

An Editor on "The Ethics of Journalism"

IN a paper on "The Ethics of Journalism," read on Saturday before the Pan-Anglican Congress, Mr. St. Loe Strachey, editor of the Spectator, touched the fringe of a large subject, says the London Standard. To many people the press discharges some of the functions of the pulpit, the lecture-room, the public meeting, the essay on morals; it is the abstract and brief chronicle of the time; it has long since superseded the theatre in that capacity; it has practically destroyed the pamphlet; and its only serious literary rival, the novel, is driven more and more to become, like the contemporary drama, a mere vehicle of entertainment. In the newspaper every morning the least adventurous of readers becomes a spectator of the cosmic movement. He pays his copper coin for admission to the show, and swiftly the world-drama is unrolled before his eyes. History is here in the making, the clash of nations, the conflict of mighty forces, the rise and fall of dynasties, the struggles of parties, the ebb and flow of public opinion, the phases of philosophy and religion, literature, sport, dress, fashion, amusement, suffering, and crime. Nothing is too small to find a place in the record, nothing too grandiose and magnificent. Science and education have combined to render it possible for the clerk, as he sits at his breakfast in a provincial town, the artisan, as he hurries to his work in the tram-car, to be an eye-witness of a revolution in Persia, a riot in India, a railway accident in Mexico, a cricket match in Australia, and a garden party at Windsor. The strange, the in-

teresting, the exciting, the attractive doings of all humanity are no longer hidden, and no longer known only to those who have time and exceptional opportunity to examine them. There is no such leveller as the newspaper; for it has gone far to make the masses of common humanity partakers in the feasts, the pageants, the enjoyments of the wealthy and the high-placed. O, for an hour of crowded life! said the stay-at-home drudge in office and factory in the old days: to feel the thrill of a wild charge of horse, to hear the cheers and see the gleam of steel as the infantry close in for the last rush up a bullet-swept ridge, to share the passions of an historic moment in the senate, or only to be an actor in some splendid ceremonial pageant. In these times the quiet civilian, as he crunches his morning toast, may quiver with the long-drawn agony, the tense energy, the final triumph of that battle that took place yesterday on the other side of the globe. The workgirl, over her tea, turns to the court ball or the gala performance, and presently knows more about those entertainments than some of the ladies and gentlemen who perspired through them. The dresses, the dances, the uniforms, the stars and medals on heroic breasts, the jewels that sparkled on lovely shoulders, the lights and the flowers, what the queen wore and how Tetrassini sang—all this she may apprehend. The journalist is the true romancer, the prose poet, if he but knew it, of our toilsome age.

On this aspect of the journalist's vocation Mr. Strachey rightly lays emphasis. "We must always remember," he says, adapting a

phrase of Delane's "that the journalist's business is publicity." The primary function of the newspaper is to let the world know what the world is doing. This is not merely in order to satisfy an idle curiosity. Mutual knowledge and understanding are essential to progress, political, social, or scientific. How helpless we should be if we could realize Mr. Strachey's suggestion and find ourselves for a few weeks in a newspaperless world. The desire for news, as he points out, may be instinctive; but it is an instinct which has been retained in the evolutionary progress, because it conduces to convenience and self-preservation. In those societies where newspapers are still undeveloped or non-existent it is regarded as a sacred duty of the ordinary citizen to pass on the news. One Beduin encountering another in the desert will always ask and impart information concerning the latest events of interest; and everybody knows how news travels with lightning rapidity through the bazaars of India. The journalist then has to regard himself mainly as a purveyor and distributor of news. His ethical problem occurs when he considers how much news he should give and of what kind. Obviously all that happens is not suitable for publication; there are some things which must be considered *tacenda*, even under the most liberal construction of journalistic privilege. Mr. Strachey is content with the dictum of a great American journal: "We print all the news that is fit to print." The canon, like all artistic and moral rules, is arbitrary. It is for the editor to form his own conception of what is or is not printable matter.

