

tion of husbands and wives at marriage separately according to certain age categories for the three income groups. Percentages have been calculated for each class frequency and placed within brackets against them.

These tables show that 73.5 per cent of wives had been married before they had reached the age of 20 years and 20.8 per cent before they had reached the age of 15 years. The corresponding percentages for husbands are 23.7 and 2.3 respectively. The average age of husband at the time of marriage works out at 23.5 years and that of the wife at 18 years. A Social and Economic Survey of the Lower-Middle class in Lucknow shows the average age of the husband to be 21.7 years and that of the wife 15.8 years at the time of marriage.' It is obvious that in the middle class families the average age at marriage is higher by about 2 years both for men and women than in the lower middle class. This improvement is probably due to enlightenment and broader outlook of the former class. It may be mentioned in this connection that in his paper on 'Sex Habits of a sample of Middle Class People of Bombay' Dr. G. S. Ghurey has found the average age of the husband to be 24.5 years and that of the wife 16.2 years at the time of marriage.

The average disparity between the ages of husbands and wives is 5½ years. On the whole this disparity is not very large. There is no significant difference in the disparity in the age of husbands and wives with respect to income groups as Table No. 8 will show.

There are 18 cases of second marriages also. Excepting one case, in the remaining 17 cases

'A Social and Economic Survey of the Lower Middle Class in Lucknow, P. 8.

second marriage took place after the death of the first wife. The average age of husband at the time of second marriage was 30½ years and of the wife a little over 18 years. Thus there was a disparity of about 12 years in their ages. We find that the average

Book Review

Gandhiji

MAHATMA GANDHI. By H. L. Polak, H. N. Brailsford and Lord Pethick-Lawrence. Oldhams Press Ltd. Price Rs. 10-8

Reviewed by Aruna Mukerji.

IT IS not easy to review a book on Gandhiji—especially a biography, for in his life is crystallised the history of a nation and the unfolding of an idea which has yet to be tested by time. The application of non-violence as a technique of political action is so great a challenge to a world which has known no other means of settling disputes except war, that only the future can assess the value of Gandhiji's contribution. The task of the reviewer is rendered somewhat easier, however, by the fact that though the authors had occasion to see something of the different phases of Gandhiji's life and work, the book does not attain a synthesis nor do the authors—prudently, it appears in retrospect—attempt an evaluation.

Polak writes about Gandhiji's student days and his early years in South Africa. He was Gandhiji's closest associate during the latter's struggle against racial discrimination in South Africa when, for the first time, the theory of passive resistance was put into practice. In the chapters on Gandhiji's early life we get a glimpse of him as a student in England. He was even then attracted towards plain living, for Polak relates how Gandhiji sup-

ported himself frugally on 1s. 3d. a day—by living in a single room and cooking his own meals with the help of a stove.

(To be continued)

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Later, as a young and unknown lawyer in South Africa, on managing to get a case settled out of court, Gandhiji wrote "My joy was boundless . . . I realised the true function of a lawyer was to unite parties riven asunder . . . I lost nothing thereby—not even my money, certainly not my soul."

Lastly, Polak speaks of him as a fighter against the discrimination against the Indians in South Africa. These few incidents show Gandhiji's early leanings towards asceticism, his gift for peaceful solution of problems and his hatred of injustice. These sidelights on his character give the clue to his later career.

He shows that the methods which were used in the struggle against racial discrimination in South Africa were later to be used in India. The idea of passive resistance was born when anti-Asiatic legislation was being contemplated, i.e., the Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance. Gandhiji called a meeting of protest and drafted resolutions which pledged the Indian community to suffer the penalties of the law rather

than submit to the ordinance, should it become law. He goes to relate how the practical experience gained by Gandhiji in organising the welfare of the workers of the Tolstoy farm—an experiment in communal living under Gandhiji's guidance—was to be useful in the latter's village welfare campaigns in India. Tolstoy farm possessed its own school, workshops for carpentry and other handicrafts,

Polak's feeling for his friend and leader are reflected in these words: "Gandhi the mystic, Gandhi the servant of mankind, Gandhi the missionary, were so many expressions of the multiple personality of Gandhi the man, who saw God in the face of the most humble, the most hostile, and the most ignoble of his countrymen."

The second part is by H. N. Brailsford—the veteran socialist writer, who visited India several times and knew the subject of his study. Bradford's view of Gandhiji is the most sympathetic, for he writes as a friend and as one who sympathised in the struggle for independence. He writes of the eventful years between 1915 and the outbreak of the World War II. Gandhiji landed in Bombay in January, 1915, at the age of forty-six with "a clear-cut philosophy of life and a political technique which had proved its efficacy in action." The writer discusses the various journeys Gandhiji undertook in his attempt to rediscover India, her people and her leaders—to Poona to meet Gokhale, to Shantiniketan to meet Tagore. Little by little he gained first-hand knowledge of the conditions of the peasants and the labouring classes which led to his attempts to improve their conditions. Brailsford describes his first successful attempt to improve the conditions

of Champaran's indigo workers, who until then were mercilessly exploited, heavily fined and taxed "The system recalls the exactions of French feudalism which Voltaire exposed on the eve of the Revolution", says Brailsford. In 1918 Gandhiji went to a district in Gujerat where the crops had failed, in order to organise the peasants in a non-violent resistance and a refusal to pay taxes until a compromise was reached. Again, he succeeded in getting the wages of the textile workers of Ahmedabad raised in 1918.

