uncomfortable in each other's company. Each bores the other and is glad to get away from him to breathe freely and move naturally again.

Usually the Englishman meets the same set of Indians, those connected with the official world, and he seldom reaches really interesting people, and if he reached them he would not easily draw them out. The British régime in India has pushed up into prominence, even socially, the official class, both British and Indian, and this class is most singularly dull and narrow-minded. Even a bright young Englishman on coming out to India will soon relapse into a kind of intellectual and cultural torpor and will get cut off from all live ideas and movements. After a day in office, dealing with the ever-rotating and never-ending files, he
will have some exercise and then go to his club to mix with his kind, drink whisky and read *Punch* and the illustrated weeklies from England. He hardly reads books and if he does he will probably go back to an old favourite. And for this gradual deterioration of mind he will blame India, curse the climate, and generally anathematise the tribe of agitators who add to his troubles, not realising that the cause of intellectual and cultural decay lies in the hide-bound bureaucratic and despotic system of government which flourishes in India and of which he is a tiny part.

If that is the fate of the English official, in spite of his leaves and furloughs, the Indian official working with him or under him is not likely to fare better, for he tries to model himself on the English type. Few experiences are more dreary than sitting with high-placed officials, both English and Indian, in that seat of Empire, New Delhi, and listening to their unending talk about promotions, leave rules, furloughs, transfers, and little tit-bits of Service scandal.

This official and Service atmosphere invaded and set the tone for almost all Indian middle-class life, especially the English-knowing intelligentsia, except to some extent in cities like Calcutta and Bombay. Professional men, lawyers, doctors and others, succumbed to it, and even the academic halls of the semi-official universities were full of it. All these people lived in a world apart, cut off from the masses and even the lower middle class. Politics was confined to this upper strata. The nationalist movement in Bengal from 1906 onwards had for the first time shaken this up and infused a new life in the Bengal lower middle-class and to a small extent even the masses. This process was to grow rapidly in later years under Gandhiji's leadership, but a nationalist struggle though life-giving is a narrow creed and absorbs too much energy and attention to allow of other activities.

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1 I have referred to Mr. Gandhi or Mahatma Gandhi as "Gandhiji" throughout these pages as he himself prefers this to the addition of 'Mahatma' to his name. But I have seen some extraordinary explanations of this 'ji' in books and articles by English writers. Some have imagined that it is a term of endearment—Gandhiji meaning 'dear little Gandhi'! This is perfectly absurd and shows colossal ignorance of Indian life. 'Ji' is one of the commonest additions to a name in India being applied indiscriminately to all kinds of people and to men, women, boys, girls and children. It conveys an idea of respect, something equivalent to Mr., Mrs., or Miss. Hindustani is rich in courtly phrases and prefixes and suffixes to names and honianic titles. 'Ji' is the simplest of these and the least formal of them,
I felt, therefore, dissatisfied with life in those early years after my return from England. My profession did not fill me with a whole-hearted enthusiasm. Politics, which to me meant aggressive nationalist activity against foreign rule, offered no scope for this. I joined the Congress and took part in its occasional meetings. When a special occasion arose, like the agitation against the Fiji indenture system for Indian workers, or the South African Indian question, I threw myself into it with energy and worked hard. But these were only temporary occupations.

I indulged in some diversions like shikar but I had no special aptitude or inclination for it. I liked the outings and the jungle and cared little for the killing. Indeed my reputation was a singularly bloodless one, although I once succeeded, more or less by a fluke, in killing a bear in Kashmir. An incident with a little antelope damped even the little ardour that I possessed for shikar. This harmless little animal fell down at my feet, wounded to death, and looked up at me with its great big eyes full of tears. Those eyes have often haunted me since.

I was attracted in those early years to Mr. Gokhale’s Servants of India Society. I never thought of joining it, partly because its politics were too moderate for me, and partly because I had no intention then of giving up my profession. But I had a great admiration for the members of the society who had devoted themselves for a bare pittance to the country’s service. Here at least, I thought, was straight and single-minded and continuous work even though this might not be on wholly right lines.

Mr. Srinivas Sastri, however, gave me a great shock in a little matter quite unconnected with politics. He was addressing a students’ meeting in Allahabad and he told them to be respectful and obedient to their teachers and professors and to observe carefully all the rules and regulations laid down by constituted authority. All this goody-goody talk did not appeal to me much; it seemed very platitudinous and somewhat undesirable, with all its stress on authoritarianism. I thought that this was perhaps due to the semi-official atmosphere which was so prevalent in India. Mr. Sastri went on and called upon the boys to report each other’s sins of omission and commission immediately to the authorities. In other words they were to spy on each other and play the part of

though perfectly correct. I learn from my brother-in-law, Ranjit S. Pandit, that this ‘ji’ has a long and honourable ancestry. It is derived from the Sanskrit Arya meaning a gentleman or noble-born (not the Nazi meaning of Aryan!). This arya became in Prakrit ajja and this led to the simple ‘ji’.
informers. These hard words were not used by Mr. Sastri but their meaning seemed to me clear, and I listened aghast to this friendly counsel of a great leader. I had freshly returned from England and the lesson that had been most impressed upon my mind in school and college was never to betray a colleague. There was no greater sin against the canons of good form than to sneak and inform and thus get a companion into trouble. A sudden and complete reversal of this principle upset me and I felt that there was a great difference between Mr. Sastri's morality and the morality that had been taught to me.

The World War absorbed our attention. It was far off and did not at first affect our lives much, and India never felt the full horror of it. Politics petered out and sank into insignificance. The Defence of India Act (the equivalent of the British D.O.R.A.) held the country in its grip. From the second year onwards news of conspiracies and shootings came to us, and of press-gang methods to enrol recruits in the Punjab.

There was little sympathy with the British in spite of loud professions of loyalty. Moderate and Extremist alike learnt with satisfaction of German victories. There was no love for Germany of course, only the desire to see our own rulers humbled. It was the weak and helpless man's idea of vicarious revenge. I suppose most of us viewed the struggle with mixed feelings. Of all the nations involved my sympathies were probably most with France. The ceaseless and unabashed propaganda on behalf of the Allies had some effect, although we tried to discount it greatly.

Gradually political life grew again. Lokamanya Tilak came out of prison and Home Rule Leagues were started by him and Mrs. Besant. I joined both but I worked especially for Mrs. Besant's League. Mrs. Besant began to play an ever increasing part in the Indian political scene. The annual sessions of the Congress became a little more exciting and the Moslem League began to march with the Congress. The atmosphere became electric and most of us young men felt exhilarated and expected big things in the near future. Mrs. Besant's internment added greatly to the excitement of the intelligentsia and vitalised the Home Rule Movement all over the country. The Home Rule Leagues were attracting not only all the old Extremists who had been kept out of the Congress since 1907 but large numbers of newcomers from the middle classes. They did not touch the masses.

Mrs. Besant's internment stirred even the older generation, including many of the Moderate leaders. Just before the internment I remember how moved we used to be by the eloquent speeches of Mr. Srinivasa Sastri which we read in the papers.
But just before or after the internment suddenly Mr. Sastri became silent. He failed us completely when the time for action came and there was considerable disappointment and resentment at his silence when most of all a lead was needed. I am afraid that ever since then the conviction has grown upon me that Mr. Sastri is not a man of action and a crisis does not suit his genius.

Other Moderate leaders, however, went ahead, some to draw back later, some to remain in the new position. I remember that there was a great deal of discussion in those days about the new Indian Defence Force which the Government was organising from the middle classes on the lines of the European defence forces in India. This Indian force was treated very differently from the European force in a variety of ways, and many of us felt that we should not co-operate with it till these humiliating distinctions were removed. After much discussion, however, we decided to co-operate in the U.P. as it was considered worth while for our young men to have military training even under these conditions. I sent my application to join the new force, and we formed a committee in Allahabad to push the scheme on. Just then came Mrs. Besant’s internment and in the excitement of the moment I managed to get the committee members—they included my father, Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. C. Y. Chintamani and other Moderate leaders—to agree to cancel our meeting and all other work in connection with the Defence Force as a protest against the Government’s action. A public notice was issued immediately to this effect. I think some of the signatories regretted later this aggressive act in war time.

Mrs. Besant’s internment also resulted in my father, and other Moderate leaders joining the Home Rule League. Some months later most of these Moderate members resigned from the League. My father remained in it and became the president of the Allahabad branch.

Gradually my father had been drifting away from the orthodox Moderate position. His nature rebelled against too much submission and appeal to an authority which ignored us and treated us disdainfully. But the old Extremist leaders did not attract him; their language and methods jarred upon him. The episode of Mrs. Besant’s internment and subsequent events influenced him considerably but still he hesitated before definitely committing himself to a forward line. Often he used to say in those days that moderate tactics were no good, but nothing effective could be done till some solution for the Hindu-Muslim question was found. If this was found then he promised to go ahead with the youngest of us. The adoption by the Congress at Lucknow in
1916 of the Joint Congress-League Scheme, which had been drawn up at a meeting of the All India Congress Committee in our house, pleased him greatly as it opened the way to a joint effort and he was prepared to go ahead then even at the cost of breaking with his old colleagues of the Moderate group. They pulled together till and during Edwin Montagu's visit to India as Secretary of State. Differences arose soon after the publication of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, and the final break in the United Provinces came in the summer of 1918 at a special provincial conference held at Lucknow over which my father presided. The Moderates, expecting that this conference would adopt a strong line against the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals, boycotted the conference. Later they also boycotted the special session of the Congress held to consider these proposals. Since then they have been out of the Congress.

This Moderate practice of quietly dropping out and keeping away from the Congress sessions and other public gatherings and not even presenting their viewpoint and fighting for it, even though the majority might be against them, struck me as peculiarly undignified and unbecoming in public workers. I think that was the general sense of large numbers of people in the country and I am sure that the almost total collapse of the Moderates in Indian politics was partly due to this timid attitude. Mr. Sastri was, I think, the only Moderate leader who attended some of the early sessions of the Congress, which had been boycotted by the Moderates as a group, and put forward his solitary viewpoint. He went up in public estimation because of it.

My own political and public activities in the early war years were modest and I kept away from addressing public gatherings. I was still diffident and terrified of public speaking. Partly also I felt that public speeches should not be in English and I doubted my capacity to speak at any length in Hindustani. I remember a little incident when I was induced to deliver my first public speech in Allahabad. Probably it was in 1915 but I am not clear about dates and am rather mixed up about the order of events. The occasion was a protest meeting against a new Act muzzling the press. I spoke briefly and in English. As soon as the meeting was over Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru, to my great embarrassment, embraced and kissed me in public on the dais. This was not because of what I had said or how I had said it. His effusive joy was caused by the mere fact that I had spoken in public and thus a new recruit had been obtained for public work, for this work consisted in those days practically of speaking only.

I remember that many of us young men in Allahabad then
had a faint hope that perhaps Dr. Sapru might take up a more advanced attitude in politics. Of all the Moderate group in the city he seemed to be the most likely to do so because he was emotional and could occasionally be carried by enthusiasm. Compared to my father seemed cold-bloodedness itself, though underneath this outer cover there was fire enough. But father’s strength of will left us little hope and for a brief while we actually had greater expectations from Dr. Sapru. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, with his long record of public work, attracted us of course and we used to have long talks with him, pressing him to give a brave lead to the country.

At home, in those early years, political questions were not peaceful subjects for discussion, and references to them, which were frequent, immediately produced a tense atmosphere. Father had been closely watching my growing drift towards Extremism, my continual criticism of the politics of talk and my insistent demand for action. What action it should be was not clear, and sometimes father imagined that I was heading straight for the violent courses adopted by some of the young men of Bengal. This worried him very much. As a matter of fact I was not attracted that way, but the idea that we must not tamely submit to existing conditions and that something must be done began to obsess me more and more. Successful action, from the national point of view, did not seem to be at all easy, but I felt that both individual and national honour demanded a more aggressive and fighting attitude to foreign rule. Father himself was dissatisfied with the Moderate philosophy, and a mental conflict was going on inside him. He was too obstinate to change from one position to another until he was absolutely convinced that there was no other way. Each step forward meant for him a hard and bitter tussle in his mind, and when the step was taken after that struggle with part of himself, there was no going back. He had not taken it in a fit of enthusiasm but as a result of intellectual conviction, and then, having done so, all his pride prevented him from looking back.