Here is the opportunity for the exercise of his discretion, his judgment, his knowledge of the public, and his good sense. He has to steer between the old-fashioned Scylla of British respectable dullness, which would publish nothing that the great majority of readers wanted to know, and the new Charybdis with its ugly shoals of triviality and sensationalism. On the whole, it may fairly be said that contemporary English journalism keeps a reasonable mean. We live, however, in an age of free speaking; and a comparison between contemporary fiction and contemporary journalism is not to the disadvantage of the latter, on the ethical side. There is a growing lubricity in the novels of which the newspapers show no trace.

As to the other side of journalistic ethics, that which concerns comment rather than news, Mr. Strachey did not say much, perhaps because he was conscious that the topic could hardly be treated adequately within the limits of his address. A newspaper has two different functions, not necessarily connected, though they are now indissolubly united. It is at once a pulpit and a broad sheet. The two things work together, though in their nature they are distinct; but the arrangement which causes the newspaper not merely to describe the doings of men but to criticize them, is not now likely to be altered. There are a few journals—like Mr. Strachey's own—which only criticize, and a few which merely report; the vast majority find scope for both the reporter and the commentator. As a critic, whether of politics, literature, art, or morals, the journalist is

assuredly not diminishing in importance. The tendency for a very considerable portion of the population to be guided in its opinions by the newspapers shows no sign of declining. It is merely a truism—and, like other truisms, exceedingly hard to translate into practice—to say that the main requisites for good journalistic comment are courage, competence, and honesty. The journalist must very frequently be an advocate, writing to support his own party or sect, but he may be—and we agree with Mr. Strachey in firmly believing that in this country he generally is—an honest advocate, convinced that the cause he upholds is on the main right. But we are also glad to note that Mr. Strachey regards the commercialism of journalism, about which a good deal of nonsense is often talked, as being the best guarantee for both integrity and capacity. The newspaper that is not run as a genuine profit-making concern is nearly always a danger, as we have seen in Continental countries. If it cannot pay its way, it must be financed by somebody; and whatever may be thought of the subsidized theatre, the subsidized newspaper is usually a nuisance. Those who find the money expect to set the tune, with more regard to their own interests and wishes than those of the public. The newspaper which has to obtain its revenues by satisfying and interesting a large miscellaneous clientele has the best chance, and the strongest incentive to exhibit honesty and ability. There is more opportunity for both qualities in the service of that many-headed, but on the whole single-hearted, entity, the general public, than in servitude to a clique or a group.

A Loyal Servant of India

IT was one of those sudden moments of life that reveal the man. They come too quick for reflection, and like the bursting of a shell overhead they are there before you know, but in a flash they show what stuff the man is made of, writes Henry W. Nevinson in the London Daily Chronicle. Day and night before the Indian National Congress at Surat last December, Mr. Gokhale had been toiling to arrange peace between the contending parties. He had taken no thought of food or sleep. Backwards and forwards he had gone from one party camp to another, always striving for some basis of agreement—something that would enable the congress to show a steady front against the powerful host of enemies who for twenty-two years had foretold its fall and met its efforts for Indian reform with contempt.

On the first day the congress broke up in disorder, but without violence. On the second day the moment came. Mr. Tilak, the clever and courageous leader of the "Extremists," was seen standing before the chair with folded arms, demanding to be heard and refusing to move unless by force. On both sides of him the younger Moderates who crowded the platform wildly gesticulated vengeance. In front of the enormous audience raged like a white sea. Mr. Gokhale, leader of the "Moderates," stood beside his old Extremist friend and opponent with both arms stretched out to protect him. In another second a wave of men brandishing long sticks rushed over the platform, table, chair, Moderates, and all. But I had time to recognize how that little action revealed the man.

