

tion, by the circulation of printed matter inciting to war, the providing of arms and the distribution of instructions for the manufacture of explosives."

### Second Nasik Conspiracy Trial

A Second Nasik Conspiracy Case charged Savarkar with the abetment of murder of Jackson, the Collector of Nasik. The trial opened on January 23, 1911, in which it was contended by the prosecution that the pistol used in the outrage was one of those twenty which Vinayak had been able to send clandestinely to India. It was, therefore, not a difficult matter to find the accused guilty of abetment and Vinayak was awarded on January 30, 1911, a second term of transportation for life.

It may be interesting to note that the two Savarkar brothers had the unique distinction amongst Indian patriots to pass jointly a big portion of their prison life in the Cellular Jail in the Andamans—aptly called "the Indian Bastille." The elder brother, Ganesh, was convicted on June 9, 1909, for composing and publishing a book of patriotic verses, entitled *Laghu Abhinav Bharat Mela*, with a sentence of transportation for life, a punishment reserved for the gravest offences under the Criminal Law of the land.

The Lahore Conspiracy Cases of a later period have been dealt with at appropriate places.

### *Life is Duty*

(1908)

The revolutionary party established itself in almost every district of Bengal and reports of action had been reaching respective headquarters not infrequently but sometimes of extremely unwelcome results.

Money to sustain the movement was necessary and looting of private properties had been taking place here and there. One such was committed at Barrah, P. S. Nawabganj, Dacca, on June 2, 1908, here more than Rs. 25,000 in cash and jewellery was taken away by the raiders. The casualty was heavy, four persons of the public were killed and a few others injured. (*Vide* p. 192).

While returning from the place of occurrence in a boat the

villagers; on both the banks of the Ichhamati, gave a hot chase. The boat sprang a leak and water had been seeping into the hold.

GOPAL *alias* DEBENDRA SEN GUPTA, was engaged in throwing water out with an improvised *chhancha* to keep the boat light by preventing accumulation of water. The chase was continued. The boat entered the Dhaleswari from Ichhamati the next day. When it was passing by Savar P.S. the Sub-Inspector came out with a rifle and began firing at the occupants of the fleeing boat.

Gopal could realise the danger of his alternate standing and stooping posture. He was sure to be a better target of the firing than those who had been sitting inside the hold. Fear could not deter him from doing his duty. A bullet hit him on the forehead which caused his instantaneous death.

To avoid identification his dead body was tied to the heavy anchor of the boat and dropped into the river thus providing him with an unmarked watery grave. He met with a fate slightly different from that of Susil Sen of Pragpur incident.

### **Peoples' Reward**

(1908)

The name of Inspector Nandalal Banerjee came into prominence in connection with the attempted arrest of Prafulla Chaki at Mokameh Ghat Station on May 1, 1908. In recognition of his meritorious services he was awarded a reward of Rs. 1,000 by the benign Government at a Durbar in Muzaffarpore on May 10, 1908, as he "was responsible for the abortive arrest as he shadowed the deceased from Samastipur to Mokameh, eventually affecting a capture."

He came to Calcutta just a few days before the incident and was putting up with a relative at No. 100/2, Serpentine Lane, Calcutta. On November 9, 1908, he left the house between 7 and 7-30 p.m. for posting a letter. When he had proceeded about 200 yards from his residence he was hit by a bullet or two from behind. He ran a few paces forward but fell down due to exhaustion shouting, "Inform my brother at 100/2, Serpentine Lane."

The assailants were not prepared to take any chance of his

survival. They closely followed him and one of the two stooped over the prostrate body of Nandalal and fired two more shots on his body. Death was instantaneous. He received four bullets which passed through the head, the centre of the back, the right side of the back and through the left shoulder.

The Inspector was under order of transfer to Muzaffarpore and was expected to be relieved from duty in the course of day or two.

No arrests were made and the assailants were able to go scot-free.

### *Poignant Parting*

(1908)

In the general round-up of suspects after the Natore Road Mail Robbery on August 3, 1908, a man not too young and in extremely bad health was arrested and after preliminary enquiry was sent up for trial at the Sessions. His young son was a co-accused in the case.

The condition of the unfortunate man, KALI CHARAN THAKUR, deteriorated under uncongenial conditions of an under-trial prison life and all efforts for his bail proved unavailing because the Civil Surgeon said that "his case is not worse in jail."

The patient died during the Christmas of 1908 and the question of disposal of the dead body created a piquant situation, the authorities refusing permission to cremation outside the jail.

The son, overwhelmed though with grief, successfully pleaded to hand over the dead body to his near relations on condition that there was no demonstration whatsoever.

Poignancy was injected to the situation by the refusal on the part of the Government to the son, the sole male issue of the father, to perform the last rites of the dead.

The parting at the jail gate was something better imagined than described.

## ***A Cripple's Blow***

(1909)

In point of cool courage, which showed no signs of faltering by a jot or tittle from the original plan, the action of CHARU CHANDRA BASU occupies a unique place in the history of the freedom movement of India.

Charu was a diminutive looking, sickly, thin-built teenager devoid of the palm and fingers of the right hand from the birth. He was not known to have any serious way of life except to those who had known him intimately and perhaps possessed the knowledge of his capacity for undertaking the most responsible job. Charu worked in several printing presses and newspaper organisations, the last being Hitaishi Press, Howrah.

He had been living at No. 130, Russa Road and had known Calcutta intimately for at least twelve years. When he decided upon his action, he visited Tollygunge for several days for practising revolver shooting. He began his watch for his victim for five or six days around the courts of Alipore. From enquiries Charu came to know for certain that Ashutosh Biswas would come to the Suburban Police Court on the day on which he got prepared for his action. During the course of the day he once tried to attack Biswas in the Judge's Court but he had to give up the idea because he found the place to be well-guarded and opportunities much less propitious than his expectations.

The redoubtable Public Prosecutor of the Alipore Bar, Ashu Biswas, had made himself obnoxious to the revolutionaries by prosecuting them with unusual zeal and sometimes with means which to all conscience were neither fair to the accused persons nor decent to the legal profession. He would go out of his way to advise the police to arrange papers and secure evidence in such a way as to facilitate conviction of politicals who had come under the ken of the vile eyes of the police. It was a time when the executive saw to it that once a person had been marked for seditious proclivities might not escape. And Ashutosh Biswas was the mainstay of the police prosecution in such matters.

Some men somewhere thought that this man should be

removed from the field of his activities. As was usual on other days, the busy lawyer had been running from one court to another in the discharge of his professional duties, and he appeared before the Suburban Police Magistrate on the fateful day, February 10, 1909, in a coining case.

Ashu left the court at 4-20 p.m. by the east entrance and was walking in a southerly direction. When nearing the hydrant at the south-east corner of the building a shot was fired and the injured man called out *bap-re* (Oh, Father!) and moving both arms rapidly ran in a westerly direction.

Charu followed his prey like a monarch of the forests and placing the revolver against his back fired another shot which passed through the body of the assailed. In passing it may be mentioned that the revolver was tightly tied with his crippled right hand which while was being extended towards the victim, his left hand pulled the trigger which fired the pistol.

A constable standing nearby grappled with Charu from his back and threw his arms around Charu rendering free movement of his hands absolutely impossible. By now Ashu ran in a circular motion through the verandah of the Court into the Court Sub-Inspector's Office where he expired within a few moments. With the restricted movement of his hand Charu fired a third shot which struck the corner of a wall about two feet above the floor.

Two other constables who had been watching the incident from a short distance came running to the aid of the first and completely overpowered the assailant. As is usual in such circumstances, Charu was brutally manhandled but still he wore a sweet smile on his lips and said that he was extremely happy that he had been able to fulfil his mission.

The revolver, which was found to be a little defective, was of Belgian make, a six-chambered one and contained three loaded cartridges and three empty cases.

All the infernal methods for extracting a confession were ruthlessly applied to the frail body of Charu but all that could be collected from him was that one Panchcowrie Sanyal of Dacca (apparently a fictitious name) had come to him and said that according to lots it had fallen on him to kill Ashu Biswas. Panchcowrie had been living in Beniatola Lane. To the great credit of Charu no such person could be discovered in Calcutta

or elsewhere and the Government failed in its attempt to discover a big conspiracy behind the murder of the great Public Prosecutor.

The District Magistrate, 24-Parganas, started a judicial enquiry on February 13, 1909, under a *shamiana* erected in the jail compound. The accused showed very little interest in the case and barely glanced at the witnesses. He answered questions by a nod of the head and most of the time kept looking outside through the door of the tent.

On being asked about the motive of the crime, Charu said, "I killed Ashu Biswas because he was an enemy of the country. He always conducted cases against innocent men and tried his best to secure a conviction."

He declined to produce any witness because he confessed that he and no body else had killed the victim and he had no such convenient witness to come and say that he had not done it.

When he was given to understand that the enquiry had ended, Charu said, "There need be no Sessions Trial, and that I might be hanged tomorrow if not today". Added he, "It was pre-ordained that Ashu would die at my hands and that I shall be hanged on that account."

The Sessions trial started on February 22, 1909, and closed on the following day. Charu was condemned to death.

The High Court confirmed the sentence on March 2, 1909. The accused expressed his firm resolve against any appeal for mitigation of his sentence.

Charu Chandra Bose was hanged in the Alipore Central Jail on March 19, 1909. He met his death with the utmost unconcern as if nothing uncommon was going to happen to him.