The outward change in his politics came about the time of Mrs. Besant’s internment and from that time onwards step by step he went ahead, leaving his old Moderate colleagues far behind, till the tragic happenings in the Punjab in 1919 finally led him to cut adrift from his old life and his profession, and throw in his lot with the new movement started by Gandhiji.

But that was still to be, and from 1915 to 1917 he was still unsure of what to do, and the doubts in him, added to his worries about me, did not make him a peaceful talker on the public issues of
the day. Often enough our talks ended abruptly by his losing his temper with us.

My first meeting with Gandhiji was about the time of the Lucknow Congress during Christmas 1916. All of us admired him for his heroic fight in South Africa, but he seemed very distant and different and unpatriotic to many of us young men. He refused to take part in Congress or national politics then and confined himself to the South African Indian question. Soon afterwards his adventures and victory in Champaran, on behalf of the tenants of the planters, filled us with enthusiasm. We saw that he was prepared to apply his methods in India also and they promised success.

I remember being moved also, in those days after the Lucknow Congress, by a number of eloquent speeches delivered by Sarojini Naidu in Allahabad. It was all nationalism and patriotism and I was a pure nationalist, my vague socialist ideas of college days having sunk into the background. Roger Casement’s wonderful speech at his trial in 1916 seemed to point out exactly how a member of a subject nation should feel. The Easter Week rising in Ireland by its very failure attracted, for was that not true courage which mocked at almost certain failure and proclaimed to the world that no physical might could crush the invincible spirit of a nation?

Such were my thoughts then, and yet fresh reading was again stirring the embers of socialist ideas in my head. They were vague ideas, more humanitarian and utopian than scientific. A favourite writer of mine during the war years and after was Bertrand Russell.

These thoughts and desires produced a growing conflict within me and a dissatisfaction with my profession of the law. I carried on with it because there was nothing else to be done, but I felt more and more that it was not possible to reconcile public work, especially of the aggressive type which appealed to me, with the lawyer’s job. It was not a question of principle but of time and energy. Sir Rash Behary Ghosh, the eminent Calcutta lawyer, who for some unknown reason took a fancy to me, gave me a lot of good advice as to how to get on in the profession. He especially advised me to write a book on a legal subject of my choice, as he said that this was the best way for a junior to train himself. He offered to help me with ideas in the writing of it and to revise it. But all his well meant interest in my legal career was in vain, and few things could be more distasteful to me than to spend my time and energy in writing legal books.

Sir Rash Behary in his old age was extraordinarily irritable and
short of temper and a terror for his juniors. I rather liked him, however, and his very failings and weaknesses were not wholly unattractive. Father and I were once his guests in Simla. It was in 1918, I think, just when the Montagu-Chelmsford report came out. He invited to dinner a few friends one evening and among them was old Mr. Khaparde. After dinner Sir Rash Behary and Mr. Khaparde became loud and aggressive in their arguments for they belonged to rival schools of politics, Sir Rash Behary being a confirmed Moderate and Mr. Khaparde was then supposed to be a leading Tilakite, although in later years he became as mild as a dove and too moderate even for the Moderates. Mr. Khaparde began criticising Mr. Gokhale (who had died some years previously), saying that he had been a British agent who had spied on him in London. This was too much for Sir Rash Behary and he shouted that Gokhale had been the best of men and a particular friend of his and that he would not permit any one to say a word against him. Mr. Khaparde then branched off to Mr. Srinivas Sastri. Sir Rash Behary did not like this but he did not resent it quite so much. Apparently he was not such an admirer of Mr. Sastri's as he had been of Gokhale's. Indeed he said that so long as Gokhale had been alive he had helped the Servants of India Society financially but since his death he had stopped his contribution. Mr. Khaparde then, as a contrast, began praising Tilak. Here was a truly great man, he said, a wonderful person, a saint. "A saint!" retorted Sir Rash Behary, "I hate saints, I want to have nothing to do with them."
VI

MY WEDDING AND AN ADVENTURE IN
THE HIMALAYAS

My marriage took place in 1916 in the city of Delhi. It was on the Vasanta Panchami day which heralds the coming of spring in India. That summer we spent some months in Kashmir. I left my family in the valley and, together with a cousin of mine, wandered for several weeks in the mountains and went up the Ladakh road.

This was my first experience of the narrow and lonely valleys, high up in the world, which lead to the Tibetan plateau. From the top of the Zoji-la pass we saw the rich verdant mountain sides below us on one side and the bare bleak rock on the other. We went up and up the narrow valley bottom flanked on each side by mountains, with the snow-covered tops gleaming on one side and little glaciers creeping down to meet us. The wind was cold and bitter but the sun was warm in the day time, and the air was so clear that often we were misled about the distance of objects, thinking them much nearer than they actually were. The loneliness grew; there were not even trees or vegetation to keep us company—only the bare rock and the snow and ice and, sometimes, very welcome flowers. Yet I found a strange satisfaction in these wild and desolate haunts of nature; I was full of energy and a feeling of exaltation.

I had an exciting experience during this visit. At one place on our march beyond the Zoji-la pass—I think it was called Matayan—we were told that the cave of Amaranath was only eight miles away. It was true that an enormous mountain all covered with ice and snow lay in between and had to be crossed, but what did that matter? Eight miles seemed so little. In our enthusiasm and inexperience we decided to make the attempt. So we left our camp (which was situated at about 11,500 feet altitude) and with a small party went up the mountain. We had a local shepherd for a guide.

We crossed and climbed several glaciers, roping ourselves up, and our troubles increased and breathing became a little difficult. Some of our porters, lightly laden as they were, began to bring up blood. It began to snow and the glaciers became terribly slippery; we were fagged out and every step meant a special effort. But still we persisted in our foolhardy attempt.
We had left our camp at four in the morning and after twelve hours' almost continuous climbing we were rewarded by the sight of a huge ice-field. This was a magnificent sight, surrounded as it was by snow-peaks, like a diadem or an amphitheatre of the gods. But fresh snow and mists soon hid the sight from us. I do not know what our altitude was but I think it must have been about 15,000 to 16,000 feet, as we were considerably higher than the cave of Amaranath. We had now to cross this ice-field, a distance probably of half a mile, and then go down on the other side to the cave. We thought that as the climbing was over, our principal difficulties had also been surmounted, and so, very tired but in good humour, we began this stage of the journey. It was a tricky business as there were many crevasses and the fresh snow often covered a dangerous spot. It was this fresh snow that almost proved to be my undoing, for I stepped upon it and it gave way and down I went a huge and yawning crevasse. It was a tremendous fissure and anything that went right down it could be assured of safe keeping and preservation for some geological ages. But the rope held and I clutched to the side of the crevasse and was pulled out. We were shaken up by this but still we persisted in going on. The crevasses, however, increased in number and width and we had no equipment or means of crossing some of them. And so at last we turned back, weary and disappointed, and the cave of Amaranath remained unvisited.

The higher valleys and mountains of Kashmir fascinated me so much that I resolved to come back again soon. I made many a plan and worked out many a tour, and one, the very thought of which filled me with delight, was a visit to Manasarovar, the wonder lake of Tibet, and snow-covered Kailas near by. That was eighteen years ago, and I am still as far as from ever from Kailas and Manasarovar. I have not even been to visit Kashmir again, much as I have longed to, and ever more and more I have got entangled in the coils of politics and public affairs. Instead of going up mountains or crossing the seas I have to satisfy my wanderlust by coming to prison. But still I plan, for that is a joy that no one can deny even in prison, and besides what else can one do in prison? And I dream of the day when I shall wander about the Himalayas and cross them to reach that lake and mountain of my desire. But meanwhile the sands of life run on and youth passes into middle age and that will give place to something worse, and sometimes I think that I may grow too old to reach Kailas and Manasarovar. But the journey is always worth the making even though the end may not be in sight.
MY WEDDING AND AN ADVENTURE

"Yea, in my mind these mountains rise,
Their perils dyed with evening's rose;
And still my ghost sits at my eyes
And thirsts for their untroubled snows."¹

¹ Walter de la Mare.
THE COMING OF GANDHIJI: SATYAGRAHA AND AMRITSAR

The end of the World War found India in a state of suppressed excitement. Industrialisation had spread and the capitalist class had grown in wealth and power. This handful at the top had prospered and were greedy for more power and opportunity to invest their savings and add to their wealth. The great majority, however, were not so fortunate and looked forward to a lightening of the burdens that crushed them. Among the middle classes there was everywhere an expectation of great constitutional changes which would bring a large measure of self-rule and thus better their lot by opening out many fresh avenues of growth to them. Political agitation, peaceful and wholly constitutional as it was, seemed to be working itself to a head and people talked with assurance of self-determination and self-government. Some of this unrest was visible also among the masses, especially the peasantry. In the rural areas of the Punjab the forcible methods of recruitment were still bitterly remembered, and the fierce suppression of the ‘Komagata Maru’ people and others by conspiracy trials added to the widespread resentment. The soldiers back from active service on distant fronts were no longer the subservient robots that they used to be. They had grown mentally and there was much discontent among them.

Among the Muslims there was anger over the treatment of Turkey and the Khilafat question and an agitation was growing. The treaty with Turkey had not been signed yet, but the whole situation was ominous. So, while they agitated, they waited.

The dominant note all over India was one of waiting and expectation, full of hope and yet tinged with fear and anxiety. Then came the Rowlatt Bills with their drastic provisions for arrest and trial without any of the checks and formalities which the law is supposed to provide. A wave of anger greeted them all over India and even the Moderates joined in this and opposed the measures with all their might. Indeed there was universal opposition on the part of Indians of all shades of opinion. Still the Bills were pushed through by the officials and became law, the principal concession made being to limit them for three years.

It is instructive to look back after fifteen years to these Bills
and the upheaval they caused. They were made into law and yet, so far as I know, they were never used even once during the three years of their life—three years which were not quiet years but were the most troubled years that India had known since the Revolt of 1857. Thus the British Government, in the teeth of unanimous public opinion, pushed through a law which they themselves never used afterwards, and thus invited an upheaval. One might almost think that the object of the measure was to bring trouble.

Another interesting fact is this. To-day, fifteen years later, we have any number of laws on the statute book, functioning from day to day, which are far harsher than the Rowlatt Bills were. Compared to these new laws and ordinances, under which we now enjoy the blessings of British rule, the Rowlatt Bills might almost be considered a charter of liberty. There is this difference, of course: since 1919 we have had a large instalment of what is called self-government, known as the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme, and now we are told that we are on the verge of another big instalment. We progress.

Gandhiji had passed through a serious illness early in 1919. Almost from his sick bed he begged the Viceroy not to give his consent to the Rowlatt Bills. That appeal was ignored as others had been and then, almost against his will, Gandhiji took the leadership in his first all-India agitation. He started the Satyagraha Sabha, the members of which were pledged to disobey the Rowlatt Act, if it was applied to them, as well as other objectionable laws to be specified from time to time. In other words they were to court gaol openly and deliberately.

When I first read about this proposal in the newspapers my reaction was one of tremendous relief. Here at last was a way out of the tangle, a method of action which was straight and open and possibly effective. I was astride with enthusiasm and wanted to join the Satyagraha Sabha immediately. I hardly thought of the consequences—law-breaking, gaol-going, etc.—and if I thought of them I did not care. But suddenly my ardour was damped and I realised that all was not plain sailing. My father was dead against this new idea. He was not in the habit of being swept away by new proposals; he thought carefully of the consequences before he took any fresh step. And the more he thought of the Satyagraha Sabha and its programme, the less he liked it. What good would the gaol-going of a number of individuals do, what pressure could it bring on the Government? Apart from these general considerations, what really moved him was the personal issue. It seemed to him preposterous that I
should go to prison. The trek to prison had not then begun and the idea was most repulsive. Father was intensely attached to his children. He was not showy in his affection, but behind his restraint there was a great love.

