

TRAVEL NOTES OF CHANNING H. TOBIAS

who went as a delegate of the National Council
of the Young Men's Christian Associations
of the United States to the World
Conference of the Young Men's
Christian Associations in
Mysore, India.



New York, N. Y., April 30, 1937

THE A. B. KOGER, COLLECTION

December 12, 1936

On the Mediterranean Sea

From time to time through the medium of the press I shall share with my friends back home impressions of what Mrs. Tobias and I see along the way. These lines are written as we round the southern end of Sicily on our way across the Mediterranean to Egypt where we shall spend a week seeing parts of Egypt and Palestine.

Since our arrival at Cherbourg on the great liner Queen Mary nearly a week ago I have been looking for signs of the coming European war so freely predicted in the American Press. I have found little or no talk of war, and, if preparations are going on, they are being veiled in such secrecy as to give no outward evidence of reality. Even at Marseilles, not very far from the Spanish frontier, there was little comment on war, and but for a French gunboat lying in the harbour there was no outward suggestion. As we near the port of Malta, British battleships are seen at anchor. This is part of Britain's program for protecting British merchant marine from a Spanish blockade. Incidentally, I think the show has been staged for Italy's benefit as well. But in spite of this I do not believe the present European scene justifies the prediction of early conflict. Sooner or later it seems that there will be a decisive showdown between the conflicting ideals of fascism and communism but I do not believe from what I have seen that such a conflict is immediately imminent.

We are travelling on a British ship and have been greatly interested in the reactions of the British people to the abdication of King Edward. True to English character there has been very little excitement over the matter. Even though they may be stung to the depths by Edward's renunciation of the throne for the love of a twice-divorced woman, Englishmen know how to keep their emotions concealed. Open indignation, however, was expressed when Edward told of his love for Mrs. Simpson in his farewell address to his people. The new king is well thought of because of his conformity to British conservatism and should from their point of view make a good king. Personally I think that aside from the Simpson love affair Edward really wanted to be free from

the confining responsibilities of the throne.

The crew of our boat is just about eighty per cent Indian. I am studying them in the light of our own racial and economic problems and shall have more to say about them as we get to know them better.

Among my acquaintances aboard ship is a Scotchman now working for Cook's in Bombay. In a conversation last night he naively let drop the following: "It was a blooming shame for Italy to treat Ethiopia as she did. England should have seized the opportunity when she had it to make a colony of Ethiopia." "For you know", he continued, "England rules according to the standards of the Bible." I felt like asking him, "Which Bible?"

II.

December 17, 1936

Cairo, Egypt

A non-white visitor to Egypt has two outstanding impressions to begin with -- First, what he sees of the remains of Egypt is replete with evidences of Negro participation in the great civilizations of the past. As I stood at Gizeh viewing the great pyramids and the mighty Sphinx, I felt a thrill, for the face of the Sphinx is unmistakably that of a pure Negro, clearly indicating that the ruling dynasty at the time of its erection was black. Then a visit to the Tombs of the Kings at Sakkarah and a view of the two colossal statues of Rameses II. at old Memphis reflected the work of Negro artists as well as depicted the likenesses of Negro characters. If these experiences were impressive, what shall I say of the time spent with the King "Tut" exhibit in the Cairo Museum? I had seen the pictures of this marvelous exhibit but was wholly unprepared for what I saw in the Museum. It would be futile and confusing to attempt a description of the gems of jewelry, house furnishings from vases of pure alabaster to beds of gold, ebony and ivory recovered from the tomb of this king who died in his early twenties. While the evidences show that he was not a pure Negro, he was certainly of Negro blood, and there were Negro members of his court.

The second impression one gets is that

people of all colors from white to jet black are without consciousness of color running the affairs of modern Egypt. One of the first officials I encountered on disembarking at Port Said was a Negro medical officer on the quarantine staff. What a tonic it was to live for a few days in a land where color carried no opprobrium with it. Egypt is developing rapidly under self-rule. Its long staple cotton is in strong competition with the American output. Modern irrigation is taking the place of the old Nile overflow in making what many believe to be the most fertile soil in the world. The poor are still very poor, and the women continue to do most of the hard work. But when I saw women students side by side with men in the University of Cairo (a very radical change of the past few years), I felt that social advances would keep pace with economic progress.

III.

December 21, 1936

Jerusalem

The Sunday before Christmas we visited the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem in the morning and in the afternoon took a drive over the old Jericho Road stopping at Gethsemane and Bethany on the way to Jericho where we saw the old and the new city, and the Jordan River and Dead Sea. Since the Dead Sea is twelve hundred feet below sea level the climatic change in an hour's drive from Jerusalem is as great as from New York to Miami. In Jerusalem there was winter and in Jericho orange and banana groves. Of course in Jerusalem we saw all the traditional sights dear to the hearts of Jews, Christians and Moslems. Particularly impressive were the temple area crowned by the Mosque of Omar, the narrow crowded streets of the old walled city and the view of the city from the Mount of Olives.