There is a chapter on the Harijans, and how Gandhiji's persistent efforts on their behalf led to the gradual opening of schools, temples, hotels and wells to them. Brailsford traces Gandhiji's "burning concern for the welfare of the peasantry". His hatred of machinery because it concentrates the control of production in the hands of a few". Gandhiji's idea of Swaraj was embodied in the Manifesto of 1930 and comprised the following points:

- (1) Total Prohibition;
- (2) Reduction of the exchange ratio to 1s. 4d.;
- (3) Reduction of the Land Revenue by 50 per cent;
- (4) Abolition of Salt Tax;
- (5) Reduction of Military expenditure by 50 per cent;
- (6) Reduction of the highest grade officials by half;
- (7) Protective tariff on foreign cloth;
- (8) Passage of Coastal Traffic Reservation Bill;
- (9) Discharge of all political prisoners, save those condemned for murder;
- (10) Abolition of the C.I.D.;
- (11) Issue of licenses to use firearms for self-defence.

Brailsford calls it "an interesting psychological and political document," and remarks that only the Mahatma would have

included prohibition and put it first. How times have changed! How few of these aims arouse enthusiasm today.

The third section of the book is by Lord Pethick-Lawrence, who was Secretary of State for India in the years preceding the handing over of power in India. Though his friendship with Gandhiji extended over many years and while as a man he may have sympathised with Gandhiji's aspirations, yet the fact that he was the official representative of his Government, naturally influences his views. He reviews recent Indian history—from the outbreak of World War II to 1948.

He writes about the Cripps' oiler, the Cabinet Mission of which he himself was the leader, and of the events preceding the granting of Independence to India, the poignant and memorable details of 30th January which none in India can have forgotten, but which may contain details not so familiar to readers outside India.

There is a final chapter on Gandhiji's role in world history. We may be forgiven for thinking that the chapter does not do full justice to Gandhiji. Gandhiji stressed the importance of the moral force in politics. He showed the way to a peaceful solution of many of the problems which confront us. Some day the world will recognise his contribution to nations, because the solutions offered by politicians so far have not satisfied the conscience of man.

As Mrs. Naidu says in her preface to the book, all three writers have fulfilled their tasks with sincerity, but if is left to Mrs. Naidu to give us two pictures of Gandhiji as we remember him:

"I love to recall the picture of him at his evening prayers, facing the multitude of wor-

shippers, with the full moon rising above the silver sea, the very spirit of immemorial India."—and again, "But perhaps the most poignant and memorable of all is

the last picture of him walking to his prayers at the sunset hour on January 30, 1948 translated in a tragic instant of martyrdom from mortality into immortality."

suggestions for lightening the burden of the tenants and for bringing some immediate relief to the agriculturists.

From South India

Landlords and Tenants in Malabar

MALABAR has currently under cultivation 15 lakh acres. Taking each family to consist of five members on an average, the land under cultivation works out to 2 acres per family of which again less than 4 acre will be wet land. If all the cultivable waste land of nearly 6½ lakh acres is brought under the plough it will not raise the acreage per family by more than an acre. The population also shows an upward trend. There is hardly a single *Taluqa* in Malabar which is self-sufficient in food grains.

The system of tenure that obtains in Malabar is today far from satisfactory and stands in the way of attaining the goal of self-sufficiency in food by 1951. Every year, an enormous sum of about Rs. 2½ crores is paid as rent to the land-holding class, and this colossal tribute is no more than interest on unproductive capital Land is also heavily burdened with debts with disastrous results. If the landlord is to get a reasonable return on his investment and the Government is also to get its share of revenue, there is little left for the tenant. If, on the other hand, the maintenance of the cultivator's family at a decent level is regarded as a legitimate objective of the system of land tenure, nothing will be left for the landlord and the Government. The average tenant has not got

the minimum capital that is necessary for increasing the yield from his land; he has often to borrow at high rates of interest. In addition, there are social parasites such as middlemen and intermediaries. Compact holdings are also split up by alienation or succession, which has brought down the economic value of land (though not its money price!) and also the technique of cultivation to the lowest possible level.

With a view to remedying grave anomalies such as these, the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee appointed a Tenancy Sub-Committee consisting of four members including an M.L.A. They have now submitted their

The report deals with both long-term and short-term proposals. The former involves taxation, industrial expansion, extension of banking and credit facilities, co-operation, etc. The appointment of an expert economic committee has been recommended for their implication. The short-term proposals are for interim reforms, relief measures and for a modification of the Tenancy Act.

Before the 1945 Amendment to the Tenancy Act came into force, a large number of tenants had been evicted on the specious plea that the landlord required the land for his own cultivation. Tenants had also been ousted through the sale of their holdings for debts or for arrears of rent. Arrears of rent had been disguised as debt and the real purpose of the Debt Relief Act defeated. The Committee suggests that a tenant who has been ousted from or has surrendered possession of his hold-

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