For many days there was this mental conflict, and because both of us felt that big issues were at stake involving a complete upsetting of our lives, we tried hard to be as considerate to each other as possible. I wanted to lessen his obvious suffering if I could, but I had no doubt in my mind that I had to go the way of Satyagraha. Both of us had a distressing time, and night after night I wandered about alone, tortured in mind and trying to grope my way out. Father—I discovered later—actually tried sleeping on the floor to find out what it was like, as he thought that this would be my lot in prison.

Gandhiji came to Allahabad at father’s request and they had long talks at which I was not present. As a result Gandhiji advised me not to precipitate matters or to do anything which might upset father. I was not happy at this, but other events took place in India which changed the whole situation, and the Satyagraha Sabha stopped its activities.

Satyagraha Day—all-India hartals and complete suspension of business—firing by the police and military at Delhi and Amritsar, and the killing of many people—mob violence in Amritsar and Ahmedabad—the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh—the long horror and terrible indignity of martial law in the Punjab. The Punjab was isolated, cut off from the rest of India; a thick veil seemed to cover it and hide it from outside eyes. There was hardly any news, and people could not go there or come out from there.

Odd individuals, who managed to escape from that inferno, were so terror-struck that they could give no clear account. Helplessly and impotently, we, who were outside, waited for scraps of news and bitterness filled our hearts. Some of us wanted to go openly to the affected parts of the Punjab and defy the martial law regulations. But we were kept back, and meanwhile a big organisation for relief and enquiry was set up on behalf of the Congress.

As soon as martial law was withdrawn from the principal areas and outsiders were allowed to come in, prominent Congressmen and others poured into the Punjab offering their services for relief or enquiry work. The relief work was largely directed by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Swami Shraddhananda; the enquiry part was mainly under the direction of my father and Mr. C. R. Das, with Gandhiji taking a great deal of interest in
it and often being consulted by the others. Deshbandhu Das especially took the Amritsar area under his charge and I was deputed to accompany him there and assist him in any way he desired. That was the first occasion I had of working with him and under him and I valued that experience very much and my admiration for him grew. Most of the evidence relating to Jallianwala Bagh and that terrible lane where human beings were made to crawl on their bellies, that subsequently appeared in the Congress Inquiry Report, was taken down in our presence. We paid numerous visits to the so-called Bagh itself and examined every bit of it carefully.

A suggestion has been made, I think by Mr. Edward Thompson, that General Dyer was under the impression that there were other exits from the Bagh and it was because of this that he continued his firing for so long. Even if that was Dyer’s impression, and there were in fact some exits, that would hardly lessen his responsibility. But it seems very strange that he should have such an impression. Any person, standing on the raised ground where he stood, could have a good view of the entire space and could see how shut in it was on all sides by houses several storeys high. Only on one side, for a hundred feet or so, there was no house, but a low wall about five feet high. With a murderous fire mowing them down and unable to find a way out, thousands of people rushed to this wall and tried to climb over it. The fire was then directed, it appears (both from our evidence and the innumerable bullet-marks on the wall itself) towards this wall to prevent people from escaping over it. And when all was over, some of the biggest heaps of dead and wounded lay on either side of this wall.

Towards the end of that year (1919) I travelled from Amritsar to Delhi by the night train. The compartment I entered was almost full and all the berths, except one upper one, were occupied by sleeping passengers. I took the vacant upper berth. In the morning I discovered that all my fellow-passengers were military officers. They conversed with each other in loud voices which I could not help overhearing. One of them was holding forth in an aggressive and triumphant tone and soon I discovered that he was Dyer, the hero of Jallianwala Bagh, and he was describing his Amritsar experiences. He pointed out how he had the whole town at his mercy and he had felt like reducing the rebellious city to a heap of ashes, but he took pity on it and esrained. He was evidently coming back from Lahore after giving his evidence before the Hunter Committee of Inquiry. I was greatly shocked to hear his conversation and to observe his
callous manner. He descended at Delhi station in pyjamas with bright pink stripes, and a dressing-gown.

During the Punjab inquiry I saw a great deal of Gandhiji. Very often his proposals seemed novel to our committee and it did not approve of them. But almost always he argued his way to their acceptance and subsequent events showed the wisdom of his advice. Faith in his political insight grew in me.

The Punjab happenings and the inquiry into them had a profound effect on father. His whole legal and constitutional foundations were shaken by them and his mind was gradually prepared for that change which was to come a year later. He had already moved far from his old moderate position. Dissatisfied with the leading Moderate newspaper, the Leader of Allahabad, he had started another daily, the Independent, from Allahabad early in 1919. This paper met with great success, but from the very beginning it was handicapped by quite an amazing degree of incompetence in the running of it. Almost everybody connected with it—directors, editors, managerial staff—had their share of responsibility for this. I was one of the directors, without the least experience of the job, and the troubles and the squabbles of the paper became quite a nightmare to me. Both my father and I were, however, soon dragged away to the Punjab, and during our long absence the paper deteriorated greatly and became involved in financial difficulties. It never recovered from them, and, although it had bright patches in 1920 and 1921, it began to go to pieces as soon as we went to gaol. It expired finally early in 1923. This experience of newspaper proprietorship gave me a fright and ever since I have refused to assume responsibility as a director of any newspaper. Indeed I could not do so because of my preoccupations in prison and outside.

Father presided over the Amritsar Congress during Christmas 1919. He issued a moving appeal to the Moderate leaders or the Liberals, as they were now calling themselves, to join this session because of the new situation created by the horrors of martial law. “The lacerated heart of the Punjab” called to them, he wrote. Would they not answer that call? But they did not answer it in the way he wanted, and refused to join. Their eyes were on the new reforms that were coming as a result of the Montagu-Chelmsford recommendations. This refusal hurt father and widened the gulf between him and the Liberals.

The Amritsar Congress was the first Gandhi Congress. Loka-

many Tilak was also present and took a prominent part in the deliberations, but there could be no doubt about it that the majority of the delegates, and even more so the great crowds
outside, looked to Gandhi for leadership. The slogan *Mahatma Gandhi ki jai* began to dominate the Indian political horizon. The Ali Brothers, recently discharged from internment, immediately joined the Congress, and the national movement began to take a new shape and develop a new orientation.

M. Mohammad Ali went off soon on a Khilafat deputation to Europe. In India the Khilafat Committee came more and more under Gandhiji's influence and began to flirt with his ideas of non-violent non-co-operation. I remember one of the earliest meetings of the Khilafat leaders and Moulvies and Ulemas in Delhi in January 1920. A Khilafat deputation was going to wait on the Viceroy, and Gandhiji was to join it. Before he reached Delhi, however, a draft of the proposed address was, according to custom, sent to the Viceroy. When Gandhiji arrived and read this draft, he strongly disapproved of it and even said that he could not be a party to the deputation, if this draft was not materially altered. His objection was that the draft was vague and wordy and there was no clear indication in it of the absolute minimum demands which the Muslims must have. He said that this was not fair to the Viceroy and the British Government, or to the people, or to themselves. They must not make exaggerated demands which they were not going to press, but should state the minimum clearly and without possibility of doubt, and stand by it to the death. If they were serious, this was the only right and honourable course to adopt.

This argument was a novel one in political or other circles in India. We were used to vague exaggerations and flowery language and always there was an idea of a bargain in our minds. Gandhiji, however, carried his point and he wrote to the Private Secretary of the Viceroy, pointing out the defects and vagueness of the draft address sent, and forwarding a few additional paragraphs to be added to it. These paragraphs gave the minimum demands. The Viceroy's reply was interesting. He refused to accept the new paragraphs and said that the previous draft was, in his opinion, quite proper. Gandhiji felt that this correspondence had made his own position and that of the Khilafat Committee clear, and so he joined the deputation after all.

It was obvious that the Government were not going to accept the demands of the Khilafat Committee and a struggle was therefore bound to come. There were long talks with the Moulvies and the Ulemas, and non-violence and non-co-operation were discussed, especially non-violence. Gandhiji told them that he was theirs to command, but on the definite understanding that they accepted non-violence with all its implications. There
was to be no weakening on that, no temporising, no mental reservations. It was not easy for the Moulvis to grasp this idea but they agreed, making it clear that they did so as a policy only and not as a creed, for their religion did not prohibit the use of violence in a righteous cause.

The political and the Khilafat movements developed side by side during that year 1920, both going in the same direction and eventually joining hands with the adoption by the Congress of Gandhiji's non-violent non-co-operation. The Khilafat Committee adopted this programme first, and August 1st was fixed for the commencement of the campaign.

Earlier in the year a Muslim meeting (I think it was the Council of the Moslem League) was held in Allahabad to consider this programme. The meeting took place in Syed Raza Ali's house. M. Mohammad Ali was still in Europe but M. Shaukat Ali was present. I remember that meeting because it thoroughly disappointed me. Shaukat Ali was, of course, full of enthusiasm but almost all the others looked thoroughly unhappy and uncomfortable. They did not have the courage to disagree and yet they obviously had no intention of doing anything rash. Were these the people to lead a revolutionary movement, I thought, and to challenge the British Empire? Gandhiji addressed them and after hearing him they looked even more frightened than before. He spoke well in his best dictatorial vein. He was humble but also clear-cut and hard as a diamond, pleasant and soft-spoken but inflexible and terribly earnest. His eyes were mild and deep, yet out of them blazed out a fierce energy and determination. This is going to be a great struggle, he said, with a very powerful adversary. If you want to take it up, you must be prepared to lose everything, and you must subject yourself to the strictest non-violence and discipline. When war is declared martial law prevails, and in our non-violent struggle there will also have to be dictatorship and martial law on our side, if we are to win. You have every right to kick me out, to demand my head, or to punish me whenever and howsoever you choose. But so long as you choose to keep me as your leader you must accept my conditions, you must accept dictatorship and the discipline of martial law. But that dictatorship will always be subject to your goodwill and to your acceptance and to your co-operation. The moment you have had enough of me, throw me out, trample upon me, and I shall not complain.

Something to this effect he said and these military analogies and the unyielding earnestness of the man made the flesh of most of his hearers creep. But Shaukat Ali was there to keep
the waverers up to the mark, and when the time for voting came
the great majority of them quietly and shamefacedly voted for
the proposition, that is for war!

As we were coming home from the meeting I asked Gandhiji
if this was the way to start a great struggle. I had expected
enthusiasm, spirited language and a flashing of eyes; instead we
saw a very tame gathering of timid, middle-aged folk. And yet
these people, such was the pressure of mass opinion, voted for
the struggle. Of course, very few of these members of the
Moslem League joined the struggle later. Many of them found
a safe sanctuary in Government jobs. The Moslem League did
not represent, then or later, any considerable section of Moslem
opinion. It was the Khilafat Committee of 1920 that was a
powerful and far more representative body, and it was this Com-
mittee that entered upon the struggle with enthusiasm.

The 1st of August had been fixed by Gandhiji for the
inauguration of non-co-operation, although the Congress had
not considered or accepted the proposal so far. On that day
Lokamanya Tilak died in Bombay. That very morning Gandhiji
had reached Bombay after a tour in Sindh. I was with him and
we joined that mighty demonstration in which the whole of
Bombay's million population seemed to have poured out to do
reverence to the great leader whom they had loved so well.
VIII

I AM EXTERNELED AND THE CONSEQUENCES THEREOF

My politics had been those of my class, the bourgeoisie. Indeed all vocal politics then (and to a great extent even now) were those of the middle classes, and Moderate and Extremist alike represented them and, in different keys, sought their betterment. The Moderate represented especially the handful of the upper middle class who had on the whole prospered under British rule and wanted no sudden changes which might endanger their present position and interests. They had close relations with the British Government and the big landlord class. The Extremist represented also the lower ranks of the middle class. The industrial workers, their number swollen up by the war, were only locally organised in some places and had little influence. The peasantry were a blind, poverty-stricken, suffering mass, resigned to their miserable fate and sat upon and exploited by all who came in contact with them—the Government, landlords, money-lenders, petty officials, police, lawyers, priests.