## ***Invasion of England***

(1909)

The growing political ferment in India produced greater repercussions in the seat of the Imperialist power of Great Britain. London was the centre of activity of Krishnavarma, Savarkar, Hardayal and others. It made possible the publication of *The Indian Sociologist* and it was the home of India House, the great centre of activity of the Indian nationalists living outside India. In fact, the Indian patriots in India and Great Britain had been strengthening each other's hands and imparting momentum to the movement towards the goal of Independence.

India had heard pistol shots in 1897 on June 22, and the deafening sound of the explosion of a bomb on April 30, 1908, was followed by mysterious importation of firearms inside the jail where a shot was fired at a traitor to apportion his due on August 31, 1908. The sister revolutionary unit in London was not far behind and a momentous event took place on July 1, 1909, demonstrating that Englishmen were now not safe in their homeland.

Most of the students possessed of nationalist sentiment would congregate at India House where propaganda against British rule in any form used to be carried on systematically. It was also used as a hostel for Indian students in London the inmates being lodged and boarded at very moderate rates.

The revolutionary spirit that pervaded this institution may be judged from the language of a red circular distributed to many Indian students in England at the beginning of May 1909, inviting them to a meeting held in 'the House' on the fifty-first Anniversary of the Mutiny of the revolt of the Sepoy regiments at Meerut—an Anniversary falling this year on the same day of the week—a Sunday. The gathering was secret, Europeans being carefully excluded. The circular, headed *Bande Mataram*, was in the following language:

To commemorate  
the Anniversary of the  
INDIAN NATIONAL RISING  
of 1857

A meeting of Indians  
in England  
will be held at  
INDIA HOUSE  
on Sunday, the 10th May, 1908,  
at 4 p.m. precisely  
You and Your friends are cordially  
invited to attend

Printed matter on the reverse side of the 'circular' declared that the purpose of the meeting was to hold up to admiration as "Martyrs", the principal leaders of the rebellion, including Nana Saheb and others.

At India House where hot discussions would be held to explore ways and means for attaining independence, MADAN LAL DHINGRA, a student of engineering was one among the participants. Moreover, he had his residence in India House from which he shifted to the other end of London before he became involved in the murderous assault on Curzon Wylie.

Madan Lal attended almost every meeting held in the India House and was present when Lajpat Rai addressed it during his stay in London. He would never try to conceal his sentiment of love for his Motherland and on one occasion he appeared in his class in the University College wearing a badge inscribed to the memory of martyrs which he had received from the organisers of a meeting held on May 10, 1909. In the class he was ordered to remove the badge which he refused. This led to 'ragging' after which he threatened to cut the throat of one of the students who was most aggressive amongst others.

News reached his father, a medical practitioner of repute and his brother, a barrister, of Madan Lal's leanings towards extremist ideas under evil influence, as they averred. His brother wrote to Wylie asking his assistance in 'reclaiming' Madan Lal. Madan Lal wrote back reviling his brother's attitude saying that it was absurd for an Anglo-Indian like Wylie to interfere in an Indian's private affairs.

Nothing unusual was noticeable in Madan Lal's behaviour on the surface. But he was not idle. He matured his plan in secret and purchased a Colt revolver in London in January and secured another pistol of Belgian make from a private person at



considerable cost. He began his shooting practice at a revolver range and recorded from the start the results of his practice in a note-book regularly.

Curzon Wyllie belonged to the Indian Army and after retirement was made Political A.D.C. to the Secretary of State in 1901. He was one of the Members of the Committee appointed by the Secretary of State to look after Indian students in London. In the course of his business he must have been keeping watch over the political leanings and activities of the Indian students and must in his own way trying to keep them and, may be, the British Empire, safe from harm's way.

The National Indian Association had its annual meeting scheduled on July 1, 1909. Wyllie dined at Savoy Hotel and proceeded to the Association's 'At Home' in the Jehangir Hall of the Imperial Institute. Having previous knowledge of Wyllie's presence in the meeting Madan Lal left his residence two hours before and went to Westbourne to talk to friends where he did not disclose anything about his plan. Madan Lal reached the meeting in time. When the musical programme had just finished Wyllie was seen descending by the staircase when Madan Lal smilingly engaged him in conversation and then suddenly drew out a revolver and fired five successive shots full in his face, the muzzle of the pistol almost touching Wyllie. When the fifth shot struck Wyllie, he fell down. A Parsi gentleman, Cowas Lalcaha, came forward for the protection of Wyllie and the sixth shot hit him resulting in his death a few days later. Wyllie was killed instantaneously and his right eye was completely shattered, his face being disfigured beyond recognition.

The bystanders seized Madan Lal who wrested his hand free and placed the revolver to his own head. The weapon clicked harmlessly, all the shots having been fired at his victim. Madan Lal had another loaded revolver, a dagger and a knife on his person at the time of his arrest. He said that he had no intention of injuring anybody and everyone might feel safe.

The police searched his lodging but could discover no objectionable matter whatsoever. They took charge of the India House, Highgate, and found a mass of literature and some incriminating letters. They also took charge of *The Indian*

*Sociologist* which in one of its issues not only condoned but encouraged political assassination.

There were no signs of nervousness and Madan Lal presented a picture of fortitude. He said,

"I am a 'patriot' working for the emancipation of the Motherland from the foreign yoke. I object to the use of the term 'murderer' to me because I am perfectly justified in what I have done. The English would have done the same thing had the Germans been in occupation of England."

Madan Lal was placed before a Magistrate who remanded him to police custody on July 2, 1909, for a week. As he entered the Court held by the arm by a stalwart constable he did not even take the trouble of looking around him but walked firmly and steadily into the dock and stood there apparently less interested in what was to take place than anybody else in the Court. He stood with his hands in the pockets of his trousers.

Asked by the Magistrate's clerk Madan Lal's answer was.

"The only thing I want to say is that I did not wilfully murder Lalcaca I saw him advancing; he caught hold of me and I only fired in self-defence"

The accused was tried in the Sessions Court at Old Bailey, and condemned to death on July 23, 1909, a decision arrived at in twenty seconds and the Sheriff fixed August 17 as the date for his execution.

Asked by the Judge if the prisoner had anything to say, the answer was:

"You can do whatever you like with me I shan't mind. I told you before when you asked the question, you are all-powerful now, you white people, and can do whatever you like. But remember, we shall have our time in times to come."

Accepting the verdict of the Jury, the Judge passed a sentence of death. Immediately the Judge had finished, Madan Lal said,

"Thank you, my Lord, for my country I thank you. I am proud to have the honour of laying down my humble life for my country."

On August 17, 1909, the convict was executed in Pentonville. It was attended only by the representatives of the High Sheriff and the prison officials.

Madan Lal carried the following statement in his pocket:

"I admit that the other day I attempted to shed English blood as

a humble revenge for the inhuman hangings and deportations of patriotic Indian youths.

"In this attempt I have consulted none but my own conscience. I have conspired with none but my own duty.

"I believe that a nation held down by foreign bayonets is in a perpetual state of war. Since open battle is rendered impossible to a disarmed race, I attacked by surprise, since guns were denied to me I drew forth my pistol and fired.

"As a Hindoo I feel that wrong to my country is an insult to God. Her cause is the cause of Shri Ram. Her service is the service of Shri Krishna. Poor in wealth and intellect a son like myself has nothing else to offer to the Mother but his own blood and so I have sacrificed the same on her altar.

"The only lesson required in India at present is to learn how to die and the only way to teach it is by dying ourselves; therefore, I die and glory in my martyrdom.

"This way will continue between India and England so long as Hindoo and English races last (if this present unnatural relation does not cease).

"My only prayer to God is that I may be reborn of the same Mother and I may re-die in the same sacred Cause till the Cause is successful and She stands free for the good of humanity and to the glory of God.

MADAN LAL DHINGRA"

Madan Lal was publicly disowned by his father and brother but was claimed by the Motherland and his grateful countrymen as one of the most beloved children of the soil which sustains the nation and imparts glory to it. His body enriched the soil of England but his spirit electrified the hearts of patriots in his own country.

A meeting was held on July 5, 1909, to express abhorrence at the murder of Wyllie. Savarkar openly supported the action and spoke against the resolution. He was very roughly handled and forced out of the meeting. Veerendra Nath Chattopadhyaya wrote a letter in *The Times* supporting the protest made by Savarkar, then a law student. He desired to point out that as soon as the cause of such violent outrages was removed, the effect would cease. He added, further,

"Coercion drives India headlong to destruction. If England still believes that she is there in the interests of humanity she will be disillusioned earlier than she thinks . . . . The catalogue of coming assassinations will probably be a long one, and the responsibility for its length will have to be

laid at the door of those, who instead of espousing the cause of Indian freedom, wish to hold India in the interests of Britain."

Krishnavarma wrote in *The Times* :

"Although I have absolutely no connection with this assassination, I frankly admit that I approve of the deed and regard the author as a martyr in the cause of Indian Independence. I know this declaration will shock many, but luckily there are even in England high-minded publicists who agree with me that political assassination is not murder."

There had been two cases of assault of Englishmen by two Indians in London. Madan Lal gave a new orientation to it. There had been a long gap from 1909 to 1940 when another Englishman was killed by an Indian under almost similar circumstances. Such stray outrages in London, though very few, produced more profound effects on the minds of the British rulers than a larger number of cases taking place in India, where the lives of more Indians than foreigners were involved.