A Devoted Life

"Sweet reasonableness," "sweetness and light"—these are exactly the qualities that Mr. Gokhale possesses, and with them he has courage, rather a rare combination. Other leaders of the Indian reform movement have greater rhetorical power, more popular ways, and perhaps wider influence with the common people; but I know none who gives such a sense of confidence, of clear and definite aims, and of a reasonable estimate as to what is possible and what is not. Born a Mahatma Brahman of the highest caste, but poor as most Brahmins are, he has thrown away the caste and kept the poverty. Since he was a student in Bombay, he has devoted himself entirely to the cause of his country, first in education (he taught for twenty years at the Ferguson College in Poona) and gradually more and more in the life of political and social reform. With this object a year or two ago he founded in Poona his Order of the "Servants of India," for the training of men who will, in the language of the rules, "devote their lives to the cause of the country in a religious spirit, and promote, by all constitutional means, the national interests of the Indian people." The training lasts five years, but two of those years must be spent in various parts of India, so as to learn the people's needs at first hand, and all members take vows to earn no money for themselves, to seek no personal advantage, to engage in no personal quarrel, and to make no distinction of caste or creed.

Social reform is part of the society's aim, as of Mr. Gokhale's, and perhaps the chief part. They are moved for the working millions of India, harassed by a bondage, they lay on themselves, a minute ritual, immature marriage, and the exclusion from life's decencies of some fifty millions who are below any caste at all. But at the present moment the chief interest is necessarily in politics, and one must suppose that Mr. Gokhale's visit to England has a political object. For India now stands at

a crisis of her destiny, and in that crisis we ourselves are involved. The Simla scheme of reforms is now being considered, and one's only hope is that it may emerge amended past recognition. Owing to our long refusal of reform, the hostility between the races is fast increasing, and the fear is that the recent outrages, such as always occur under repression, will provide the official excuse for more repression still.

Practicable Reforms

I do not speak for Mr. Gokhale. I only try to represent his proposals as I have gathered them from his public utterances and from many conversations I had with him in India. But anyone who studies India may know them, for he is a public man, and for some years past has sat on the Viceroy's Legislative Council as elected representative of the Bombay presidency. When the fatal error of the Partition of Bengal was first committed by Lord Curzon it was Mr. Gokhale also who was chosen president of the National Congress (at Benares, December, 1905) as the man most likely to hold the parties together and to guide their counsels with most discretion in a dangerous time. One passage in his presidential address is worth reading now. Mr. Morley had just been appointed to the Indian office:—

"Large numbers of educated men in this country," said Mr. Gokhale, "feel towards Mr. Morley as towards a Master, and the heart hopes and yet trembles. He, the reverent student of Burke, the disciple of Mill, the friend and biographer of Gladstone—will he courageously apply their principles and his own to the government of this country, or will he, too, succumb to the influence of the India office, and thus cast a blight on hopes which his own writings have done so much to foster?"

Like all the other leading Indians I have met, Mr. Gokhale is convinced that the present unrest will never be calmed down unless some modification is made in that partition of Bengal by which, under the name of efficiency, Lord Curzon sought to express his pique and irritation against the Bengal people. One of two modifications might easily be carried out by a re-arrangement of the outlying districts of Behar, Chota Nagpur, Orissa, and Assam, all of which consist of different races. The only essential thing is that the whole of Bengal should be kept together, just as we keep together the whole of Scotland. If this were done quickly, and if Bengal were placed under a governor, like the governors of Bombay and Madras, the outburst of satisfaction and renewed confidence with which it would be received would allay the present serious agitation and give further reforms a chance of remedial effect.

Plea for Concessions

Among such reforms, I think, Mr. Gokhale would place very high the appointment of an Indian on to the Executive Council, and an enlargement of the Viceroy's and other legislative councils, not, as is proposed, by the nomination of big landowners and other wealthy men, who would be bound to say *ditto* to any official proposal, but by elected members up to the number of half the council, thus leaving the officials with a steady but narrow majority, the right of veto remaining with the Viceroy, governor, or lieutenant-governor. It might be then laid down that if a large proportion of the elected members—say, two-thirds—were opposed to a certain measure, it should be suspended for further consideration. Some similar control ought to be granted over the expenditure of money, for at present the representative members have, no real voice in the spending of the immense sums that are scraped off their own people year by year.

These reforms, followed by a gradual extension of primary education (to which the government now gives only about £200,000, as against some £20,000,000 given to the Army), would, I believe, serve, in Mr. Gokhale's opinion, as an earnest of our country's goodwill and of the Liberal party's determination to introduce Liberal principles into the government of India. Liberal and generous measures like these are required to cut the ground under the feet of those who are now proclaiming distrust in England's sense of justice and freedom, and have already established a small school of fanatical hatred against us.