A reader of the newspapers would hardly imagine that a vast peasantry and millions of workers existed in India or had any importance. The British-owned Anglo-Indian newspapers were full of the doings of high officials; English social life in the big cities and in the hill stations was described at great length with its parties, fancy-dress balls and amateur theatricals. Indian politics, from the Indian point of view, were almost completely ignored by them, even the Congress sessions being disposed of in a few lines on a back page. They were not considered news of any value except when some Indian, prominent or otherwise, slanged or criticised the Congress and its pretensions. Occasionally there was a brief reference to a strike, and the rural areas only came into prominence when there was a riot.

Indian newspapers tried to model themselves on the Anglo-Indian ones but gave much greater prominence to the nationalist movement. For the rest they were interested in the appointment of Indians to important or unimportant offices, their promotions and transfers—when there was always a party given to the outgoing officer at which “great enthusiasm prevailed.” At the time of a fresh Government settlement of an agricultural area, which almost always resulted in an increase of Government
revenue, there was an outcry because the landlord's pocket was affected. The poor tenant was nowhere in the picture. These newspapers were owned and controlled chiefly by the landlords and the industrialists. Such was that which was called the "nationalist" press.

One of the persistent demands of the Congress itself, during its early years, was a permanent settlement of the land in the non-settled areas, in order that the rights of the landlords might be protected. No mention was made of the tenant.

Conditions have changed greatly during the last twenty years because of the growth of the nationalist movement, and now even the British-owned newspapers have to give space to Indian political problems if they are to retain their Indian readers. But they do so in their own peculiar way. Indian newspapers have developed a slightly wider outlook and talk benevolently of the worker and the peasant, because that is the fashion, and there is a growing interest in industrial and rural problems among their readers. But essentially now, as before, they voice the interests of the Indian capitalist and landlord class which owns them. Many Indian princes have also taken to investing money in these newspapers and they see to it that they get their money's worth. Yet many of these newspapers are called "Congress" newspapers, although many of those who control them are not even members of the Congress. But the Congress is a popular word with the public and many an individual and a group exploit it to their advantage. Newspapers which are prepared to take up a more advanced position have, of course, always to live in fear of big fines or even of suppression under the stringent press laws and censorship.

In 1920 I was totally ignorant of labour conditions in factories or fields, and my political outlook was entirely bourgeois. I knew, of course, that there was terrible poverty and misery, and I felt that the first aim of a politically free India must be to tackle this problem of poverty. But political freedom, with the inevitable dominance of the middle class, seemed to me the obvious next step. I was paying a little more attention to the peasant problem since Gandhiji's agrarian movements in Champaran (Behar) and Kaira (Gujrat). But my mind was full of political developments in 1920 and of the coming of non-co-operation which was looming on the horizon.

Just then a new interest developed in my life which was to play an important part in later years. I was thrown, almost without any will of my own, into contact with the peasantry. This came about in a curious way.
My mother and Kamala (my wife) were both unwell, and early in May 1920 I took them up to Mussoorie. My father was busy then in a big raj case in which he was opposing Mr. C. R. Das. We stopped at the Savoy Hotel in Mussoorie. At that time, peace negotiations were proceeding between the Afghan and British envoys (this was after the brief Afghan War in 1919 when Amanullah came to the throne) at Mussoorie, and the Afghan delegation were stopping at the Savoy Hotel. They kept to themselves, however, fed separately, and did not appear in the common rooms. I was not particularly interested in them, and for a whole month I did not see a single member of their delegation, and if I saw them I did not recognise them. Suddenly one evening I had a visit from the Superintendent of Police and he showed me a letter from the local Government asking him to get an undertaking from me that I would not have any dealings or contacts with the Afghan delegation. This struck me as extraordinary since I had not even seen them during a month’s stay and there was little chance of my doing so. The Superintendent knew this, as he was closely watching the delegation, and there were literally crowds of secret service men about. But to give any undertaking went against the grain and I told him so. He asked me to see the District Magistrate, the Superintendent of the Dun, and I did so. As I persisted in my refusal to give an undertaking an order of extermination was served on me, calling upon me to leave the district of Dehra Dun within twenty-four hours, which really meant within a few hours from Mussoorie. I did not like the idea of leaving my mother and wife, both of whom were ailing; and yet I did not think it right to break the order. There was no civil disobedience then. So I left Mussoorie.

My father had known Sir Harcourt Butler, who was then Governor of the United Provinces, fairly well, and he wrote to him a friendly letter saying that he was sure that he (Sir Harcourt) could not have issued such a stupid order; it must be some bright person in Simla who was responsible for it. Sir Harcourt replied that the order was quite a harmless one and Jawaharlal could easily have complied with it without any injury to his dignity. Father, in reply, disagreed with this and added that, although there was no intention of deliberately breaking the order, if my mother’s or wife’s health demanded it, I would certainly return to Mussoorie, order or no order. As it happened, my mother’s condition took a turn for the worse, and both father and I immediately started for Mussoorie. Just before starting, we received a telegram rescinding the order.
When we reached Mussoorie the next morning the first person I noticed in the courtyard of the hotel was an Afghan who had my baby daughter in his arms! I learnt that he was a minister and a member of the Afghan delegation. It transpired that immediately after my externment the Afghans had read about it in the newspapers, and they were so much interested that the head of the delegation took to sending my mother a basket of fruit and flowers every day.

Father and I met one or two members of the delegation later and we were cordially invited to visit Afghanistan. Unhappily we were unable to take advantage of this offer, and I do not know if the invitation stands under the new dispensation in that country.

As a result of the externment order from Mussoorie I spent about two weeks in Allahabad, and it was during this period that I got entangled in the Kisan (peasant) movement. That entanglement grew in later years and influenced my mental outlook greatly. I have sometimes wondered what would have happened if I had not been externed and had not been in Allahabad just then with no other engagements. Very probably I would have been drawn to the kisans anyhow, sooner or later, but the manner of my going to them would have been different and the effect on me might also have been different.

Early in June 1920 (so far as I can remember) about two hundred kisans marched fifty miles from the interior of Partabgarh district to Allahabad city with the intention of drawing the attention of the prominent politicians there to their woe-begone condition. They were led by a man named Ramachandra, who himself was not a local peasant. I learnt that these kisans were squatting on the river bank, on one of the Jumna ghats, and, accompanied by some friends, went to see them. They told us of the crushing exactions of the taluqadars, of inhuman treatment, and that their condition had become wholly intolerable. They begged us to accompany them back to make inquiries as well as to protect them from the vengeance of the taluqadars who were angry at their having 'come to Allahabad on this mission. They would accept no denial and literally clung on to us. At last I promised to visit them two days or so later.

I went there with some colleagues and we spent three days in the villages far from the railway and even the pucca road. That visit was a revelation to me. We found the whole countryside afire with enthusiasm and full of a strange excitement. Enormous gatherings would take place at the briefest notice by word
of mouth. One village would communicate with another, and the second with the third, and so on, and presently whole villages would empty out, and all over the fields there would be men and women and children on the march to the meeting-place. Or, more swiftly still, the cry of Sītā Rām—Sita Ra-a-a-m—would fill the air, and ravel far in all directions and be echoed back from other villages, and then people would come streaming out or even running as fast as they could. They were in miserable rags, men and women, but their faces were full of excitement and their eyes glistened and seemed to expect strange happenings which would, as if by a miracle, put an end to their long misery.

They showered their affection on us and looked on us with loving and hopeful eyes, as if we were the bearers of good tidings, the guides who were to lead them to the promised land. Looking at them and their misery and overflowing gratitude, I was filled with shame and sorrow, shame at my own easy-going and comfortable life and our petty politics of the city which ignored this vast multitude of semi-naked sons and daughters of India, sorrow at the degradation and overwhelming poverty of India. A new picture of India seemed to rise before me, naked, starving, crushed, and utterly miserable. And their faith in us, casual visitors from the distant city, embarrassed me and filled me with a new responsibility that frightened me.

I listened to their innumerable tales of sorrow, their crushing and ever-growing burden of rent, illegal exactions, ejectments from land and mud hut, beatings; surrounded on all sides by vultures who preyed on them—zamindar’s agents, money-lenders, police; toiling all day to find that what they produced was not theirs and their reward was kicks and curses and a hungry stomach. Many of those who were present were landless people who had been ejected by the landlords, and had no land or hut to fall back upon. The land was rich but the burden on it was very heavy, the holdings were small and there were too many people after them. Taking advantage of this land hunger the landlords, unable under the law to enhance their rents beyond a certain percentage, charged huge illegal premiums. The tenant, knowing of no other alternative, borrowed money from the money-lender and paid the premium, and then, unable to pay his debt or even the rent, was ejected and lost all he had.

This process was an old one and the progressive pauperisation of the peasantry had been going on for a long time. What had happened to bring matters to a head and rouse up the country-
side? Economic conditions, of course, but these conditions were similar all over Oudh, while the agrarian upheaval of 1920 and 1921 was largely confined to three districts—Partabgarh, Rae Bareli and Fyzabad. This was partly due to the leadership of a remarkable person, Ramachandra, Baba Ramachandra as he was called.

Ramachandra was a man from Maharashtra in western India and he had been to Fiji as an indentured labourer. On his return he had gradually drifted to these districts of Oudh and wandered about reciting Tulsidas’s *Ramayana* and listening to tenants’ grievances. He had little education and to some extent he exploited the tenantry for his own benefit, but he showed remarkable powers of organisation. He taught the peasants to meet frequently in *sabhas* (meetings) to discuss their own troubles and thus gave them a feeling of solidarity. Occasionally huge mass meetings were held and this produced a sense of power. *Sītā-Rām* was an old and common cry but he gave it an almost warlike significance and made it a signal for emergencies as well as a bond between different villages. Fyzabad, Partabgarh and Rae Bareli are full of the old legends of Ramachandra and Sita—these districts formed part of the kingdom of Ayodhya—and the favourite book of the masses is Tulsidas’s *Hindi Ramayana*. Many people knew hundreds of verses from this by heart. A recitation of this book and appropriate quotations from it was a favourite practice of Ramachandra. Having organised the peasantry to some extent he made all manner of promises to them, vague and nebulous but full of hope for them. He had no programme of any kind and when he had brought them to a pitch of excitement he tried to shift the responsibility to others. This led him to bring a number of peasants to Allahabad to interest people there in the movement.

Ramachandra continued to take a prominent part in the agrarian movement for another year and served two or three sentences in prison, but he turned out later to be a very irresponsible and unreliable person.

Oudh was a particularly good area for an agrarian agitation. It was, and is, the land of the taluqadars—the “Barons of Oudh” they call themselves—and the zamindari system at its worst flourished there. The exactions of the landlords were becoming unbearable and the number of landless labourers was growing. There was on the whole only one class of tenant and this helped united action.

India may be roughly divided into two parts—the zamindari
area with its big landlords, and the area containing peasant proprietors, but there is a measure of overlapping. The three provinces of Bengal, Behar, and the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, form the zamindari area. The peasant proprietors are comparatively better off, although even their condition is often pitiable. The mass of the peasantry in the Punjab or Gujrat (where there are peasant proprietors) is far better off than the tenants of the zamindari areas. In the greater part of these zamindari areas there were many kinds of tenancies—occupancy tenants, non-occupancy tenants, sub-tenancies, etc. The interests of various tenants often conflict against each other and this militates against joint action. In Oudh, however, there were no occupancy tenants or even life tenants in 1920. There were only short-term tenants who were continually being ejected in favour of some one who was willing to pay a higher premium. Because there was principally one class of tenant, it was easier to organise them for joint action.