It transpired on enquiry that Madan Lal, 22, passed his I. A. examination from Amritsar and was a student at Lahore for some time. He took a job in the Kashmir Settlement Department which he changed for one in the Simla-Kalka Tonga Service. He went over to England about three years ago, became a student of Engineering and was due to return by October of the same year.

### ***In the Court of Justice***

(1910)

Safety of persons connected with the prosecution of revolutionary political cases was at a discount. It seemed that the dare-devils had the entire situation under their control and could do as they liked. The Alipore Bomb Conspiracy Case roused the imagination of fiery youngmen absolutely unconcerned about their own perils and a series of cases from firing resulting in the death of a trusted Government servant or to one helping the Government in such matters occurred in quick succession. The Government with the police, spies and informers, loyalists, guards and watchmen equipped with arms proved to be completely inadequate.

Courageous, intelligent, resourceful youngmen seemed to be available in plenty as if the political soil of the country had been fertilised by the water of revolution and that the crop of martyrs had been lusty and unending.

The mighty Government of India had a large number of devoted servants who proved themselves through merit as the strong arm of the administration. For their protection and safety the Government maintained a big retinue of guards and watchmen at a huge cost. But the vendetta of the young members of the revolutionary party tracked their path with certainty of an inexorable fate and they realised their objects irrespective of all consequences to themselves. It was like death bringing two persons of the opposite camps in mortal embrace with one another.

BIRENDRA NATH DATTA GUPTA, a mere lad of nineteen asked his leader for some serious action and was granted the distinction of taking charge of Shams-ul-Alam, a redoubtable Deputy Superintendent of Police, and removing him from the field of mischievous activity. Alam had been connected with the Alipore Bomb Conspiracy Trial from the beginning and was accepted by the Government as the most competent officer in such a complicated political affair. He revelled in political cases in favour of the prosecution and it became, as it were, the breath of his nostril.

It transpired, and he became conscious of it, that he was being followed by agents of the revolutionary party and there had been at least two previous attempts on his life after the arrest of the Alipore Conspiracy Case accused. A few days after the death of Ashu Biswas on February 10, 1909, he was shadowed by a young man who was arrested by his guards. Unfortunately for Alam, the man was discharged for want of evidence.

About a week before January 24, 1910, he was followed by a Bengali youth while Alam had been going along the maidan. Due to pluck and swiftness in speed the man was able to evade arrest though closely followed by Alam's men.

As was usual with Alam he was busy helping the lawyers of the Crown in a political case in the High Court on January 24, 1910. At about 5-30 p.m., at the end of the hearing for the day, when Alam after arranging the papers and exhibits came out of the Court room and wended his way towards the staircase which went down to the east entrance of these courts. In front of him

was the Advocate General and immediately following him was an armed constable of the Bengal Police deputed to be in attendance on him. He was on the point of reaching the top of the staircase when he came in contact with a young Bengali who had been, as it seemed, hanging about the verandah and watching the movements of his victim. He was seen by Alam's orderly to hold a revolver in his hand. The boy stretched his arm, aimed at Alam and fired. When hit, Alam shouted *pakro*, and handed over the stick he had in his hand to his orderly and almost at the same moment fell to the ground on his back. The shot had penetrated right into the heart. Alam, the devoted Police Officer, died an instantaneous death.

\* Biren at once got into the staircase when a cry of murder was raised. He came down the stairs unopposed and ran towards the gate on the east of the building facing Old Post Office Street. As this gate was closed and a section of the crowd had almost come upon him, Biren fired a second shot and the crowd thinned away. By the next gate he came out on the street and began to run towards the north with a revolver in his hand.

He was now chased by a mounted police but this was not so troublesome to him as the concourse of men collected on the street. His speed was, as a consequence, greatly restricted. With great difficulty he reached Hastings Street where he was overtaken by the mounted police. He shot at the police which missed its mark. He was arrested and his revolver was immediately snatched away from his hand. It was a .380 bore Webley revolver with six chambers. He also carried with him a dagger and a knife.

On January 27, 1910, he was placed before the Chief Presidency Magistrate and the next day he was committed to the High Court Sessions.

At the High Court the case started on January 31, 1910. The accused looked pale, calm and completely unconcerned and entered the dock with a sweet smile on his lips. He was charged with murder of Shams-ul-Alam on January 24, 1910. The accused made no reply except that he did not want the help of any Counsel as he was going to plead guilty. Nobody was present in court room for watching the case on his behalf. The accused did not like to say anything. He refused to put any question to anybody, or to produce defence witness or address the Jury.

The Jury without retiring unanimously gave the verdict of 'guilty'. The Judge delivered a sentence of death.

The sentence was received calmly. Biren stepped down the dock into the cell rather cheerfully and wore a beautifully shining smiling face.

While awaiting trial at the High Court the accused expressed desire to eat *kachuri*, *sandesh* and *rasogolla* which were supplied to him.

It was reported that Biren had before his execution made a statement incriminating Jatin Mukherjee and a few others as having asked him to commit the outrage. It came to be known that the police got a page of a newspaper printed afresh containing insinuations against Biren by his leader Jatin Mukherjee with the sole object of extracting a confessional statement of the condemned boy. It was one of the vilest acts in a criminal trial when a young boy of eighteen, face to face with death, was duped to make the case of several other persons implicated in offences of a serious nature rather worse. Before Biren's execution he came to know of this diabolical underhand game on the part of the police and regretted his action and craved forgiveness of Jatin Mukherjee who had absolute faith in Biren as incapable of doing any mean act in normal circumstances.

Biren was executed on February 21, 1910.

The brave lad displayed no special aptitude for any political activity, just like the many others of his associates. A Vaidya by birth, he hailed from Bikrampore, Dacca. He was educated at Jalpaiguri at his sister's house and read up to preparatory class of the Entrance standard.

Biren came to Calcutta about seven years before the incident which has immortalised his name and put up with one of his elder brothers. He shifted to a mess at Bechu Chatterji Street, about two months before.

On the day of occurrence he turned up at 8-30 or 9 a.m. and stayed in the mess up till 11 a.m. showing no signs of the inner storm that had been lashing the mind.

## ***A Deadly Farewell***

(1909-1910)

The *Abhinav Bharat* had its branches in various parts of Maharashtra and youngmen pursuing the aims and objects of such Societies. Any incident thought to be detrimental to the interest of the country would produce its repercussions on the members which sometimes would manifest themselves in some overt act.

The incredible punishment of transportation for life to Ganesh Damodar Savarkar, caused a wave of resentment in the country. Some hot-blooded youths of Nasik took into their heads of avenging the conduct of the Magistrate who had passed the judgment on Savarkar and had made the cause of the country suffer so terribly.

It is said that an intense desire of the heart forces the brain to work out means for its fulfilment. In Ganesh Savarkar was epitomised all that was patriotic and noble for the country. Boys assembled and discussed means to give their plan a definite shape. In course of deliberations they would compare amongst themselves as to the fitness of a person for undergoing suffering and if needs be to offer supreme sacrifice. On one such occasion when challenged by one of his friends that there was no man amongst them who could reach the level of Madan Lal Dhingra, Kanhere, to prove his courage and endurance for suffering, held a hot chimney for two minutes in the bare palm of his hand.

By the end of 1908 the boys met and three new members were admitted into the Society with a view to collect money and arms in fulfilment of their common object.

ANANT LAXMAN KANIHERE was a member of *Abhinav Bharat* at Aurangabad, a town in a Native State many miles away from Nasik which could be reached by several hours journey by rail.

In or about May 1909 in consequence of the dastardly judgment on Ganesh Savarkar, the idea of murdering Jackson suggested itself to VINAYAK NARAYAN DESHPANDE and he communicated the idea to other comrades amongst whom KRISHNA GOPAL KARVE and another accepted it in all seriousness. Ere



this, Karve had learnt the manufacture of ingredients of bomb-making and had collected a few pistols from difficult sources.

After the plan had matured ANANT LAXMAN KANHERE who was then at Aurangabad was asked to come to Nasik. He reached Nasik on December 19, 1909. On the next day he met others at the house of one of the group. In the course of discussion of the plan Kanhere pleaded inexperience in the use of pistol and he was assured of opportunities of shooting practice in the meantime. Kanhere with VINAYAK NARAYAN DESHPANDE and another went for the night to the Panchawati School of which Deshpande was teacher. In the early hours of the morning (December 20, 1909) they went to Bate Road where Kanhere fired a pistol in the air. He was taken to the *cutchery* (Court) where Jackson was identified to him.

After his period of service at Nasik, Jackson was under order of transfer to Poona and a theatrical performance was arranged to bid him farewell at the Vijayanand Theatre on December 21, 1909.

The plan for Jackson's murder was complete. Kanhere was provided with the weapons at Deshpande's house in the evening of December 21, which consisted of a Browning pistol and a nickel-plated revolver. As previously arranged Kanhere carried a packet of arsenic with a view to commit suicide on arrest. He also carried two tickets for admittance into the performance. Two or three others also got inside the theatre. Deshpande took a seat at a distance of 10 to 12 cubits from Kanhere. In case Kanhere had failed, another who had been entrusted with finishing the task got a seat very near the one meant for Jackson.

If both would fail, Deshpande would take the field and manage to kill Jackson. In any case, no chance was to be taken and Jackson must die.

Invited by the inhabitants of Nasik, Jackson came into the meeting as arranged to attend the farewell party. Just as he had been passing by the pit and was only three or four rows behind the seat reserved for him at the orchestra, Kanhere, who was sitting in a corner in the pit, was seen to come very close to his victim. There was a big report and everybody thought it to be that of a cracker. It was from Kanhere's pistol. The first shot missed, the bullet having passed below Jackson's armpit. The next

bullet hit him in the armpit and Jackson fell down. Six or more shots were put through Jackson from the front and his body was literally riddled with bullets. Death was instantaneous.

