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[No. 2

	PAGE		PAGE
<i>Mahatma Gandhi</i>	33	<i>Beta-Ray Counters.</i> R. S. KRISHNAN ..	37
<i>Missions on Science and Technology</i> ..	34	<i>TTT-Curve Data and Their Application.</i> G. P. CONTRACTOR	43
<i>Improving the Position of Mathematics in India</i>	35	<i>Effect of Afternoon Heat Lows on Winds at Lower Levels.</i> S. L. MALURKAR ..	47
<i>Some Aspects of Pure and Applied Wood Anatomy</i>	35	<i>Letters to the Editor</i>	49
<i>The Variation in Stature and Cephalic Index among Bengalee College Students</i> 36		<i>Photosensitive Glass</i>	58
<i>Blood-Fluke Problem in India</i>	36	<i>Reviews</i>	59
		<i>Science Notes and News</i>	62

MAHATMA GANDHI

AT rare intervals in the history of mankind, there arise personalities, the wide response to whose teachings inspire the hope that man, after all, is progressing in the right direction. The traits of these great personalities are easily described. They embody in themselves and typify all the lofty ideals of social conduct which civilised man cherishes at heart but often fails to adopt in the normal activities of life. These great men are optimists having intense faith in the essential goodness of man, in his sweet reasonableness and in his eventual conversion, by precept and example, to a life of charitable neighbourliness. They leave the impress of their teachings and of their model lives, not merely on their own age but on generations to come. Such was the life of Mahatma Gandhi, and there is little doubt that he will be ranked among the great teachers of the world.

That Gandhi fell at the hands of a misguided youth, moved by narrow sectarianism, is, indeed, no reflection on our civilisation, our land or our high religious convictions. For, in every land and every age, people in all grades of moral evolution are to be found. Their individual conduct cannot be generalised sweepingly as of the generation or of the country. During Lincoln's lifetime there must have been as few men of his calibre as of Booth, his assassin. The world reaction to Mahatma Gandhi's unnatural end makes us believe that his martyrdom, even as that of Jesus Christ, will assure a lasting response to his ideal of *ahimsa*. And the universal veneration which he commanded in his lifetime is further proof that his teachings will not be forgotten after his death.

In every role—as reformer, statesman, ascetic and religious preacher—Gandhi was

truly a revolutionary. Like all great revolutionaries, he was a man of paradoxes: it was difficult to classify his views along accepted lines. He claimed to be a sanatanist, but advocated the equality of all castes; he was a lucid thinker, but an unhesitating dualist in theology; he dedicated his life to the economic and social upliftment of the masses, but unflinchingly advocated atavism in many fields of human endeavour; and finally, though the most doughty champion of the oppressed and the enslaved, he would have nothing to do with violent methods of emancipation.

The most outstanding achievement of Gandhiji, in the field of politics, has been the practice of truth. To him the means was far more important than the end. He has succeeded in showing to the world that diplomacy and tact can go hand in hand with honesty and sincerity of purpose.

Despite differences of opinion and ways of thinking, all men honoured him for his intense sincerity and enormous courage of conviction. His way of reminding the world, that no man has a right to possess more while another has less, was to lead the sim-

ple life of the poor in all its actuality; his way of asking men to be self-reliant was to weave his own cloth and cobble his own shoes; his way of preaching equality of men and religions was to live with them all in loving friendship. These demonstrations, simple as they were, went far towards the promotion of self-respect among his countrymen and of peace between communities.

While India remains ever in his debt for his unrivalled leadership in the final phase of her historic emancipation, the world is grateful to him for the successful demonstration that political disputes between nations can also be settled in ways other than war—by moral force as against military might or machiavellianism, a method which spells failure to neither party, but, like mercy, blesseth him that gives and him that receives. By this exalted method of persuasion Gandhiji exercised a power unprecedented in the history of mankind.

Let us hope that posterity will have no cause to accuse the men of his generation that his life and teachings were lost on them.

EDITORIAL NOTE

MISSIONS ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

RECENTLY we have read an announcement that the United States will soon establish a Mission on Science and Technology in the American embassy at London. The object of the mission is to supply interested individuals and commercial firms with information on the latest developments in such fields as organic chemistry, biochemistry, physics, engineering, biology and agronomy, and to collect information on British developments for dissemination to government agencies and scientific societies in U.S.A. The mission will also assist in facilitating exchange of scientific personnel, develop and continue close personal contact with government agencies and research institutions in the United Kingdom, and generally stimulate exchange of reports of scientific and technological nature.

Such friendly contacts between different countries are of obvious benefit to scientists and technicians as well as to the people who depend on them for their material advancement. The establishment of such missions is, further, one of the positive methods of promoting active co-operation in the international sphere. To countries like India and China, with enormous potentialities of economic development, the more technically advanced countries like the United States, Britain and Russia could, by establishing such missions, give a helping hand and accelerate their progress. The United States and Russia are in a particularly advantageous position in this respect, as the agricultural industry is greatly developed in these countries. With their help it is clearly possible to cut short the period of modernisation and to attain the peak of agricultural production and thus help in overcoming the critical shortage of world food supplies. We trust the Government of India will take the necessary steps for the establishment of friendly foreign scientific missions in India.