In practice there was no guarantee in Oudh for even the short term of the contract. A landlord hardly ever gave a receipt for rent received, and he could always say that the rent had not been paid and eject the tenant, for whom it was impossible to prove the contrary. Besides the rent there were an extraordinary number of illegal exactions. In one taluqa I was told that there had been as many as fifty different kinds of such exactions. Probably this number was exaggerated but it is notorious how taluqadars often make their tenants pay for every special expenditure—a marriage in the family, cost of the son’s education in foreign countries, a party to the Governor or other high official, a purchase of a car or an elephant. Indeed these exactions have got special names—motrauna (tax for purchase of motor), hathauna (tax for purchase of elephant), etc.

It was not surprising therefore that a big agrarian agitation should develop in Oudh. What was surprising to me then was that this should have developed quite spontaneously without any city help or intervention of politicians and the like. The agrarian movement was entirely separate from the Congress and it had nothing to do with the non-co-operation that was taking shape. Or perhaps it will be more correct to say that both these widespread and powerful movements were due to the same fundamental causes. The peasantry had of course taken part in the great hârtals that Gandhiji had proclaimed in 1919 and later his name was becoming a charm for the man in the village.

What amazed me still more was our total ignorance in the
cities of this great agrarian movement. No newspaper had con-
tained a line about it; they were not interested in rural areas. I
realised more than ever how cut off we were from our people and
how we lived and worked and agitated in a little world apart
from them.
WANDERINGS AMONG THE KISANS

I spent three days in the villages, came back to Allahabad, and then went again. During these brief visits we wandered about a great deal from village to village, feeding with the peasants, living with them in their mud huts, talking to them for long hours, and often addressing meetings, big and small. We had originally gone in a light car and the peasants were so keen that hundreds of them, working overnight, built temporary roads across the fields so that our car could go right into the interior. Often the car got stuck and was bodily lifted out by scores of willing hands. But we had to leave the car eventually and to do most of our journeying by foot. Everywhere we went we were accompanied by policemen, C.I.D. men, and a Deputy Collector from Lucknow. I am afraid we gave them a bad time with our continuous marching across fields and they were quite tired out and fed up with us and the kisans. The Deputy Collector was a somewhat effeminate youth from Lucknow and he had turned up in patent leather pumps! He begged us sometimes to restrain our ardour and I think he ultimately dropped out, being unable to keep up with us.

It was the hottest time of the year, June, just before the monsoon. The sun scorched and blinded. I was quite unused to going out in the sun and ever since my return from England I had gone to the hills for part of every summer. And now I was wandering about all day in the open sun with not even a sun-hat, my head being wrapped in a small towel. So full was I of other matters that I quite forgot about the heat and it was only on my return to Allahabad, when I noticed the rich tan I had developed, that I remembered what I had gone through. I was pleased with myself for I realised that I could stand the heat with the best of them and my fear of it was wholly unjustified. I have found that I can bear both extreme heat and great cold without much discomfort, and this has stood me in good stead in my work as well as in my periods in prison. This was no doubt due to my general physical fitness and my habit of taking exercise, a lesson I learnt from my father, who was a bit of an athlete and, almost to the end of his days, continued his daily exercise. His head became covered with silvery hair, his face was deeply furrowed and looked old and weary with thought, but the rest of his body, to
within a year or two of his death, seemed to be twenty years younger.

Even before my visit to Partabgarh in June 1920, I had often passed through villages, stopped there and talked to the peasants. I had seen them in their scores of thousands on the banks of the Ganges during the big melas and we had taken our Home Rule propaganda to them. But somehow I had not fully realised what they were and what they meant to India. Like most of us, I took them for granted. This realisation came to me during these Partabgarh visits and ever since then my mental picture of India always contains this naked, hungry mass. Perhaps there was some kind of electricity in the air, perhaps I was in a receptive frame of mind and the pictures I saw and the impressions I gathered were indelibly impressed on my mind.

These peasants took away the shyness from me and taught me to speak in public. Till then I hardly spoke at a public gathering; I was frightened at the prospect, especially if the speaking was to be done in Hindustani, as it almost always was. But I could not possibly avoid addressing these peasant gatherings, and how could I be shy of these poor unsophisticated people? I did not know the arts of oratory and so I spoke to them, man to man, and told them what I had in my mind and in my heart. Whether the gathering consisted of a few persons or of ten thousand or more I stuck to my conversational and rather personal method of speaking, and I found that, whatever might be lacking in it, I could at least go on. I was fluent enough. Perhaps many of them could not understand a great deal of what I said. My language or my thought was not simple enough for them. Many did not hear me when the gathering was very large for my voice did not carry far. But all this did not matter much to them when once they had given their confidence and faith to a person.

I went back to Mussoorie to my mother and wife but my mind was full of the kisans and I was eager to be back. As soon as I returned I resumed my visits to the villages and watched the agrarian movement grow in strength. The down-trodden kisan began to gain a new confidence in himself and walked straighter with head up. His fear of the landlords' agents and the police lessened, and when there was an ejectment from a holding no other kisan would make an offer for that land. Physical violence on the part of the zamindars' servants and illegal exactions became infrequent, and whenever an instance occurred, it was immediately reported and an attempt at an inquiry was held. This checked the zamindars' agents as well as the police. The taluqadars were frightened and were on the defensive and the
provincial government promised an amendment of the Oudh Tenancy Law.

The taluqadars and the big zamindars, the lords of the land, the "natural leaders of the people", as they are proud of calling themselves, had been the spoilt children of the British Government, but that Government had succeeded, by the special education and upbringing it provided or failed to provide for them, in reducing them, as a class, to a state of complete intellectual impotence. They did nothing at all for their tenantry, such as landlords in other countries have to some little extent often done, and became complete parasites on the land and the people. Their chief activity lay in endeavouring to placate the local officials, without whose favour they could not exist for long, and demanding ceaselessly a protection of their special interests and privileges.

The word 'zamindar' is rather deceptive, and one is apt to think that all zamindars are big landlords. In the ryotwari provinces it means the peasant proprietor. Even in the typical zamindari provinces, it includes in its fold the relatively few big landlords, thousands of middle landowners, and hundreds of thousands of persons who live in extreme poverty and are no better than tenants. In the United Provinces, so far as I can remember, there are a million and a half persons classed as zamindars. Probably over ninety per cent. of these are almost on the same level as the poorest tenants, and another nine per cent. are only moderately well off. The biggish landowners are not more than five thousand in the whole province, and of this number, about one-tenth might be considered the really big zamindars and taluqadars. In some instances the bigger tenants are better off than the destitute petty landowners. Both these poor landowners and the middle landlords, though often intellectually backward, are as a whole a fine body of men and women, and, with proper education and training, can be made into excellent citizens. They have taken a considerable part in the nationalist movement. Not so the taluqadars and the big zamindars, barring a few notable exceptions. They have not even the virtues of an aristocracy. As a class they are physically and intellectually degenerate and have outlived their day; they will continue only so long as an external power like the British Government props them up.

Right through the year 1921 I continued my visits to the rural areas, but my field of activity grew till it comprised the whole of the United Provinces. Non-co-operation had begun in earnest and its message had reached the remotest village. A host of
Congress workers in each district went about the rural areas with the new message to which they often added, rather vaguely, a removal of kisan grievances. Swaraj was an all-embracing word to cover everything. Yet the two movements—non-co-operation and the agrarian—were quite separate, though they overlapped and influenced each other greatly in our province. As a result of Congress preaching, litigation went down with a rush and villages established their panchayats to deal with their disputes. Especially powerful was the influence of the Congress in favour of peace, for the new creed of non-violence was stressed wherever the Congress worker went. This may not have been fully appreciated or understood but it did prevent the peasantry from taking to violence.

This was no small result. Agrarian upheavals are notoriously violent, leading to jacqueries, and the peasants of part of Oudh in those days were desperate and at white heat. A spark would have lighted a flame. Yet they remained amazingly peaceful. The only instance of physical violence on a taluqadar that I remember was when a peasant went up to him as he was sitting in his own house, surrounded by his friends, and slapped him on the face on the ground that he was immoral and inconsiderate to his own wife!

There was violence of another kind later which led to conflicts with the Government. But this conflict was bound to come, for the Government could not tolerate this growing power of a united peasantry. The kisans took to travelling in railway trains in large numbers without tickets, especially when they had to attend their periodical big mass meetings which sometimes consisted of sixty or seventy thousand persons. It was difficult to move them and, unheard of thing, they openly defied the railway authorities, telling them that the old days were gone. At whose instigation they took to the free mass travelling I do not know. We had not suggested it to them. We suddenly heard that they were doing it. Stricter railway control prevented this later.

In the autumn of 1920 (when I was away in Calcutta attending the special session of the Congress) a few kisan leaders were arrested for some petty offence. They were to be tried in Partabgarh town but on the day of the trial a huge concourse of peasants filled the court compound and lined the route to the gaol where the accused leaders were kept. The magistrate's nerve gave way and he postponed the trial to the next day. But the crowd grew and almost surrounded the gaol. The kisans can easily carry on for a few days on a handful of parched gram. Ultimately the kisan leaders were discharged, perhaps after a
formal trial inside the gaol. I forget how this came about but for the *kisans* this was a great triumph and they began to think that they could always have their way by weight of numbers alone. To the Government this position was intolerable and soon after a similar occasion arose and this time it ended differently.

It was at the beginning of January 1921. I had just returned to Allahabad from the Nagpur Congress when I received a telegram from Rae Bareli asking me to go there immediately as trouble was expected. I left the next day. I discovered that some leading *kisans* had been arrested some days back and had been lodged in the local gaol. Remembering their success at Partabgarh and the tactics they had then adopted, the peasants marched to Rae Bareli town for a mass demonstration. But this time the Government was not going to permit it and additional police and military had been collected to stop the *kisans*. Just outside the town on the other side of a little river, the main body of the *kisans* was stopped. Many of them, however, streamed in from other directions. On arrival at the station I learnt of this situation and immediately I proceeded straight to the river where the military were said to face the peasants. On the way I received a hurriedly written note from the District Magistrate asking me to go back. I wrote my reply on the back of it enquiring under what law and what section he was was asking me to go back and till I heard from him I proposed to go on. As I reached the river sounds of firing could be heard from the other side. I was stopped at the bridge by the military and as I waited there I was suddenly surrounded by large numbers of frightened *kisans* who had been hiding in the fields on this side of the river. So I held a meeting of about a couple of thousand peasants on the spot and tried to remove their fear and lessen their excitement. It was rather an unusual situation with firing going on on their brethren within a stone’s throw across a little stream and the military in evidence everywhere. But the meeting was quite successful and took away the edge from the *kisans’* fear. The District Magistrate then returned from the firing line and, at his request, I accompanied him to his house. There he kept me, under some pretext or other, for over two hours, evidently wanting to keep me away from the *kisans* and my colleagues in the city.

We found later that many men had been killed in the firing. The *kisans* had refused to disperse or to go back but otherwise they had been perfectly peaceful. I am quite sure that if I or some one else they trusted had been there and had asked them to do so they would have dispersed. They refused to take their orders from men they did not trust. Some one actually suggested
to the Magistrate to wait for me a little but he refused. He could not permit an agitator to succeed where he had failed. That is not the way of foreign governments depending on prestige.

Firing on *kisans* took place on two occasions in Rae Bareli district about that time and then began, what was much worse, a reign of terror for every prominent *kisan* worker or member of a *panchayat*. Government had decided to crush the movement. Hand-spinning on the *charkha* was then spreading among the peasantry at the instance of the Congress. A *charkha* therefore became the symbol of sedition and its owner got into trouble, the *charkha* itself being often burnt. Thus the Government tried to crush by hundreds of arrests and other methods both the agrarian and the Congress movements in the rural areas of Rae Bareli and Partabgarh. Most of the principal workers were common to the two movements.

A little later, in the year 1921, Fyzabad district had its dose of widespread repression. The trouble started there in a peculiar way. The peasants of some villages went and looted the property of a taluqadar. It transpired subsequently that they had been incited to do so by the servants of another zamindar who had some kind of feud with the taluqadar. The poor ignorant peasants were actually told that it was the wish of Mahatma Gandhi that they should loot and they willingly agreed to carry out this behest, shouting "Mahatma Gandhi ki jai" in the process.