The assailant was arrested on the spot and he was prevented from committing suicide by those who held him. He told his captors that he had no mind to escape and he felt happy that he had been able to perform his duty successfully. A note in his pocket purported to say that Jackson would always say good things but would do nothing.

KRISHNA GOPAL KARVE was arrested on the December 24, and others on different dates very close to one another.

The trial of Anant Laxman Kanhere, Vinayak Narayan Deshpande and Krishna Gopal Karve with four other accused commenced on January 14, 1910. After the preliminary enquiry the accused were committed to a High Court Special Tribunal on February 2, 1909.

The accused, particularly Kanhere, appeared with an air of indifference to what had been going around.

The trial at the High Court started on March 7, 1910, on charges of murder, conspiracy, aiding and abetting, etc. Judgment was delivered on March 29, 1910, and three, viz., Anant Laxman Kanhere, Krishna Gopal Karve and Vinayak Narayan Deshpande were sentenced to death; three others to transportation for life and one to two years' rigorous imprisonment.

A few days after the death sentence was passed, the condemned persons were removed from the House of Correction at Byculla where they remained incarcerated, to the Special Prison, Thana, a suburb of Bombay.

The accused were executed at the Thana Special Prison on April 19, 1910, at 7 o'clock in the morning. The gallows which was in a secluded spot was screened off from public view so that there might be no witness to the execution.

## ***Scandalous***

(1910)

In a case connected with a dacoity KALA CHAND BOSE of Ghoshnagar (under P.S. Satkhira) was arrested in September 1910 and was put in the lock-up of the Satkhira Subsidiary Jail. One morning he was found missing from his cell. A frantic search was successfully launched and Kala Chand arrested near Keshabpur was brought to Magura. He was in police custody and what transpired behind the scene nobody could know but only guess. One morning his dead body was discovered at an out-of-the-way place in Satkhira. There was no dearth of Government activity for investigating the cause of death of Kala Chand and the S.D.O. rushed to Magura for the purpose. In addition, the intestines of the deceased were sent to Calcutta for chemical examination. Neither the relations of the victim of the sordid mystery nor the public could know anything further than the cryptic news published in the local *Khulnabasi* at the time.

## **In Constant Danger**

(1911)

Lives of investigating police officers had been getting more and more insecure in proportion to the growing activities of the members of the revolutionary organisations. On February 21, 1911, Sris Chandra Chakrabarti of the Criminal Investigation Department, had been returning to his house in the Sikdar Bagan Street with a friend at about 7-45 p.m. An unknown assailant shot him from behind from such a close range that the victim's shirt caught fire. The place was dimly lighted and nearly deserted.

The bullet passed right through the policeman's body about the region of the liver. He was a very strong man and though wounded seriously he ran to the dispensary of his uncle not very close from the place of the incident. He was immediately removed to the Medical College and in spite of the best aid, he expired about an hour later.

Nobody was arrested in this connection and no trace could be found of the assailant.

## ***A Shuttlecock of Fate***

(1910-1911)

An unfortunate lad CHARU CHANDRA GHOSE was one of the original forty-six accused in the Howrah 'Gang Case' who were committed for trial on July 20, 1910, for conspiracy to wage war against the King, etc. Charu was arrested on March 24, 1910, when seriously ill and was scarcely able to stand his trial and attendance in the court was a sure death for him.

On April 4, 1911, Charu was produced before the Special Magistrate, Howrah, and an application for bail was moved on the ground that the accused had been suffering from apoplectic fit and that his detention in jail would endanger his life. The petition was summarily rejected. Subsequently on the report of the Medical Officer of the jail, Charu was released on bail on May 19, 1910. Barely four months elapsed when he was re-arrested on September 24, 1910. He was forced to appear before the Special Tribunal from day to day up till January 4, 1911.

The condition of his health deteriorated very fast and a further application was made before the High Court. There was a funny exchange of arguments between the Crown Counsel and the presiding Judge each trying to shift on the other the responsibility of the bail and subsequent possible disappearance of the accused. The Counsel would say that if His Lordship would be pleased he might grant the accused bail on his own responsibility, while the Judge wanted to extract a definite acquiescence from the Counsel for his action. The members of the public present in the Court greatly enjoyed this unusual tussle between the Judge and the Counsel. Ultimately as a middle course Charu was exempted from attending the Court on days fixed for his trial.

Now it was a question of life and death to the accused confined in the solitary cell of a jail. Just a few days before his death Charu was released on bail on the ground of paralysis of the limbs. Before the judgment was delivered Charu snapped at the Court of Justice being taken away to Divine Protection from the clutches

of the law and vindictiveness of the Government on April 16, 1911. Charu breathed his last in Bakulbagan, Bhowanipore.

The distracted mother of Charu Chandra submitted a memorial to the Lieutenant Governor stating that her luckless son "would not have been cut off in the prime of his life had he not been arrested and placed in the *hajut* in a solitary cell at a time when the state of his health demanded close attention and careful medical treatment with absolute rest and constant attendance."

The memorial, useless though, was relegated to the waste paper basket because no expression of regret or even an acknowledgment was vouchsafed to the aggrieved mother. The dignity of law and order of the land was vindicated but it removed one of the bricks of the foundation of the British Empire in India.

### *A Station Tragedy*

(1910-1911)

When political discontent had overrun Bengal and violent political actions had been taking place at none too distant intervals, the South could scarcely escape infiltration of ideas that would inflame the minds of at least a section of young men for taking steps to make the country free.

In the early part of 1910 meetings were held in Tuticorin by organisers of the freedom movement where highly seditious speeches were delivered by speakers denouncing judgments in political cases and of the serious harm to Indian interests that the presence of Englishmen had been inflicting on the country. The members of the *Bharat Mata Association*, the name by which the organisation came to be known, discussed various ways and means to attain their objective and at one stage they came to the conclusion that there was no use killing Europeans individually with swords, stones and sticks but that they would have a Mutiny similar to that of 1857.

The first few centres were opened by men on oath at Tenkasi and Tuticorin and branches at Shencottah and Punalur (of Travancore) and also at other places. Tuticorin was selected as

the headquarter and frequent meetings were held at that place. In one of the meetings the Goddess *Kali* was displayed and red powder and sandalwood paste were placed in the water to propitiate the Goddess and some other processes were also gone through for the success of their endeavour. At one of these meetings WANCHI (VANCHI) IYER said that crores of Indians were dying every year; famine, plague and poverty had been the result of the white men's rule. To put an end to their tyranny the white men should be killed if *Swaraj* was to be snatched away from unwilling hands. He promised to supply the party with arms for any action related to the purpose. He wanted to remind the members present at the meeting that Ashe had ruined the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company and the accredited leaders of the political movement were being sent to long terms of imprisonment by him. At another meeting Wanchi asked his friends to form secret societies to drive the English out of India. He went over to Pondicherry for collection of arms.

In pursuance of the common object the *samitis* became very active between January 1, 1911, and July 17, 1911, and the enthusiasts frequently met at Tenkasi, Tuticorin, Shencottah, Punalur, Ottapadram and at other places.

While preparations for a mass scale mutiny slipped into the background, Wanchi, a clerk in the Travancore Forest Department, with a few selected friends decided upon killing Robert William D'estcourt Ashe, the Collector of Tinnevely District. Ashe was given a warning in writing as under:

"We members of the Bharatha Matha Association hereby warn you to the following effect: 'Don't interfere with any public concern. If you are stubborn inspite of this warning, then your head will be smashed to pieces in a short time'."

Yours faithfully,

B. M. A.

(alias New Bharatha Matha Association)"

The above letter was sent to the Deputy Inspector-General of Police on December 12, 1910.

A few days before the incident a pamphlet printed in Tamil and signed *Vande Mataram* was circulated from Tinnevely by post appealing to Indians to join the *Abhinav Bharat Samaj*, described as a secret society. The pamphlet set out a number of

pledges in lucid terms which recruits must take and exhorted the murder of the British in order to free India from the foreign yoke. The imprint in the pamphlet was "Feringhi Nashini" Press, Madras.

Wanchi Iyer now began to move earnestly to translate the threat to Ashe into action. On June 16, 1911, he visited the *hundi* shop of a friend and rested there for the night with another whose name he did not disclose. This was repeated for the second night. On the morning of June 17, both of them left the place saying that they were going by train to Madura.

On the fateful June 17, 1911, Mr. and Mrs. Ashe travelled from Tinnevelly to Manyanchi Junction where they had to change for Kodaikanal. Wanchi followed the couple from Tinnevelly in the same train and got down at the station keeping a close watch on his victim.

They arrived at Manyanchi at about 11 A.M. The train stopped at the western-most platform of the station. There were three platforms and the booking office was situated between two of them while the third (the eastern-most) was separated from the booking office by railway lines.

When the train from Tinnevelly arrived Mr. and Mrs. Ashe got down from their first class carriage in the train and took up their seat in the train which was waiting on platform No. 2. His servant meanwhile had removed his luggage from the Tinnevelly train and had it arranged on platform No. 3 so as to be in readiness when the Boat Mail for Tuticorin had arrived.