So far, by our refusal of all concession, we have allowed men like Mr. Gokhale nothing to which they could point as the result of their constitutional and reasonable methods; and by the arrogance of our official opposition to reform we are laying up a heavy penalty, not only for ourselves, but for India as well.

THE INDIAN IN AFRICA AGAIN

It was generally hoped that the troubles of the Indians in the Transvaal were at an end. They voluntarily registered themselves on the distinct understanding, as Mr. H. L. Polak states in the Indian Review, that the Registration law would be repealed. "The whole sub-continent has been taught the futility of armed resistance. The principle has been laid down that no legislation should be passed affecting the welfare or interest of the unrepresented races without previous full and free consultation with them."

The whole issue is set out in the Indian Review for April by Mr. Polak, who lives in South Africa, in the belief that faith would be kept with the Indians by the Transvaal Government. In the course of the paper Mr. Polak ominously says: "The Transvaal Indians have been obsessed by a constant fear that whatever bad thing happened to them was merely the precursor of something considerably worse, and rarely was their dread unfounded." By the same post which brings this article from India comes Indian Opinion, published in Natal—that is Mr. Polak's own paper—dated May 30, which seems to show that that "constant fear" had some basis.

This paper contains an article headed "Playing Foul—An Exhibition of Slimeless—Transvaal Government and the Asiatic Act—Passive Resistance Once More," the upshot of which seems to be that the Transvaal government is not keeping faith with the Indians. Mr. Gandhi, who was one of the Indian leaders, writes a letter to the Colonial office, in which he says:

"I beg to apply formally for a return of my application for voluntary registration and all the papers given by me to you in connection with the matter, for the following reasons.

"I have just learnt that it is the definite intention of the government to legalize voluntary registration under the Asiatic act, making the act applicable to such Asiatics in every other respect. This I consider to be a distinct breach of the compact arrived at between the government and the Asiatic communities of the Transvaal.

"General Smuts told me at the interview at which you were present that, if the compact on the part of the Asiatic communities was carried out, he would repeal the act. This, as you are aware, was in answer to my letter of February 1, last, asking for a definite assurance on the matter.

"I claim that the Asiatics have more than fulfilled their part of the contract. It was, therefore, the government's duty to declare their intention to repeal the act."

It will be interesting to see what reply the Colonial office makes.—Public Opinion.

President of Venezuela

RESIDENT CASTRO is a highly interesting personality. Nine years ago he was an obscure politician who sat in the Federal Senate of Venezuela for the remote Andine State of El Tachira. The Senator could not, or would not, pay his taxes, and his cattle were seized to make good his default, says the London Times. That was the real starting point of his career. He went into rebellion with a handful of followers marched against Caracas, seduced the 6,000 well-armed troops of President Andrade, who prudently put to sea in "the navy," and installed himself provisionally at the Yellow House. There he has since remained, ruling Venezuela with a hand of iron, trampling under foot the plainest obligations of international right, and treating with insolence the remonstrances of all powers who seek redress for the grievances of their subjects. He has recently expounded to a representative of the *Matin* his views on things in general in an article of which our Paris correspondent sent us the summary that appeared yesterday. They may be studied with profit and with amusement by those who care to understand the character of the civilization and of the politics of certain South American Republics. France is one of the many countries with which President Castro's Government have a difference. Two years and a half ago they took possession of the property of a French telegraph company, on the pretext that some of its agents had been hostile to the President's rule. When the French government remonstrated, M. Taigny, the chargé d'affaires, received his passports, and the ports were closed to French shipping. President Castro looks upon the situation thus created with equanimity. He justly points out that, while France has a good deal of money sunk in Venezuela, Venezuela has not a penny invested in France. If M. Fallières wishes to renew diplomatic relations, he must take the necessary steps. His brother President bears no malice, and will be ready to receive his advances with affability. He has indeed, a special predilection for France. Was not Napoleon her ruler, and does not President Castro, as a soldier, venerate the memory of that great man? Napoleon, it is true, lost the battle of Waterloo, and Castro gained the tremendous conflict of Vittoria against the rebel Matos, from which he infers that, had he stood opposed to Wellington and Blucher, the history of mankind would have been different from what it has been. For Bolivar also he has the deepest admiration, but his innate sincerity compels him to admit that Bolivar's achievements will be rated in history below his own. The "Liberator" drove out the Spaniards. The task of the "Restorer" is to expel the cosmopolitan capitalist. In Venezuela, Colombia, Bolivia, and Ecuador the economic life of the country is in the hands of strangers. The "Restorer" intends to make them loosen their grasp—and to keep their money. "Why," he exclaimed to his French visitor, "should I conceal it? My dream is to regenerate the Republics of the north of South America by reuniting them in a common defence against the invasion of the barbarians of Europe and of the other America?"