I was very angry when I heard of this and within a day or two of the occurrence I was on the spot, somewhere near Akbarpur in Fyzabad district. On arrival I called a meeting for the same day and within a few hours five or six thousand persons had collected from numerous villages within a radius of ten miles. I spoke harshly to them for the shame they had brought on themselves and our cause and said that the guilty persons must confess publicly. (I was full in those days of what I conceived to be the spirit of Gandhiji’s Satyagraha). I called upon those who had participated in the looting to raise their hands, and strange to say, there, in the presence of numerous police officials, about two dozen hands went up. That meant certain trouble for them.

When I spoke to many of them privately later and heard their artless story of how they had been misled, I felt very sorry for them and I began to regret having exposed these foolish and simple folk to long terms of imprisonment. But the people who suffered were not just two or three dozen. The chance was too good to be lost and full advantage was taken of the occasion to crush the agrarian movement in that district. Over a thousand arrests were made, and the district gaol was overcrowded, and the
trial went on for the best part of a year. Many died in prison
during the trial. Many others received long sentences and in later
years, when I went to prison, I came across some of them, boys
and young men, spending their youth in prison.

The Indian *kisans* have little staying power, little energy to
resist for long. Famines and epidemics come and slay them in
their millions. It was surprising that they had shown for a whole
year great powers of resistance against the combined pressure of
government and landlord. But they began to weary a little and
the determined attack of the Government on their movement
ultimately broke its spirit for the time being. But it continued
still in a lower key. There were not such vast demonstrations
as before, but most villages contained old workers who had not
been terrorised and who carried on the work in a small way. All
this, it must be remembered, was prior to the gaol-going which
the Congress started at the end of 1921. Even in this the *kisans*
took a considerable part, in spite of all they had suffered during
the previous year.

Frightened by the agrarian movement, the Government had
hurried on with tenancy legislation. This promised some im-
provement in the lot of the *kisan* but the measure was toned
down when it was found that the movement was already under
control. The principal change it affected was to give a life ten-
ancy to the *kisan* in Oudh. This sounded attractive to him but,
as he has found out subsequently, his lot is in no way better.

Agrarian troubles continued to crop up in Oudh but on a
smaller scale. The world depression which began in 1929, how-
ever, again created a great crisis owing to the fall in prices.
X

NON-CO-OPERATION

I have dealt with the Oudh agrarian upheaval in some little detail because it lifted the veil and disclosed a fundamental aspect of the Indian problem to me to which nationalists had paid hardly any attention. Agrarian troubles are frequently taking place in various parts of India, symptoms of a deep-seated unrest, and the kisan agitation in certain parts of Oudh in 1920 and 1921 was but one of them, though it was, in its own way, a remarkable and a revealing one. In its origin it was entirely unconnected with politics or politicians, and right through its course the influence of outsiders and politicians was of the slightest. From an all-India point of view, however, it was a local affair and very little attention was paid to it. Even the newspapers of the United Provinces largely ignored it. For their editors and the majority of their town-dwelling readers, the doings of mobs of semi-naked peasants had no real political or other significance.

The Punjab and the Khilafat wrongs were the topics of the day, and non-co-operation, which was to attempt to bring about a righting of these wrongs, was the all-absorbing subject. The larger issue of national freedom or Swaraj was for the moment not stressed. Gandhiji disliked vague and big objectives, he always preferred concentrating on something specific and definite. Nevertheless, Swaraj was very much in the air and in people’s thoughts, and frequent reference was made to it in innumerable gatherings and conferences.

In the autumn of 1920 a special session of the Congress met at Calcutta to consider what steps should be taken and, in particular, to decide about non-co-operation. Lala Lajpat Rai, freshly back from the United States after a long absence from home, was the President. He disliked the new-fangled proposal of non-co-operation and opposed it. He was usually considered an Extremist in Indian politics, but his general outlook was definitely constitutional and moderate. Force of circumstances and not choice or convictions had made him an ally of Lokamanya Tilak and other Extremists in the early days of the century. But he had a social and economic outlook, strengthened by his long residence abroad, and this gave him a broader vision than that of most Indian leaders.
Wilfrid Scawen Blunt in his "Diaries" describes an interview he had (about 1909) with Gokhale and Lalaji. He is very hard on both, considering them far too cautious and afraid of facing realities. And yet Lalaji faced them far more than most Indian leaders. Blunt's impressions make us realise how low was the temper of our politics and our leaders at that time, and how an able and experienced foreigner was struck by them. But a decade had made a great difference to that temper.

Lala Lajpat Rai was not alone in his opposition; he had a great and impressive company with him. Indeed, almost the entire Old Guard of the Congress opposed Gandhiji's resolution of non-co-operation. Mr. C. R. Das led the opposition, not because he disapproved of the spirit behind the resolution, for he was prepared to go as far or even farther, but chiefly because he objected to the boycott of the new legislatures.

Of the prominent leaders of the older generation my father was the only one to take his stand by Gandhiji at that time. It was no easy matter for him to do so. He sensed and was much influenced by the objections that had led most of his old colleagues to oppose. He hesitated, as they did, to take a novel step towards an unknown region, where it was hardly possible to keep one's old bearings. Yet he was inevitably drawn to some form of effective action, and the proposal did embody definite action, though not exactly on the lines of his thought. It took him a long time to make up his mind. He had long talks with Gandhiji and Mr. C. R. Das. Mr. Das and he were thrown a great deal together just then as they were both appearing, on opposite sides, in a big mofussil case. They looked at the problem from much the same point of view and there was very little difference between them even as regards the conclusion. Yet that little difference was just enough to keep them on either side of the main resolution at the Special Congress. Three months later they met again at the Nagpur Congress, and from then onwards they pulled together, ever coming nearer to each other.

I saw very little of father in those days before the Calcutta Special Congress. But whenever I met him, I noticed how he was continually grappling with this problem. Quite apart from the national aspect of the question there was the personal aspect. Non-co-operation meant his withdrawing from his legal practice; it meant a total break with his past life and a new fashioning of it—not an easy matter when one is on the eve of one's sixtieth birthday. It was a break from old political colleagues, from his profession, from the social life to which he had grown accus-
tomed, and a giving up of many an expensive habit which he had grown into. For the financial aspect of the question was not an unimportant one, and it was obvious that he would have to reduce his standard of living if his income from his profession vanished.

But his reason, his strong sense of self-respect, and his pride, all led him step by step to throw in his lot wholeheartedly with the new movement. The accumulated anger with which a series of events, culminating in the Punjab tragedy and its aftermath, filled him; the sense of utter wrong-doing and injustice, the bitterness of national humiliation, had to find some way out. But he was not to be swept away by a wave of enthusiasm. It was only when his reason, backed by the trained mind of a lawyer, had weighed all the pros and cons that he took the final decision and joined Gandhiji in his campaign.

He was attracted by Gandhiji as a man, and that no doubt was a factor which influenced him. Nothing could have made him a close associate of a person he disliked, for he was always strong in his likes and dislikes. But it was a strange combination—the saint, the stoic, the man of religion, one who went through life rejecting what it offers in the way of sensation and physical pleasure, and one who had been a bit of an epicure, who accepted life and welcomed and enjoyed its many sensations, and cared little for what may come in the hereafter. In the language of psychoanalysis it was a meeting of an introvert with an extrovert. Yet there were common bonds, common interests, which drew the two together and kept up, even when, in later years, their politics diverged, a close friendship between them.

Walter Pater, in one of his books, mentions how the saint and the epicure, starting from opposed points, travelling different paths, one with a religious temper, the other opposed to it, and yet both with an outlook which, in its stress and earnestness, is very unlike any lower development of temper, often understand each other better than either would understand the mere man of the world—and sometimes they actually touch.

This Special Session at Calcutta began the Gandhi era in Congress politics which has lasted since then, except for a period in the twenties when he kept in the background and allowed the Swaraj Party, under the leadership of Deshbandhu C. R. Das and my father, to fill the picture. The whole look of the Congress changed; European clothes vanished and soon only khadi was to be seen; a new class of delegate, chiefly drawn from the lower middle classes became the type of Congressman; the
language used became increasingly Hindustani, or sometimes the language of the province where the session was held, as many of the delegates did not understand English, and there was also a growing prejudice against using a foreign language in our national work; and a new life and enthusiasm and earnestness became evident in Congress gatherings.

After the Congress was over Gandhiji paid a visit to the veteran editor of the Amrit Bazaar Patrika, Syt Motilal Ghose, who was lying on his death-bed. I accompanied him. Motilal Babu blessed Gandhiji and his movement, and he added that, as for himself, he was going away to other regions, and wherever these might be, he had one great satisfaction—he would be somewhere where the British Empire did not exist. At last he would be beyond the reach of this Empire!

On our way back from the Calcutta Special Congress I accompanied Gandhiji to Santiniketan on a visit to Rabindra Nath Tagore and his most lovable elder brother 'Boro Dada'. We spent some days there, and I remember C. F. Andrews giving me some books which interested and influenced me greatly. They dealt with the economic aspects of imperialism in Africa. One of these books—Morell’s *Black Man’s Burden*—moved me greatly.

About this time or a little later, C. F. Andrews wrote a pamphlet advocating independence for India. I think it was called *Independence—the Immediate Need*. This was a brilliant essay based on some of Seeley’s writings on India, and it seemed to me not only to make out an unanswerable case for independence but also to mirror the inmost recesses of our hearts. The deep urge that moved us and our half-formed desires seemed to take clear shape in his simple and earnest language. There was no economic background or socialism in what he had written; it was nationalism pure and simple, the feeling of the humiliation of India and a fierce desire to be rid of it and to put an end to our continuing degradation. It was wonderful that C. F. Andrews, a foreigner and one belonging to the dominant race in India, should echo that cry of our inmost being. Non-co-operation was essentially, as Seeley had said long ago, “the notion that it was shameful to assist the foreigner in maintaining his domination”. And Andrews had written that “the only way of self-recovery was through some vital upheaval from within. The explosive force needed for such an upheaval must be generated within the soul of India itself. It could not come through loans and gifts and grants and concessions and proclamations from without. It must come from within. . . .
Therefore, it was with the intense joy of mental and spiritual deliverance from an intolerable burden, that I watched the actual outbreak of such an inner explosive force, as that which actually occurred when Mahatma Gandhi spoke to the heart of India the *mantram*—'Be free! Be slaves no more!' and the heart of India responded. In a sudden movement her fetters began to be loosened, and the pathway of freedom was opened."

The next three months witnessed the advancing tide of non-co-operation all over the country. The appeal for a boycott of the elections to the new state legislatures was remarkably successful. It did not and could not prevent everybody from going to these councils and thus keep the seats vacant. Even a handful of voters could elect or there might be an unopposed election. But the great majority of voters abstained from voting, and all who cared for the vehemently expressed sense of the country refrained from standing as candidates. Sir Valentine Chirol happened to be in Allahabad on the election day, and he made a round of the polling booths. He returned amazed at the efficiency of the boycott. At one rural polling station, about fifteen miles from Allahabad city, he found that not a single voter had appeared. He gives an account of his experiences in one of his books on India.

The wisdom of this boycott had been questioned by Mr. C. R. Das and others at the Calcutta session, but they stood by the Congress decision. The elections being over, this point of difference was removed, and the next full session of the Congress at Nagpur in December 1920 saw a reunion of many of the old Congress leaders on the plank of non-co-operation. The very success of the movement had convinced many a doubter and waverer.