Ashe was reading seated facing west and Mrs. Ashe was facing east looking at the platform in which the Boat Mail was expected to arrive. A few minutes after the passengers from the Tinnevelly train had come to the platform to take the Boat Mail, a shot was heard which some passengers had at first took to be due to bursting of a soda-water bottle. Cries of a lady for help were heard. Ashe was hit by a bullet on the left side of the chest below the collar bone from the revolver of a middle aged man of average size who was noticed by some, as was told afterwards, to have been loading a revolver on the platform. Ashe fell down on the floor of the carriage bleeding profusely. He was taken to the compartment of a train for Tinnevelly which hurriedly started to get medical aid.

With the cries of the lady, people standing on the platform ran towards the direction from which the sound had been heard. A man with a revolver was seen standing on the platform No. 2, with a boy who was taken to be his servant.

The assailant waited for a few moments to find if the shot has properly taken effect and as he was convinced of the fact, he was on the point of running away from the place. Ashe's orderly caught hold of the man but had to let him off on the latter's threatening him with a revolver.

The assailant ran down the platform declaring that he would shoot anyone who approached him, and eventually ran into a latrine situated at the end of the platform and shot himself through the throat. His death was instantaneous. The boy who was seen standing by Wanchi's side on the platform before the incident started running northwards from the Manyanchi Station.

When hit, Ashe took up his hat and threw it at his assailant. It fell short of the aim and dropped on the platform.

The police became very active after the incident arresting persons at random. On the completion of investigation, fourteen persons were committed before a Special Tribunal of the High Court on August 30, 1911, on charges of conspiracy for waging war against the King, murder, conspiracy and abetment, etc. While the accused had been awaiting their trial one of them, Venkateswara Iyer of Punarol, a well-to-do Brahmin Vakil, killed himself by cutting his throat with a sharp knife and another Dharmaraja Iyer, by taking poison, both in October 1911.

Judgment was passed awarding various terms of imprisonment to some and acquitting only a few.

### **Common Fate**

(1911)

A Sub-Inspector of the Criminal Investigation Department, Raj Kumar Ray, became the target of attack of the Mymensingh revolutionaries. On June 18, 1911, while Raj Kumar was entering his house, located very near the Bengal Police Station, he was shot at the forehead and different parts of the body by an unknown assailant. He fell dead on the ground.

His companion, the Court Inspector, could simply notice a



figure speedily vanishing into darkness and there was no chance of identifying the culprit and none was ever arrested.

### A Wholesale Massacre

(1911)

Sonarang, a village in the Munshigunge Sub-Division, Dacca, was the scene of a political action on July 11, 1911, when Rasul Dewan and Ameri Dewan, both *daffadars* of the village and Kali Binode Chakrabarti, an important witness in a peon assault case in which several young men were convicted, were seriously assaulted.

After dusk a young man went to the house of *daffadar* Rasul Dewan and called him outside his house. As soon as he came out he was immediately shot at with a revolver. Rasul cried out, "Very well, I have recognised you." The assailant who had been speeding away, turned back and fired a few shots causing Rasul's instantaneous death.

The houses of Ameri Dewan and Kali Binode were visited simultaneously and almost the similar procedure adopted for attacking their victims. Ameri also died on the spot.

Kali was one time a political suspect but subsequently under inducement became a very important witness on behalf of police prosecution.

Instead of a gun, he was attacked with knives and received several injuries on his person. He was removed to the hospital in a precarious condition where he struggled hard with death for four days. He died on July 15, 1911, in the Munshigunge Hospital.

From the point of view of the 'party', the whole incident covering three lives in a single night, was a signal success inasmuch as none could be traced and the police had to give up all hopes of bringing the offenders to book.

## ***The Noblest Sacrifice***

(1911)

There are very few cases of sacrifice in this world which may compare with the example set by an unknown and forgotten soldier in the fight for freedom of the Motherland.

In 1911, NARENDRA NARAYAN CHAKRABARTI (of Badree, Mymensingh) with two associates, one of whom was a lad in his teens and was having his initiation in dangerous activities, had been proceeding for some revolutionary action through a dense jungle to reach the destination after dusk. It was a desperate situation when a tiger was noticed by Naren to be on the point of jumping over the boy. Making up his mind with commendable promptitude Narendra Narayan placed himself between the two and grappled with the tiger with all his strength. The other gentleman also intervened.

The tiger could not reach the boy, mauled the other man at two places and left the place after killing Narendra on the spot. The boy was safe. It was a difficult matter to disclose the incident to anybody; particularly the police must not have any clue to the death of a prominent political worker. Naren's body was buried in a deep part of the jungle and he was long taken to have turned a recluse and would have nothing to do with the family.

## ***Martyrdom in the Andamans***

(1908-1912)

The story of the inhuman torture that the soldiers of the Freedom's battle had suffered in the jails on the mainland of India and the far off Andamans is not fully known because this has not been properly narrated not even by those who had undergone the suffering themselves. There is one case which gives a meagre detail of just a fraction of the limitless methods of diabolical treatment that had been meted out to those whose names ought to go down in history in letters of gold.

A mere lad of eighteen, INDU BHUSAN ROY, was arrested on

May 2, 1908, from 32, Muraripukur Road, Manicktala, together with Barindra Kumar Ghose and others, as accused in the Alipore Conspiracy Case. The yearning for independence had infected the young heart of Indu and he was seeking for an opportunity to serve the Motherland by making her free from the *feringhi* yoke and establish a better Government. He was a student of a High School in Khulna and appeared at the Entrance Examination in 1907 in which he failed. In those days parents and relations would think of their sons and wards getting married at a very early age and there was no exception with Indu. His father pressed him very hard for marriage but to lead the life of an ascetic he left behind his loving parents with scant intimation to them. He had been roaming about in search of a suitable place when he met Barindra at College Square and was told of the preparations that had been secretly going on there. He took his residence at Manicktala and began studying the *Gita* seriously. He gradually developed the idea of sacrificing his life for the country and thus to set an example to his countrymen. He was a keen student of history and books like *Ananda Math* and such other literature helped him to form this noble idea.

As one who had very little attachment for life, he was selected for risky ventures and one such was the throwing of a bomb at the Mayor of Chandernagore on April 11, 1908.

Indu was convicted in the Alipore Conspiracy Case and was awarded a punishment of transportation for ten years.

Indu Bhusan reached the Andaman Cellular Jail, a name that used to strike terror to the hearts of even the most heinous and hardened criminals, in December 1909. He was one of those who had to work outside the jail. To Indu the work was more troublesome and humiliating than the work done inside the jail.

The position was that if a common prisoner even when working outside the jail fell ill, he was sent to a hospital other than the jail hospital and was known to be better than the one inside. The case was quite different with political prisoners. If he was sick, he was at once declared to be feigning illness and was punished all the more for falling ill. The degree of the malady was overlooked and a prisoner suffering from illness that had partly incapacitated him from doing any heavy work, was made to walk a distance of

more than four miles while carrying his own beddings on his shoulder. He was immediately locked up in his individual cell.

Indu was at the end of his physical endurance when he expressed his preference for duties inside the jail. On arrival chains were placed on his hands and legs and he was marched to his old cell. In a day or two he was ordered to go back to his scheduled duty in the settlement which he refused to do. He was at once charged with the offence of breach of jail discipline.

Indu was in a pitiable condition of health and was scarcely able to carry on with the work he had to perform. On the afternoon of April 28, 1912, Indu desired to see the jailor and he was taken to his office. He requested, in the most entreating terms, the jailor to change his work of making white flax out of *rambash* plant. He had been suffering from blisters caused by the juice of the *rambash* so much that it was even difficult for him to move his fingers freely. It became so painful that he could not get a wink of sleep during the whole night. The pain and the raw sores in his hands prevented him from taking his food to mouth. The touch of *dal* caused him so much pain that tears would roll down his cheeks and the food could not be touched at all. He beseechingly pleaded that if the same state of affairs were allowed to continue he would die of starvation.

He prayed again for a change of work; alternatively, to be sent to the hospital for a few days so that his palms might heal up. All his entreaties met with blunt rebuff from the jailor, who used the most abusive language befitting the guardian of the hell on earth. Indu persisted in asking the jailor to allow him to see the Medical Officer so that he might show the condition of his hands to him and get redress.

The jailor shouted, "You must carry out my orders." Then after a pause for a minute or so he blurted out, "All right, I will change your work" and ordered the warder-in-charge to engage Indu in the *kolu* or the dreaded oil-crusher (*ghani*) from the next morning. Indu muttered that he would simply die if he would have to work in the oil mill with those hands of his. The jailor was obdurate. Indu was dismissed amid a shower of abusive language.

This was the last straw on the camel's back and before many hours Indu was found dead, hanging in his cell. At 1 o'clock of

April 29, 1912, he was found hanging from the top window by a noose made of strips of his torn *kurta*. One of the inmates of the Cellular Jail at the time (Veer Savarkar: *Story of My Transportation for Life*, p. 214) wrote that "the youngman must have found life too burdensome for the loss of his self-respect, to bear or to endure." One of the warders in his morning round found Indu hanging in his cell. An alarm was raised. The jailor hastened to the spot; the matter was telephoned to the Medical Superintendent four or five times and a police orderly was also sent to the said Officer's bungalow which was situated not far away. No response came before 8 o'clock next morning. In the meantime a Madras Hospital Assistant was sent for, but when he came, the body was found as stiff as a log.

Next morning when the Superintendent, the District Magistrate and the police came to investigate, the Jailor, a veritable scoundrel, gave his own version of the affair which was accepted on the spot. It was given that the suicide was due to hallucination that his fellow-convicts had been contemplating to murder him. A more specious plea could never have been discovered even by the Devil himself.