He has confidence in his "star"—which, indeed, has been wonderfully constant and propitious hitherto. "I have no fear," he declared, "of Europe. All the Powers may form a coalition. So long as I live, Venezuela will be unconquerable." As for France, she has not dared to support either her Minister or her country. He has papers which explain her reserve, and she herself, he adds, expelled Monsignor Montagnini, causes far less grave than those which he had against M. Taigny. Venezuela, he acknowledges, is on

bad terms with nearly all the Powers. "It is my work," he boasts, "and I am proud of it." The boast seems to be fully justified. With no country is she on worse terms than with "the other America." "The other America" has the same sort of grievances against the Government of Caracas as have other wealthy and civilized States. Her former protegee is proving most ungrateful. Quite lately President Castro has refused point blank to submit his differences with the Government of Washington to arbitration. "What is more disconcerting, he seems, according to our American correspondent, to have shown that, on some points, he has something to say for himself. It appears to be admitted, for example, that one of the American companies, whose rights he has infringed, did in fact aid a rebellion against him, though it did so under compulsion, and he suggests, with a certain appearance of plausibility, that the past career of another complainant is not beyond suspicion. It may even be acknowledged in a general way that concessionaires and exploiters of all nationalities often conduct their operations in half-civilized lands, such as Venezuela, without much respect for the interests, or even for the laws, of the countries in which they work. But when this admission has been made, the fact remains that on all available evidence the rule of Cipriano Castro has been, and is, a system of sheer brigandage. It is impossible not to admire his very real ability and courage, or not to laugh at his amazing arrogance. The messages in which he belauds himself and his sway, and assures the world, with all the extravagance of Spanish-American rhetoric, that he has made Venezuela great, glorious and free, are masterpieces of impudent mendacity. But the man is not only a ruthless and greedy tyrant at home. He has long been an international nuisance, and sooner or later, by one Power or by another, that nuisance will have to be abated.

STRUGGLE WITH A TIGER

Two brothers, Khuda Bakha and Shaikh Abdul Ghani of Moradabad, were despatched recently to Rampur on an errand, and while entering a grove at Khadpura a tiger sprang upon Khuda Bakha, who, being an athlete, warded off the blow aimed at him with his right hand and caught one of the paws with the other and maintained his hold, though the tiger was mauling the other hand.

Abdul Ghani now rushed up with a stout stick, which he forced down the tiger's throat, making it release his brother's hand, when Khuda Bakha seized another paw with his wounded hand, forcing both the paws back. He wrestled with the tiger, keeping it down by sheer force, while Abdul Ghani belabored it with a lathi and killed it.

The tiger was carried by the brothers to his highness the Nawab of Rampur, "who kept the skin as a memento and sent Khuda Bakha to the state dispensary for treatment."—Indian Telegraph.

What is probably one of the most expensive bits of preaching was delivered on Whitsunday at Elberfeld, a town in Rhenish Prussia. The preacher received for a sermon lasting about half an hour the sum of \$4,900. The origin of this custom dates back to the year 1690, when a wealthy French baron named Favard died and bequeathed to the Protestant Church in that town the legacy, on the condition that every year a clergyman selected from among those holding the poorest livings in the diocese should preach a short sermon extolling the good deeds of the dead baron.