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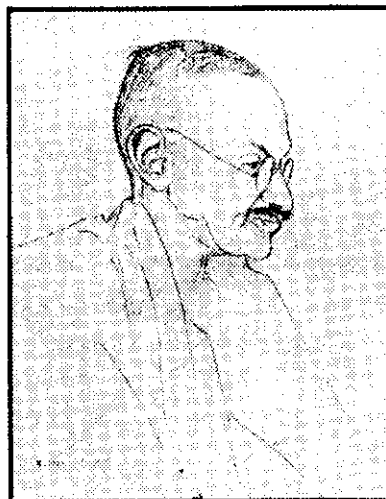
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This Fellow Gandhi Again!

SINCE our article on Gandhi appeared a fortnight ago we have had several inquiries from correspondents for more information about him. Here is an attempt, necessarily sketchy, to meet that demand, with Gandhi's own biography, edited by the Rev. C. F. Andrews and published by Allen and Unwin, supplying most of the material.

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI is the son of the Prime Minister of an Indian State, the nephew of another, and the grandson of a third. The family, however, was not a rich one, nor a particularly learned one either, and Gandhi himself confesses that he was only a "mediocre student" and learnt nothing from his early schooling except "how to abuse his teacher." At the age of 13 he was married—not merely betrothed, he points out. It appears that he was actually betrothed by his parents three times, the first two of his intended brides having died as children. The third betrothal took place when he was seven, though he had no recollection of it himself. Of his wedding at the age of 13 he writes, "I do not think it meant more to me then than the prospect of good clothes to wear, drum beating, marriage processions, rich dinners, and a strange girl to play with," but his experience made him in later



MAHATMA GANDHI
A drawing by Kanu Desai

Southampton on his first visit. He had worn his black suit on the boat to save his best clothes, and disembarked into an English winter clad in immaculate white flannels! In London he had trouble at first over his vegetarian diet and must have been a constant source of worry to his landladies. For a while he set out to be a young man of culture, taking dancing, elocution, and violin lessons. Then he gave up trying to be a social figure and lived in London on 17/- a week.

First Visit To South Africa

AFTER passing his law examinations and becoming a member of the English Bar, Gandhi returned to India, still a very young man, still more interested in "food reform" than almost anything else. As a lawyer he was not very successful and when he got on the wrong side of a British Political Agent (it was partly his own fault, he confesses) he realised that his chances of ever making a place in his profession in India were slight. So he accepted an offer to go to South Africa on legal business for a Moslem firm. He reached Durban in May, 1893.

He had been in South Africa only about two days when he encountered race prejudice against the Indians. Because he was a Hindu he was ordered to remove his turban in a courthouse; he was not allowed to travel first-class by train; he was assaulted by a coachman; he could not secure accommodation at hotels, and when at last he did he was not at first allowed to eat with the other guests; he had to secure a special pass to go out after 9 p.m.; and he was kicked off the footpath outside President Kruger's house. These experiences led him to take up the cause of the Indians in South Africa. At Pretoria he made the first public speech of his life, urging the Indians to improve their own ways, and especially their sanitary conditions, and suggesting the formation of an Indian association to protect their interests. Then, with his law suit satisfactorily settled, he returned to India in 1896.

War, Plague, Rebellion

BUT he soon went back to South Africa at the request of the Indian community, to lead their agitation against a £3 poll tax on indentured labourers who wished to remain in South Africa.

But by this time Gandhi's work and his speeches were getting into the press. The Europeans in South Africa were aroused against him, and when he landed again in Durban he was attacked by a mob and was only rescued from it by the wife of the Police Superintendent, and later from lynching, by the cool wits of the Superintendent. When the trouble died down Gandhi refused to take legal action against his assailants. "This is a religious question with me," he said.

(Continued on next page)

life a strong opponent of the Hindu custom of child-marriage. Actually it was successful in his own case; he must have been a very difficult husband, but his wife has stayed with him, nursing him in his illnesses, even sometimes sharing his imprisonments.

After marriage, Gandhi continued at school. He was painfully shy, introspective, and he disliked organised sports, though he has always been fond of walking. One of his educational theories, taken from his account of his early life, is worth quoting: "Children should first be taught the art of drawing before learning how to write. Let the child learn his letters by observation just as he draws different objects, such as flowers and birds. He will then write a beautifully formed hand" Gandhi himself never did.

From an early age Gandhi took an interest in all branches of religious faith—and tolerated them all except Christianity! What caused him to develop a sort of dislike of Christianity was, he says, the habit of some Christian missionaries in India of pouring scorn on all other faiths. Later he came to revise his views but it was the New Testament, and particularly the Sermon on the Mount, that impressed him. The Old Testament, he confesses, sent him to sleep!

Passage To England

GANDHI'S father died when he was 16. The elders of his family decided to send him to England to study law, but the decision was strongly opposed by one section of his caste. In fact, he became a partial outcast as a result, and remains so to this day.

Those who remember the Gandhi who insisted on wearing a loin cloth at formal gatherings on a later visit to England might have been even more surprised if they had seen the young Hindu law student who stepped from the boat at



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