The news of Indu Bhusan's tragic end reached India after many long weeks and was received by all concerned with a sense of profound sorrow and grief. The state of helplessness of the Indian people in such circumstances must have steeled a thousand hearts to avenge the death of Indu Bhusan by making India free so that nothing of the sort could happen again in a civilized administration.

### Watcher Watched

(1912)

The movements of the agents of the Government were, as far as possible, closely watched by those who in their turn were under strict surveillance of the police and its henchmen, spies and informers.

Ratilal Ray, a Head Constable of the Dacca police, was on the watch over some suspects for a number of days at a stretch. On the fifth day of his duty he reported to his next higher officer that he had seen some of the missing suspects moving about in the

locality. In the evening of September 24, 1912, he went to the house of a friend leaving it at 7-15 p.m. and within ten minutes he was shot dead in Jhulanbari Lane.

For want of any clue no step could be adopted for the apprehension of the culprits.

## **A 'Capital' Conspiracy**

(1912-1915)

The spirit of revolt against British rule in India that had gripped the imagination of the Bengali youths was not slow to affect the minds of the valiant Punjabis. In the early months of 1907, as the Lieutenant Governor noted in his report:

"Everywhere people were sensible of a change, of a 'new air' which was blowing through men's minds, and were waiting to see what would come of it." *Report of the Sedition Committee*. 1918, p 141 *et seq.*

The said report further stated that

"in the big cities in the centre of the Province the agitators seriously try to arouse feelings of disloyalty. .... In certain important towns such as Rawalpindi, Sialkot and Lyallpur an active anti-British propaganda is being openly and simultaneously preached. In Lahore, the Capital of the Province, the propaganda is virulent and has resulted in a more or less general state of serious unrest."

The number of supporters of extremist views had been growing fast. A riot broke out over the conviction of the *Punjabee* for sedition. Scant courtesy was shown to Europeans whom the common people had hitherto looked upon with awe and unwilling respect. The educated extremist agitators carried on a campaign of hate by means of speeches at public meetings and spread a definite anti-British propaganda in the villages more particularly where widespread and deep dissatisfaction over legislation proposing modifications of Canal Colony tenures and a projected raising of canal rates in the Bari-Doab, prevailed. Special care was taken to inflame the passion of the great Sikhs and goad them into action.

Attention was directed to the police who were branded as traitors to their fellow countrymen and advised to quit the service of the Government. The Indian soldiers, otherwise loyal, were

invited to join the people by leaving their ranks. The movement was to proceed towards the objective of bringing the Government machinery to a standstill preferably by stirring up a strong feeling of racial hatred.

When these methods succeeded in their mission exceedingly well it was then a question of months if not days when an overt act of a violent nature was to take place anywhere within the Province. Punjab was compared to a heap of dry gunpowder when a small spark would result in a terrible explosion. And it so happened in the heart of the Capital of India.

It was the daring outrage on Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy of India, on December 23, 1912. The occasion was the Viceroy's state entry to Delhi for initiation of the new Imperial Capital of India. The special train conveying His Excellency steamed into the central station. The State functions arranged for the occasion at the place were gone through with unusual pomp and grandeur. Hardinge mounted a tusker and the procession started moving. When the procession was in the centre of Chandney Chowk just beyond the Clock Tower and in front of the Punjab National Bank buildings, a bomb burst with deafening report on the rear part of the *howdah* between Hardinge and one of the attendants, Jamadar Mahabir Singh of Balarampur State, holding the umbrella. The full effect of the explosion on the Viceroy was prevented by the Viceroy's seat, the back of which was wrecked. The whole of the metal work of immense weight and great thickness of silver was blown off. A portion of the projectile hit Hardinge's back and passed upwards his shoulder causing a wound four inches long and exposing the shoulder blade. There were multiple injuries on the right side of the neck and on the right hip.

The incident is better described in the words of Lady Hardinge who was accompanying her august husband in the procession. She expressed it as a 'terrible experience' for her and certainly it was. But it seems that she was able to maintain her composure as best as was possible under the circumstances and guided the nearest attendants to the Viceroy to remove His Excellency to a place where succour would be readily available. She wrote:

"Passing down the Chandney Chowk where the cheering was on all sides, I suddenly felt an upheaval and was thrown forward. When I recovered my place, I felt rather dazed and most decidedly deaf with loud

singing in the head. The Viceroy turned to me and said, 'I am afraid, that was a bomb'.

"The elephant had stopped. Then he called out: 'Go on' and the procession started again. My impression was perfect stillness from the crowds until then, but when we restarted, there were voices raised and I heard 'bravo' amongst them.

"I then began noticing more details; for instance that the *howdah*-back had gone and the Viceroy looked pale. I said, 'Are you sure that you are not hurt?'

"He answered, 'I am not sure. I had a great shock, but I think I can go on.'

"A few seconds afterwards, I stretched back, and through a slit of the uniform near his right shoulder (the farthest from me) I could see red flesh appearing.

"Then I thought that shall I tell him he is wounded, which will frighten him, or to take the risk of the harm the jolt of the elephant may do him. I looked round again and noticed the legs of a man who was hanging backwards and dead.

"Then I quietly said, 'Do let me stop the procession as I fear the man behind is dead.' (We have moved on 150 yds.)

"He said: 'Of course we cannot go on under these circumstances.'

"I stopped the elephant and signed to Col. Maxwell on the elephant on the front. He ran up and the Viceroy said, 'Can you do anything for the poor man behind?'

"And I said: 'Would you like Col. Roberts to come? I think the Viceroy's shoulder is hurt.'

"Just then the Viceroy had a little convulsion and was rapidly losing consciousness. Regaining consciousness, he gave all instructions for the full carrying out of the ceremony.

"After this there is nothing to tell excepting a history of the difficulties of getting him off the *howdah* and his clothes taken off. He was bleeding profusely from about six wounds. No one was in the house, but the staff did everything and managed him beautifully."

(A letter read in a meeting at the Town Hall, Bombay, on January 8, 1913).

Nobody could be arrested in spite of declaration of rewards from the Government and the Native Chiefs who showed a greater concern than those who could be really interested in the case. The amounts assumed a fantastic figure and there was doubt whether these would be available when occasion would demand it.

The Government of India on January 24, 1913, declared that a reward of Rupees one lakh will be paid to anyone giving information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or



persons responsible for the act. The declaration cancelled all previous notifications of reward by the Government or of anybody else.

The only theory that could be established at the time after prolonged investigation was that the bomb, a composite percussion type, was similar to those used in previous outrages in Bengal. It was made of a cigarette tin which contained picric acid, fulminate of mercury and jute combs (sharp iron spikes, technically known as 'pins' and attached to the rollers of jute machines).

The idea of the cigarette tin, used at Delhi, with the cigarette label in tact, was to enable the culprit to carry the machine without causing suspicion.

There were the usual arrests and investigations were carried with the zeal befitting the occasion. Nothing could be established, the Delhi police felt dismayed and the matter rested there for the time being.

Before six months had elapsed from the date of attempt on the Viceroy, Lahore gave an indication of revolutionary activities in the Province. The Lawrence Garden was the scene of an outrage that had apparently failed in its objective on May 17, 1913. A *chaprasi* of the Gymkhana Club was found dead on the road about one hundred yards from the Montgomery Hall. He had terrible wounds in the left leg and right knee, while his chest and body were pierced as if by some sharp nails. A lamp-post on the side of the road opposite to where the *chaprasi* was lying prostrate, was found smashed to pieces.

The culprits could not be traced. During investigations it transpired that a bomb had been placed on the road by which the unfortunate *chaprasi* had been passing on his cycle when he stumbled against it and caused the explosion.

News had reached from Bengal to Lahore that Gordon of the Maulavai Bazar fame had been transferred to Kasur, a District of Lahore, to make him safe against the vendetta of the Bengal group of workers. Close watch was kept over his movements and it came to the knowledge of Bengal's counterpart in Punjab that Gordon would be present on May 17, 1913, at the Club, and steps had had to be taken to murder him when coming out of the Club room. As with the Delhi outrage, the Police were unable to discover any clue whatsoever relating to the outrage.

Signs of revolutionary activity became gradually pronounced in Delhi and elsewhere. Leaflets containing exhortations to young men for revolutionary actions were distributed especially amongst the students. One of this extolled the attempt on Hardinge's life on December 23, 1912, in the following language :

"The *Gita*, the Vedas and the Koran all enjoin us to kill all the enemies of our Motherland, irrespective of caste, creed or colour. .... Leaving other great and small things, the special manifestation of the Divine Force at Delhi in December last proved beyond doubt that the destiny of India is being moulded by God Himself."

Baffled in their attempt to arrest anybody in connection with the past two serious outrages, the police diverted their attention to the probable source of seditious literature, particularly of the issues of the *Liberty* which were in secret circulation or pasted at different parts of the city from time to time.

On and from February 16, 1914, a considerable number of houses were searched at different places. The police took action partly on warrants under the Press Act by the Deputy Commissioner of Delhi, for the seizure of proscribed leaflets of inflammatory nature. Connection with Bengal was sought to be established by a Government statement to the effect that some copies of the seized leaflets had already been produced as evidence in the Raja Bazar Bomb Case. Most of the men who later figured as accused in the Delhi Conspiracy Case were arrested during the course of these searches.