A few old leaders, however, dropped out of the Congress after Calcutta, and among these a popular and well-known figure was that of Mr. M. A. Jinnah. Sarojini Naidu had called him the "Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity", and he had been largely responsible in the past for bringing the Moslem League nearer to the Congress. But the new developments in the Congress—non-co-operation and the new constitution which made it more of a popular and mass organization—were thoroughly disapproved of by him. He disagreed on political grounds, but it was not politics in the main that kept him away. There were still many people in the Congress who were politically even less advanced than he was. But temperamentally he did not fit in at all with the new Congress. He felt completely out of his
element in the khadi-clad crowd demanding speeches in Hindustani. The enthusiasm of the people outside struck him as mob-hysteria. There was as much difference between him and the Indian masses as between Savile Row and Bond Street and the Indian village with its mud-huts. He suggested once privately that only matriculates should be taken into the Congress. I do not know if he was serious in making this remarkable suggestion, but it was in harmony with his general outlook. So he drifted away from the Congress and became a rather solitary figure in Indian politics. Later, unhappily, the old Ambassador of Unity associated himself with the most reactionary elements in Muslim communalism.

The Moderates or Liberals had, of course, nothing to do with the Congress. They not only kept away from it; they merged themselves in the Government, became ministers and high officials under the new scheme, and helped in fighting non-co-operation and the Congress. They had obtained almost what they desired, some reforms had been granted, and so there was no need for them to agitate. While the country was seething with excitement and becoming more and more revolutionary, they became frankly counter-revolutionary, a part of the Government itself. They were completely cut off from the people and developed a habit, which has persisted since, of looking at problems from the official point of view. They ceased to be a party in any real sense and became a small number of individuals dotted about in a few big cities. Mr. Srinivasa Sastri became an Imperial Envoy, visiting, at the instance of the British Government, various British dominions as well as the United States of America, and strongly criticising the Congress and his own countrymen for the struggle they were carrying on against that Government.

And yet the Liberals were far from happy. It is not a pleasant experience to be cut off from one’s own people, to sense hostility even though one may not see it or hear it. A mass upheaval is not kind to the non-conformists, though Gandhiji’s repeated warnings made non-co-operation far milder and gentler to its opponents than it otherwise would have been. But even so, the very atmosphere stifled those who opposed the movement, just as it invigorated and filled with life and energy those who supported it. Mass upheavals and real revolutionary movements always have this double effect: they encourage and bring out the personality of those who constitute the masses or side with them, and at the same time they suppress psychologically and stifle those who differ from them.
This was the reason why some people complained that non-co-operation was intolerant and tended to introduce a dead uniformity of opinion and action. There was truth in this complaint, but the truth lay in this, that non-co-operation was a mass movement, and it was led by a man of commanding personality who inspired devotion in India's millions. A more vital truth, however, lay in its effect on the masses. There was a tremendous feeling of release there, a throwing-off of a great burden, a new sense of freedom. The fear that had crushed them retired into the background, and they straightened their backs and raised their heads. Even in remote bazaars the common folk talked of the Congress and Swaraj (for the Nagpur Congress had finally made Swaraj the goal), and what had happened in the Punjab, and the Khilafat—but the word 'Khilafat' bore a strange meaning in most of the rural areas. People thought it came from khilaf, an Urdu word meaning 'against' or 'opposed to', and so they took it to mean: opposed to Government! They discussed, of course, especially their own particular economic grievances. Innumerable meetings and conferences added greatly to their political education.

Many of us who worked for the Congress programme lived in a kind of intoxication during the year 1921. We were full of excitement and optimism and a buoyant enthusiasm. We sensed the happiness of a person crusading for a cause. We were not troubled with doubts or hesitation; our path seemed to lie clear in front of us and we marched ahead, lifted up by the enthusiasm of others, and helping to push on others. We worked hard, harder than we had ever done before, for we knew that the conflict with the Government would come soon, and we wanted to do as much as possible before we were removed.

Above all, we had a sense of freedom and a pride in that freedom. The old feeling of oppression and frustration was completely gone. There was no more whispering, no round-about legal phraseology to avoid getting into trouble with the authorities. We said what we felt and shouted it out from the house-tops. What did we care for the consequences? Prison? We looked forward to it; that would help our cause still further. The innumerable spies and secret-service men who used to surround us and follow us about became rather pitiable individuals as there was nothing secret for them to discover. All our cards were always on the table.

We had not only a feeling of satisfaction at doing effective political work which was changing the face of India before our
eyes and, as we believed, bringing Indian freedom very near, but also an agreeable sense of moral superiority over our opponents, both in regard to our goal and our methods. We were proud of our leader and of the unique method he had evolved, and often we indulged in fits of self-righteousness. In the midst of strife, and while we ourselves encouraged that strife, we had a sense of inner peace.

As our moral grew, that of the Government went down. They did not understand what was happening; it seemed that the old world they knew in India was toppling down. There was a new aggressive spirit abroad and self-reliance and fearlessness, and the great prop of British rule in India—prestige—was visibly wilting. Repression in a small way only strengthened the movement, and the Government hesitated for long before it would take action against the big leaders. It did not know what the consequences might be. Was the Indian Army reliable? Would the police carry out orders? As Lord Reading, the Viceroy, said in December 1921, they were “puzzled and perplexed.”

An interesting circular was sent confidentially by the U.P. Government to its district officers in the summer of 1921. This circular, which was published later in a newspaper, stated with sorrow that the “initiative” was always with the “enemy”, meaning the Congress, and this was an unfortunate state of affairs. Various methods were then suggested to regain the initiative, among them being the starting of those ludicrous bodies, the “Aman Sabhas”. It was believed that this particular method of combating non-co-operation was adopted at the suggestion of the Liberal Ministers.

The nerves of many a British official began to give way. The strain was great. There was this ever-growing opposition and spirit of defiance which overshadowed official India like a vast monsoon cloud, and yet because of its peaceful methods it offered no handle, no grip, no opportunity for forcible suppression. The average Englishman did not believe in the bona fides of non-violence; he thought that all this was camouflage, a cloak to cover some vast secret design which would burst out in violent upheaval one day. Nurtured from childhood in the wide-spread belief that the East is a mysterious place, and in its bazaars and narrow lanes secret conspiracies are being continually hatched, the Englishman can seldom think straight on matters relating to these lands of supposed mystery. He never makes an attempt to understand that somewhat obvious and very unmysterious person the Easterner. He keeps well away
from him, gets his ideas about him from tales abounding in spies and secret societies, and then allows his imagination to run riot. So it was in the Punjab early in April 1919 when a sudden fear overwhelmed the authorities and the English people generally, made them see danger everywhere, a widespread rising, a second mutiny with its frightful massacres, and, in a blind, instinctive attempt at self-preservation at any cost, led them to that frightfulness, of which Jallianwala and the Crawling Lane of Amritsar have become symbols and bywords.

The year 1921 was a year of great tension, and there was much to irritate and annoy and unnerve the official. What was actually happening was bad enough, but what was imagined was far worse. I remember an instance which illustrates this riot of the imagination. My sister Swarup’s wedding, which was taking place at Allahabad, was fixed for the 10th May, 1921, the actual date having been calculated, as usual on such occasions, by a reference to the Samvat calendar, and an auspicious day chosen. Gandhiji and a number of leading Congressmen, including the Ali brothers, had been invited, and to suit their convenience, a meeting of the Congress Working Committee was fixed at Allahabad about that time. The local Congressmen wanted to profit by the presence of famous leaders from outside, and so they organised a district conference on a big scale, expecting a large number of peasants from the surrounding rural areas.

There was a great deal of bustle and excitement in Allahabad on account of these political gatherings. This had a remarkable effect on the nerves of some people. I learnt one day through a barrister friend that many English people were thoroughly upset and expected some sudden upheaval in the city. They distrusted their Indian servants, and carried about revolvers in their pockets. It was even said privately that the Allahabad Fort was kept in readiness for the English colony to retire there in case of need. I was much surprised and could not make out why any one should contemplate the possibility of a rising in the sleepy and peaceful city of Allahabad just when the very apostle of non-violence was going to visit us. Oh, it was said, May 10th (the day accidentally fixed for my sister’s marriage) was the anniversary of the outbreak of the Mutiny at Meerut in 1857 and this was going to be celebrated!

Owing to the prominence given to the Khilafat movement in 1921 a large number of Moulvies and Muslim religious leaders took a prominent part in the political struggle. They gave a definite religious tinge to the movement, and Muslims generally
were greatly influenced by it. Many a Westernised Muslim, who was not of a particularly religious turn of mind, began to grow a beard and otherwise conform to the tenets of Orthodoxy. The influence and prestige of the Moulvies, which had been gradually declining owing to new ideas and a progressive Westernisation, began to grow again and dominate the Muslim community. The Ali brothers, themselves of a religious turn of mind, helped in this process, and so did Gandhiji, who paid the greatest regard to the Moulvies and the Maulanas.

Gandhiji, indeed, was continually laying stress on the religious and spiritual side of the movement. His religion was not dogmatic, but it did mean a definitely religious outlook on life, and the whole movement was strongly influenced by this and took on a revivalist character so far as the masses were concerned. The great majority of Congress workers naturally tried to model themselves after their leader and even repeated his language. And yet Gandhiji’s leading colleagues in the Working Committee—my father, Deshbandhu Das, Lala Lajpat Rai, and others—were not men of religion in the ordinary sense of the word, and they considered political problems on the political plane only. In their public utterances they did not bring in religion. But whatever they said had far less influence than the force of their personal example—had they not given up a great deal that the world values and taken to simpler ways of living? This in itself was taken as a sign of religion and helped in spreading the atmosphere of revivalism.

I used to be troubled sometimes at the growth of this religious element in our politics, both on the Hindu and the Muslim side. I did not like it at all. Much that Moulvies and Maulanas and Swamis and the like said in their public addresses seemed to me most unfortunate. Their history and sociology and economics appeared to me all wrong, and the religious twist that was given to everything prevented all clear thinking. Even some of Gandhiji’s phrases sometimes jarred upon me—thus his frequent reference to Rama Raj as a golden age which was to return. But I was powerless to intervene, and I consoled myself with the thought that Gandhiji used the words because they were well known and understood by the masses. He had an amazing knack of reaching the heart of the people.

But I did not worry myself much over these matters. I was too full of my work and the progress of our movement to care for such trifles, as I thought at the time they were. A vast movement had all sorts and kinds of people in it, and so long as our main direction was correct, a few eddies and backwaters did not
matter. As for Gandhiji himself, he was a very difficult person to understand, sometimes his language was almost incomprehensible to an average modern. But we felt that we knew him quite well enough to realise that he was a great and unique man and a glorious leader, and having put our faith in him we gave him an almost blank cheque, for the time being at least. Often we discussed his fads and peculiarities among ourselves and said, half-humorously, that when Swaraj came these fads must not be encouraged.

Many of us, however, were too much under his influence in political and other matters to remain wholly immune even in the sphere of religion. Where a direct attack might not have succeeded, many an indirect approach went a long way to undermine the defences. The outward ways of religion did not appeal to me, and above all I disliked the exploitation of the people by the so-called men of religion, but still I toned down towards it. I came nearer to a religious frame of mind in 1921 than at any other time since my early boyhood. Even so I did not come very near.

What I admired was the moral and ethical side of our movement and of satyagraha. I did not give an absolute allegiance to the doctrine of non-violence or accept it for ever, but it attracted me more and more, and the belief grew upon me that, situated as we were in India and with our background and traditions, it was the right policy for us. The spiritualisation of politics, using the word not in its narrow religious sense, seemed to me a fine idea. A worthy end should have worthy means leading up to it. That seemed not only a good ethical doctrine but sound, practical politics, for the means that are not good often defeat the end in view and raise new problems and difficulties. And then it seemed so unbecoming, so degrading to the self-respect of an individual or a nation to submit to such means, to go through the mire. How can one escape being sullied by it? How can we march ahead swiftly and with dignity if we stoop or crawl?