It came to be known that the *Liberty* was printed either in Jullundur, at least its first two issues, or in Calcutta, particularly the third and the fourth. In one of these it published a list of heroes who had been executed for murder or who had been imprisoned for violent crimes. These men were described as 'Workers of God, and that they had been working under heavenly guidance'. The motive must be love for doing God's work. Sacrifice of life was indispensable. It concluded: "Be God's instruments. Die and build your nation. *Bande Mataram*."

The connecting link of the two wings of the revolutionary party in Punjab and Bengal was Rash Behari Bose who had been mainly instrumental in infusing life to the organisation functioning in Northern India. The object of the movement as stated by Rash Behari himself was

"by the commission of outrages to awaken the masses to the fact that they are living under a foreign yoke. Then a strong desire will burst among the masses for open revolution."

Rash Behari acted not only as the link between Bengal and Punjab but as the Director of operations in the whole of Northern India. He selected some able lieutenants who were prepared to undergo any amount of suffering and face any risk unto death.

Amongst those was ABADH BEHARI. He attended the Lahore Central Training College, but lived at Delhi and was an intimate friend of AMIR CHAND since 1908. He met Rash Behari at Agarwal Ashram in 1912. Abadh Behari was made the head of the revolutionary activities in U.P. and Punjab. He had a hand in every department of the organisation and was capable of managing even intricate jobs with comparative ease. Once he wrote to a friend of his :

"Death is for all and we shall die the death of a hero The Bengal spirit should be implanted in Punjab"

Abadh Behari was arrested on February 19, 1914. In his room was found a few copies of *Liberty* pamphlet, a manuscript copy of a Paper called *Talwar*, the original of which was first published in Berlin on March 19, 1910. The title page displayed a picture of Madan Lal Dhingra as its hero and exemplar. A Hindi manuscript dealing with the uses of poisons for political purposes and a document advocating general massacre of Europeans formed part of the seized documents from his room. Amongst other articles were a cap of bomb and a bottle of petrol.

AMIR CHAND was for some time employed in the Cambridge Mission High School, and at the time of his arrest was the Headmaster in the Sanskrit School, Charkhewola. He was the central figure in the group of 'the workers of God'. Teaching of youngmen, particularly in the revolutionary cult was his life's mission. The experience of his age and the undoubted talents were an asset to the organisation.

During the search of Amir Chand's house some brown papers of a very distinctive character were found. Amongst the papers was a cover containing a Hindi pamphlet dealing with the use of poison. There were a few copies of the *Liberty* and a document containing a list of names with an *alias* and a letter of

the alphabet opposite each name; a list of places, each also with a special letter denoting places of meeting. Amir Chand's house was called Rs. 100, Abadh Bihari's, Rs. 400/-, etc. Annas and Pies indicated time. Another manuscript headed *Love of Liberty* advocated a general massacre of Europeans, especially the English. There was a mass of other incriminating documents.

A biscuit box containing a quantity of cotton wool with some slight yellow stains on it was also found in another room. Amir Chand and his nephew were put under arrest on February 19, 1914.

BALMOKAND, together with Abadh Behari, was especially deputed for the preparation and dissemination of seditious literature and was trained in the throwing of bombs. In February 1914, Balmokand unsuccessfully tried at Jodhpur, where he acted as a private tutor, to secure a pass for gaining entrance into the Viceregal enclosure. He was put in charge of operations in Punjab, especially for Lahore.

Balmokand was entrusted by Rash Behari for finding an employment for BASANTA KUMAR BISWAS so that he might be readily available when there was a demand on his services.

Basanta *alias* Bishin Das served in The Popular Dispensary, Sutramand, Lahore, a job secured through the good offices of Balmokand. While not unmindful of his duties to his masters, he could always manage to eke out time and opportunity to carry out the plan and programme of his political leader. He rendered a very good account of himself in connection with the attempt on the Viceroy's life. He was successful in evading arrest in a remarkable manner. The story goes that his effeminate features and puny size came very handy to dress in female attire and get himself mixed up with the ladies taking their stand in the Punjab National Bank Building in Chandney Chowk, for witnessing the show. When at his suggestion the ladies around him diverted their attention to a particular part of the procession, he managed, it is alleged, to throw the bomb unobserved and during the commotion caused by the violent explosion deftly slipped out of the building and got mixed up with the crowd on the streets.

He was selected with Abadh Behari to conduct the operations for the murder of Gordon and but for the indiscretion in placing the bomb in a pathway not frequented by the European members

of the Club, he might have added another feather to his cap of exploits.

Basanta Biswas left Delhi and went to his native village Paragacha in the Nadia District, Bengal, to perform the *sradh* ceremony of his father where he was arrested on February 26, 1914.

Rash Behari Bose, one of the principal accused, could not be found anywhere and a reward of Rs. 5,000 was offered by the Government on March 14, 1914, for his apprehension. He was declared a proclaimed offender and all his properties were confiscated to the State.

He was described in a circular as a man "of about thirty years of age, fair complexioned and tall, has large eyes, and that the third finger of one hand is stiff and scarred due to some accident." One of the prosecution witnesses, the approver, in the Delhi Conspiracy Case, deposed:

"He is strongly built, neither very fair, nor very dark. He looked like a Bengali or a Punjabi according to how he was dressed. He had a small wound in the third finger knuckle, owing to his finger being crushed in the door of a railway carriage during the last visit to Bengal. The wound was of the size of a four-anna bit. He has broad eyes."

On March 16, 1914, Amir Chand, Abadh Behari, Basanta Biswas, Balmokand and seven others were placed before the Delhi Magistrate for trial. The accused were variously indicted in groups for conspiracy, sedition, murder, possession of explosives, etc. Against all the accused the common charge was that they had conspired together for commission of murder and in furtherance of their common object, some of the accused were in possession of explosives in contravention of the Explosive Substances Act. The prosecution alleged that certain of the accused had actually committed murder, viz., at Lahore when a *chaprasi* was killed on May 17, 1913. Some others happened to be members of a conspiracy having distributed or being in possession of literature which contained deliberate incitements to murder.

The Magistrate framed charges against all the accused, eleven in number, for conspiracy to murder. Amir Chand, Abadh Behari, Balmokand and Basanta Biswas were further charged under the

**Explosive Substances Act, Basanta Biswas and Abadh Behari for the murder of a *chaprasi* on May 17, 1913, at Lahore.**

The Sessions Trial opened at Delhi on May 21, 1914, and the omnibus charge ran thus:

“That you . . . between October, 1910 and March, 1914, both at Delhi and at other places in British India, did conspire with one another and with other persons (the approvers etc) and other persons unknown, to commit the offence of murder (302 I P C) which offence was committed on May 17, 1913, at Lahore and thereby committed an offence under Section 120B and 302 I.P.C.”

The charge was amended on May 25, by substitution of the word “agree” for “conspire”.

On October 5, 1914, judgment was delivered in which Amir Chand and Abadh Behari were sentenced to 20 years’ transportation under the Explosive Substances Act, Basanta Biswas to transportation for life for conspiracy in consideration of his tender age; Abadh Behari, Amir Chand and Balmokand were further sentenced to death.

On October 22, 1914, appeals were preferred in the Punjab Chief Court on behalf of Amir Chand, Abadh Behari and Balmokand. The prosecution Counsel prayed for confirmation of the sentence of the three appellants and enhancement of sentence of Basanta Biswas. It was contended that he was twenty-two years of age and was fully conscious of the consequence of his action. On February 10, 1915, all the accused, including Basanta, were condemned to death. Three others were given varying terms of imprisonment.

The Secretary of State was moved to stay execution for a short time to enable the condemned men to move the Privy Council. On March 1, 1915, the request was rejected.

The accused fought against time and paucity of resources and anyhow managed to submit an appeal with the Privy Council. The judgment of the Judicial Committee rejecting the appeal came to be known in India on April 29, 1915. There was a little loss of time and all the four

- (i) Amir Chand,
- (ii) Balmokand,
- (iii) Abadh Behari, and
- (iv) Basanta Biswas

were executed on May 11, 1915, in the Ambala jail. (A Lahore message, dated May 12 published in *The Pioneer* on May 14, 1915, stated "all the four accused.....have now been executed").

The four great heroes of India who with unflinching devotion had worked jointly in life against enormous odds, sacrificed their lives together on the gallows and marched together towards the Martyrs' Paradise to enjoy a nation's gratitude raised from below.

Though not quite known to the world at large the name of a silent Martyr in connection with the Delhi Conspiracy executions should be recorded with deserving respect. Balmokand paid the highest penalty of the law for the love of his country. When the news of his execution reached his home, RAMRAKHI, the devoted wife of Balmokand, in spite of all persuasions to the contrary stopped taking food and drink and in the course of a few days she followed her husband with a cheerful mien with the blessings of all who gathered around her during the last few days of her mortal existence. Blessed be her name!

### *Quiet Sacrifice*

(1913)

A large number of persons were convicted in one of the Nasik Conspiracy cases and one of these was SAKHARAM DADAJE GOREY. He was awarded a sentence of five years' rigorous imprisonment. He was kept in prison where he had not been keeping good health for some time. He developed bronchitis and expired on February 12, 1913 (*The Englishman*, February 14, 1913). He set an example of silently giving up the life for a cause.

### *Deplorable Incident*

(1913-1915)

The political character of the occurrence at Nimej in the Beaur Sub-Division of the Shahabad District can be attributed only to the motive of the action. One of the principal accused used to preach amongst his followers that any action including

dacoity, that would advance the cause of *Swaraj*, was always justifiable. Another accused was in constant touch with a man who was a close friend of Amir Chand of the Delhi Conspiracy Case.

A story gained currency that the *mohant* of the temple situated at Nimej had amassed considerable wealth and the whole amount had been kept concealed in the *ashram* premises. On March 20, 1913, MOTICHAND with four others attacked the *mohant*, Bhagwan Das, who, in the scuffle that ensued between the raiders and himself, was killed in offering resistance. His attendant, a young boy in his early teens, Banshidhar, was murdered so that there could be no evidence of the crime. The raiders had to go away with a small booty not worth the trouble, much more so when two innocent lives were involved.

The incident passed off without any arrest. After a lapse of some months the name of the principal accused figured prominently in another political case and the murder was out. Motichand and his friends were arrested and a case for murder, dacoity, etc., was started against them. After the preliminary enquiry the accused were committed to the Sessions on July 7, 1914. On October 5, 1914, Motichand was sentenced to death and his co-accused to a long term of imprisonment, and another to transportation for ten years. On January 28, 1915, the death sentence was confirmed by the High Court.

Motichand appealed before the Privy Council and his application was dismissed by the Judicial Committee on March 5, 1915 and he was executed in the same month.

### ***An Incautious Act***

(1912-1913)

On March 27, 1913, the sound of a violent explosion was heard at about 7-30 p.m. at Maulavi Bazar, Sylhet. Next morning a dead body, mutilated beyond recognition, of a respectable looking Bengali was found near the fencing of the compound of the S.D.O., Mr. Gordon. The sacred thread in the trunk of the body indicated that the deceased belonged to a Brahmin family.



The left hand of the deceased up to wrist as also a few fingers of the right hand were blown away and no trace of them could be discovered. The right thigh was also shattered and bones, flesh, etc., were reduced to pulp. The whole body with its numerous ghastly wounds presented an awful and sickening spectacle. The wounds in the chest and abdomen were also numerous and the left side of the face was completely disfigured.

The deceased wore a coat, a shirt, a *genji* and a wrapper. In the pocket of the coat was found a fully loaded revolver with a few spare cartridges, two blank postal envelopes, a few sheets of blank papers and a pencil.

Another loaded revolver was found at a little distance and it seemed that the man had been carrying the revolver in one hand and the bomb in another and explosion caused the revolver to be blown away. •

In the breast pocket was found a few rupees, some of which were pinned through as if by a screw owing to the violence of the impact.

It was further noticed that one of the pistols was rather new and the pattern of the other was old. The exploded bomb resembled in every particular the one that was thrown at the Viceroy Lord Hardinge.

It was guessed that failing to find out Gordon in his bungalow the young man went to the Circuit House where Gordon was likely to be present at a dinner fixed for the evening. Gordon was not even there.

He left the place and in his hurry to get back into Gordon's bungalow tried to negotiate the fencing, tipped over it and fell to the ground. The bomb that he had been carrying exploded by the impact with dire consequences.

The man could not be identified after investigation for a long time by the police.

There was a story behind this attempt. Gordon had made himself a nuisance by his high-handed brutal treatment of those whom he suspected to have any connection with instances of disobedience to law and his administrative discipline. Somebody reported to him that the Jagatsi Ashram at Silchar had become a centre of political activity and that the head of the *ashram* had declared that he had no respect for British rule.

Moreover, it was reported that on June 30, 1912, he had repudiated the authority of the Government. Gordon had neither the time nor the inclination to go minutely into the matter and at once took into his head to disband the *ashram* and the *ashramites* by terrorising the inmates as also the local people, the bulk of whom had a soft corner for the institution.

He had been seeking for an opportunity for giving expression to his temper when a convenient complaint filed on June 20, 1912, before the S.D.O. Gordon, by a gentleman to the effect that his younger brother had been kidnapped and forcibly kept confined in the *ashram*, became very handy. Order was immediately passed to search the *ashram* and to rescue the boy. The police wanted to have its own way. It was alleged that the search was resisted by the *ashram* people on July 6. On the very next day, July 7, the Assistant Superintendent of Police appeared on the scene with armed men at his command and made a very liberal use of their lathis and bayonets on the inmates. There were a few cases of firing and MAHENDRA NATH DE, known as Yogananda, (an M.A., B.Sc. of the Calcutta University) was hit by the bullet during the search.

The party returned to the headquarters not very much satisfied with what had been achieved. On July 8, a strong police force each carrying a firearm raided the *ashram* with a view to put every *ashramite* under arrest. It was absolutely hell let loose on a place where people were mostly given to religious pursuits. The place was thoroughly ransacked. Trunks, almirahs and all closed containers were broken open, things were thrown pell-mell; the men were beaten indiscriminately, some, not excluding ladies, having received serious injuries on their person. They were pulled by the hair and one or two dishevelled, were thrown on a pile of bleeding, half-conscious men. Blood flowed freely. Every adult male was tightly secured with ropes. Some received gun-shot wounds. The whole place was plundered; all valuable articles were removed. The police entered the sacred precincts of the establishment and perpetrated the most sacrilegious acts. The whole place presented a spectacle of a ransacked city surrendered to a ruthless invader after a stiff resistance.

Most of the arrested people were marched to the police station which was situated at a long distance from the place.

Mahendra hit by a bullet on July 7, died of his injuries on July 16, 1912, in the Sylhet jail. In March 1913, a case was started against twelve persons of the *ashram* and most of them were convicted and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

The police now proceeded against the elder brother of the kidnapped boy, who supplied Gordon a handle to perpetrate a series of wanton acts, for deliberately giving false information to the authorities. He was found guilty and awarded three months' rigorous imprisonment.

Gordon had reports of similar exploits on his list. He had become an object of terror to even peace-loving citizens within his administrative jurisdiction as nobody could guess when and in what way his temper would find expression. It was thought to be a part of the duty of the revolutionaries not only to get rid of such an obnoxious officer but to impart good lessons to others who would behave in a similar fashion. The incident ending in disaster was the outcome of this accepted policy.

Not the least particular could be traced of the deceased. A man convicted in the first Barisal Conspiracy Case while undergoing his term of imprisonment was cited as a witness in a subsequent political case in Barisal. In the course of his evidence he disclosed that the name of the boy who had sacrificed his life in Maulavi Bazar on March 27, 1913, was JOGENDRA NATH CHAKRAVARTI alias Ram Chunder of Sylhet. He was a prominent member of Mymensingh unit and was in charge of arms and ammunition of the organisation.

A mystery that had baffled all solution in the past and the police had given up all hopes of discovering the identity of the boy was solved in a most unexpected way. But for this accidental revelation, nobody could ever know any particulars about the boy going silently into oblivion, unwept, unhonoured and unsung.

**In a Trice**

(1913)

On September 29, 1913, Haripada Dey, a Head Constable of the Criminal Investigation Department and attached to Inspector, Nripendra Nath Ghose, had been standing near the statue of Vidyasagar in the College Square, Calcutta, apparently

busy in keeping an eye on the movements of persons amongst whom there were likely to be some over whom the police desired to keep a close watch.

It so happened that three young men quietly entered the Square through the gate situated on the western side of the Square and one of them opened fire at Haripada who was unmindful of his own safety and ran away. All the three then went out by the southern side over the middle of the fencing and vanished in no time.

It was just a question of minutes when the assailants came, finished their business and disappeared. Haripada was seen falling to the ground with the third shot. He was immediately removed to the Medical College Hospital, very close to the place of the incident, where he was found dead. There were two bullets imbedded inside the body and the third penetrated the right arm and passed out by the shoulder blade.

### **Most Unexpected**

(1913)

A great prop of the Criminal Investigation Department, Bankim Chandra Chaudhuri, met with his death on September 30, 1913, inside his house in Mymensingh. He had just come back from his evening stroll and took his seat in his outer drawing-room with *hookah* (hubble-bubble) from which he was smoking leisurely in great comfort. All on a sudden a bomb burst in front of him killing him outright. His legs were shattered; numerous pins penetrated his body, one piercing his left eye. Yellow powder was found scattered over the whole body and also on his bed. Iron nails of different sizes were found embedded in the wall.

A reward of Rs. 1,000 was announced the next day for information relating to the incident which lapsed in due course.

### **A Notable Bag**

(1914)

The assassination of inspector Nripendra Nath Ghose of the Criminal Investigation Department, (Special Branch), Calcutta, was surely an act of ingenuity and adroitness and proved to be a triumph for the revolutionaries in the early stages of political action involving the life of police officers.

On January 19, 1914, at about 8 p.m. when the junction of Grey Street and Chitpore Road was crowded with pedestrians and vehicular traffic, Nripen was shot dead by an assassin's bullet at the Sovabazar corner of the street. The place of occurrence was within a hundred yards of the Kumartuli P.S. The congestion on the road afforded special opportunity to the assailant in getting into the crowd and thus avoid arrest and identification.

Nripen had finished his day's work at the C.I.D. headquarters at Elysium Row, Calcutta, and started for his home by tram at about 7-45 p.m. Hardly had he alighted when the assassin who must have followed him all through the journey, jumped out of the trailer car, brought out a revolver and fired at him from a very close range. The shot administered to him passed through the head and Nripen reeled and fell on his back without a groan, death being instantaneous. He received a second shot in the chest.

Nripen had a long and distinguished career in the Police Department and was usually connected with cases of political outrage. His death in such circumstances was deemed a great victory for the cause and loss to the ruling power.

The boy arrested on suspicion, after protracted trial, retrial and re-retrial, was acquitted by the High Court.