Such were my thoughts then. And the non-co-operation movement offered me what I wanted—the goal of national freedom and (as I thought) the ending of the exploitation of the underdog, and the means which satisfied my moral sense and gave me a sense of personal freedom. So great was this personal satisfaction that even a possibility of failure did not count for much, for such failure could only be temporary. I did not understand or feel drawn to the metaphysical part of the Bhagavad Gita, but I liked to read the verses—recited every evening in Gandhiji's
ashram prayers—which say what a man should be like: Calm of purpose, serene and unmoved, doing his job and not caring overmuch for the result of his action. Not being very calm or detached myself, I suppose, this ideal appealed to me all the more.
NINETEEN TWENTY-ONE AND THE FIRST IMPRISONMENT

NINETEEN TWENTY-ONE was an extraordinary year for us. There was a strange mixture of nationalism and politics and religion and mysticism and fanaticism. Behind all this was agrarian trouble and, in the big cities, a rising working-class movement. Nationalism and a vague but intense country-wide idealism sought to bring together all these various, and sometimes mutually contradictory, discontents, and succeeded to a remarkable degree. And yet this nationalism itself was a composite force, and behind it could be distinguished a Hindu nationalism, a Muslim nationalism partly looking beyond the frontiers of India, and, what was more in consonance with the spirit of the times, an Indian nationalism. For the time being they overlapped and all pulled together. It was Hindu-Musalman ki Jai everywhere. It was remarkable how Gandhiji seemed to cast a spell on all classes and groups of people and drew them into one motley crowd struggling in one direction. He became, indeed (to use a phrase which has been applied to another leader), "a symbolic expression of the confused desires of the people".

Even more remarkable was the fact that these desires and passions were relatively free from hatred of the alien rulers against whom they were directed. Nationalism is essentially an anti-feeling, and it feeds and fattens on hatred and anger against other national groups, and especially against the foreign rulers of a subject country. There was certainly this hatred and anger in India in 1921 against the British but, in comparison with other countries similarly situated, it was extraordinarily little. Undoubtedly this was due to Gandhiji's insistence on the implications of non-violence. It was also due to the feeling of release and power that came to the whole country with the inauguration of the movement and the widespread belief in success in the near future. Why be angry and full of hate when we were doing so well and were likely to win through soon? We felt that we could afford to be generous.

We were not so generous in our hearts, though our actions were circumspect and proper, towards the handful of our own countrymen who took sides against us and opposed the national movement. It was not a question of hatred or anger, for they
carried no weight whatever and we could ignore them. But deep within us was contempt for their weakness and opportunism and betrayal of national honour and self-respect.

So we went on, vaguely but intensely, the exhilaration of action holding us in its grip. But about our goal there was an entire absence of clear thinking. It seems surprising now, how completely we ignored the theoretical aspects, the philosophy of our movement as well as the definite objective that we should have. Of course we all grew eloquent about Swaraj, but each one of us probably interpreted the word in his or her own way. To most of the younger men it meant political independence, or something like it, and a democratic form of government, and we said so in our public utterances. Many of us also thought that inevitably this would result in a lessening of the burdens that crushed the workers and the peasantry. But it was obvious that to most of our leaders Swaraj meant something much less than independence. Gandhiji was delightfully vague on the subject, and he did not encourage clear thinking about it either. But he always spoke, vaguely but definitely, in terms of the under-dog, and this brought great comfort to many of us, although, at the same time, he was full of assurances to the top-dog also. Gandhiji’s stress was never on the intellectual approach to a problem but on character and piety. He did succeed amazingly in giving backbone and character to the Indian people. There were many, however, who developed neither much backbone nor character, but who imagined that a limp body and a flabby look might be the outward semblance of piety.

It was this extraordinary stiffening-up of the masses that filled us with confidence. A demoralized, backward, and broken-up people suddenly straightened their backs and lifted their heads and took part in disciplined, joint action on a country-wide scale. This action itself, we felt, would give irresistible power to the masses. We ignored the necessity of thought behind the action; we forgot that without a conscious ideology and objective the energy and enthusiasm of the masses must end largely in smoke. To some extent the revivalist element in our movement carried us on; a feeling that non-violence as conceived for political or economic movements or for righting wrongs was a new message which our people were destined to give to the world. We became victims to the curious illusion of all peoples and all nations that in some way they are a chosen race. Non-violence was the moral equivalent of war and of all violent struggle. It was not merely an ethical alternative, but it was effective also. Few of us, I think, accepted Gandhiji’s old ideas about machinery
and modern civilization. We thought that even he looked upon
them as utopian and as largely inapplicable to modern con-
ditions. Certainly most of us were not prepared to reject the
achievements of modern civilization, although we may have
felt that some variation to suit Indian conditions was possible.
Personally, I have always felt attracted towards big machinery
and fast travelling. Still there can be no doubt that Gandhi's
ideology influenced many people and made them critical of the
machine and all its consequences. So, while some looked to the
future, others looked back to the past. And, curiously, both felt
that the joint action they were indulging in was worth while,
and this made it easy to bear sacrifice and face self-denial.

I became wholly absorbed and wrapt in the movement, and
large numbers of other people did likewise. I gave up all my
other associations and contacts, old friends, books, even news-
papers, except in so far as they dealt with the work in hand.
I had kept up till then some reading of current books and had
tried to follow the developments of world affairs. But there
was no time for this now. In spite of the strength of my family
bonds, I almost forgot my family, my wife, my daughter. It
was only long afterwards that I realised what a burden and a
trial I must have been to them in those days, and what amazing
patience and tolerance my wife had shown towards me. I lived
in offices and committee meetings and crowds. "Go to the
villages" was the slogan, and we trudged many a mile across
fields and visited distant villages and addressed peasant meetings.
I experienced the thrill of mass-feeling, the power of influencing
the mass. I began to understand a little the psychology of
the crowd, the difference between the city masses and the
peasantry, and I felt at home in the dust and discomfort, the
pushing and jostling of large gatherings, though their want of
discipline often irritated me. Since those days I have sometimes
had to face hostile and angry crowds, worked up to a state when
a spark would light a flame, and I found that that early ex-
perience and the confidence it begot in me stood me in good
stead. Always I went straight to the crowd and trusted it, and
so far I have always had courtesy and appreciation from it, even
though there was no agreement. But crowds are fickle, and the
future may have different experiences in store for me.

I took to the crowd and the crowd took to me, and yet I never
lost myself in it; always I felt apart from it. From my separate
mental perch I looked at it critically, and I never ceased to
wonder how I, who was so different in every way from those
thousands who surrounded me, different in habits, in desires,
in mental and spiritual outlook, how I had managed to gain goodwill and a measure of confidence from these people. Was it because they took me for something other than I was? Would they bear with me when they knew me better? Was I gaining their goodwill under false pretences? I tried to be frank and straightforward to them; I even spoke harshly to them sometimes and criticised many of their pet beliefs and customs, but still they put up with me. And yet I could not get rid of the idea that their affection was meant not for me as I was, but for some fanciful image of me that they had formed. How long could that false image endure? And why should it be allowed to endure? And when it fell down and they saw the reality, what then?

I am vain enough in many ways, but there could be no question of vanity with these crowds of simple folk. There was no posing about them, no vulgarity, as in the case of many of us of the middle classes who consider ourselves their betters. They were dull certainly, uninteresting individually, but in the mass they produced a feeling of overwhelming pity and a sense of impending tragedy.

Very different were our conferences where our chosen workers, including myself, performed on the platform. There was sufficient posing there and no lack of vulgarity in our flamboyant addresses. All of us must have been to some extent guilty of this, but some of the minor Khilafat leaders probably led the rest. It is not easy to behave naturally on a platform before a large audience, and few of us had previous experience of such publicity. So we tried to look as, we imagined, leaders should look, thoughtful and serious, with no trace of levity or frivolity. When we walked or talked or smiled we were conscious of thousands of eyes staring at us and we reacted accordingly. Our speeches were often very eloquent but, equally often, singularly pointless. It is difficult to see oneself as others see one. And so, unable to criticise myself, I took to watching carefully the ways of others, and I found considerable amusement in this occupation. And then the terrible thought would strike me that I might perhaps appear equally ludicrous to others.

Right through the year 1921 individual Congress workers were being arrested and sentenced, but there were no mass arrests. The Ali Brothers had received long sentences for inciting the Indian Army to disaffection. Their words, for which they had been sentenced, were repeated at hundreds of platforms by thousands of persons. I was threatened in the summer with proceedings for sedition because of some speeches I had de-
livered. No such step, however, was taken then. The end of the year brought matters to a head. The Prince of Wales was coming to India, and the Congress had proclaimed a boycott of all the functions in connection with his visit. Towards the end of November the Congress volunteers in Bengal were declared illegal and this was followed by a similar declaration for the United Provinces. Deshbandhu Das gave a stirring message to Bengal: "I feel the handcuffs on my wrists and the weight of iron chains on my body. It is the agony of bondage. The whole of India is a vast prison. The work of the Congress must be carried on. What matters it whether I am taken or left? What matters it whether I am dead or alive?" In the U.P. we took up the challenge and not only announced that our volunteer organisation would continue to function, but published lists of names of volunteers in the daily newspapers. The first list was headed by my father's name. He was not a volunteer but, simply for the purpose of defying the Government order, he joined and gave his name. Early in December, a few days before the Prince came to our province, mass arrests began.

We knew that matters had at last come to a head; the inevitable conflict between the Congress and the Government was about to break out. Prison was still an unknown place, the idea of going there still a novelty. I was sitting rather late one day in the Congress office at Allahabad trying to clear up arrears of work. An excited clerk told me that the police had come with a search warrant and were surrounding the office building. I was, of course, a little excited also, for it was my first experience of the kind, but the desire to show off was strong, the wish to appear perfectly cool and collected, unaffected by the comings and goings of the police. So I asked a clerk to accompany the police officer in his search round the office rooms, and insisted on the rest of the staff carrying on their usual work and ignoring the police. A little later a friend and a colleague, who had been arrested just outside the office, came to me, accompanied by a policeman, to bid me good-bye. I was so full of the conceit that I must treat these novel occurrences as everyday happenings that I treated my colleague in a most unfeeling manner. Casually I asked him and the policeman to wait till I had finished the letter I was writing. Soon news came of other arrests in the city. I decided at last to go home and see what was happening there. I found the inevitable police searching part of the large house and learnt that they had come to arrest both father and me.

Nothing that we could have done would have fitted in so well
with our programme of boycotting the Prince's visit. Wherever he was taken he was met with hartals and deserted streets. Allahabad, when he came, seemed to be a city of the dead; Calcutta, a few days later, suddenly put a temporary stop to all the activities of a great city. It was hard on the Prince of Wales; he was not to blame, and there was no feeling against him whatever. But the Government of India had tried to exploit his personality to prop up their decaying prestige.

There was an orgy of arrests and convictions, especially in the United Provinces and in Bengal. All the prominent Congress leaders and workers in these provinces were arrested, and ordinary volunteers by the thousand went to prison. They were, at first, largely city men and there seemed to be an inexhaustible supply of volunteers for prison. The U.P. Provincial Congress Committee was arrested en bloc (55 members) as they were actually holding a committee meeting. Many people, who had so far taken no part in any Congress or political activity, were carried away by the wave of enthusiasm and insisted on being arrested. There were cases of Government clerks, returning from their offices in the evening, being swept away by this current and landing in gaol instead of their homes. Young men and boys would crowd inside the police lorries and refuse to come out. Every evening we could hear from inside the gaol, lorry after lorry arriving outside heralded by our slogans and shouts. The gaols were crowded and the gaol officials were at their wits' ends at this extraordinary phenomenon. It happened sometimes that a police lorry would bring, according to the warrant accompanying it, a certain number of prisoners—no names were or could be mentioned. Actually, a larger number than that mentioned would emerge from the lorry and the gaol officials did not know how to meet this novel situation. There was nothing in the Jail Manual about it.

Gradually the Government gave up the policy of indiscriminate arrests; only noted workers were picked out. Gradually also the first flush of enthusiasm of the people cooled down and, owing to the absence in prison of all the trusted workers, a feeling of indecision and helplessness spread. But the change was superficial only, and there was still thunder in the air and the atmosphere was tense and pregnant with revolutionary possibilities. During the months of December 1921 and January 1922 it is estimated that about thirty thousand persons were sentenced to imprisonment in connection with the non-co-operation movement. But though most of the prominent men and workers were in prison, the leader of the whole