Social and political currents are moving rapidly in Palestine. Jews are moving in from Germany and Poland by the hundreds of thousands and the Arabs who claim that they have a right to political control are contesting every inch of ground. Great Britain holds a protectorate over the country and has several thousand English troops policing the country. The High Commission is meeting now but the Arabs are not cooperating. This is interpreted to mean that there may be another outbreak at any time.

A hold-up on the Jericho Road took place the day before we passed over it. This was attributed by Jews to Arabs. Meanwhile the Jews under Zionist leadership are turning the rural districts of Palestine into a veritable Garden of Eden. Citrus groves remind one of California and Florida. Cactus hedges take the place of fences and the methods of farming are modern in contrast to the camel and ass-drawn plows of the Arabs. In the city of Jerusalem a modern Jewish community is in process of construction. Beautiful homes of modernistic architecture and great apartment houses are being erected. The greatest Y.M.C.A. building in the world and the King David Hotel, owned and operated by Jews, flank each other on the principal thoroughfare just outside the Jaffa Gate of the old city. A single railroad running through Lydda to Kantara on the Suez Canal, built during the war, connects with the outside world. Camel caravans, automobiles and busses are other forms of transportation. Verily Jerusalem seems destined to remain through all the centuries the world's most interesting city.

IV.

December 25, 1936

Red Sea

We are "somewhere east of Suez" on the Red Sea and it is Christmas Day. The temperature is above eighty degrees, which means that we are having a tropical Christmas. Just before noon our ship received a distress signal from a small freighter and true to the ethics of the sea turned around and rendered the needed service. A four year old child was ill and medical supplies were needed. A lifeboat from our ship with the supplies aboard was let down and rowed over to a similar boat from the other ship. The transfer of supplies completed, our ship turned to its regular course and we are again on our way.

I could tell you more about Christmas aboard ship but I prefer to write about the Suez Canal. Three days ago we slipped silently out of the harbour of Port Said, Egypt, and were in the Canal before we realized it. This remarkable near-cut to the East was opened for travel sixty-five years ago after ten years' labor in its construction. It is privately controlled in that its stock is owned by governments and individuals. By international agreement it is

never to be closed to the ships of any nation in peace or war. It is one hundred miles long and about one hundred and thirty-five feet wide. No vessel is allowed to travel faster than six and a half miles an hour while passing through. In order for one vessel to pass another it is necessary for one to tie up to the bank while the other passes. Preference is given to mail vessels and the movement of ships is controlled by signal stations about ten miles apart. We met three ships, two of which were Italian transports filled with troops coming from Ethiopia. They shouted and waved frantically but received no response from our ship. It is British.

The outstanding impression of the all-day passage through the Canal was the sunset on Bittur Lake. I had never seen anything like the variety of colors in sky and lake and shore line. I understand that even more beautiful natural phenomena are ahead of us in India. It is hard to conceive of such as possible.

Our next port of call is Aden across the bay from the railroad port leading into Ethiopia. It will be a case of "so near and yet so far."

V.

January 22, 1937

Bombay, India

India is not a country; it is an empire. With a population three times as great as that of the United States, and a larger geographical area, I have naturally been impressed by the proportions of this great nation. As a matter of fact, I could spend much of the limited space of this letter telling of geography, climate, natural scenery, historical relics, etc., etc., but since my primary interest is in people I must make only brief reference to other matters. As to climate, it is mostly tropical. My wife and I have abandoned hats for tops in order to guard against sunstroke. At this time of year the nights are pleasantly cool and the days very hot. We have been all the way from Madras in the South, where it is hot night and day, up to Delhi and Lahore in the Punjab, where the nights are actually cold; but in every place flowers are in full bloom and people are in tropical dress. In-

dia is an old, old country, and abounds in ruins of historic significance and remains or architecture that can not be classified as ruins. Such is the world-famous Taj Mahal of Agra, built by the Emperor Shah Jahan in 1653. It is needless to describe this white marble mausoleum which every American school boy knows is regarded as possibly the most beautiful building in the world. Hindu temples and Mohammedan mosques dot the country hillsides as well as dominate the building ensemble of cities. Right here I am tempted to go into a description of the religious life of India, an understanding of which is necessary if one would understand India, but pressure of time and space forbids.

Now for a word on the people-- The moment I set foot on Indian soil at Bombay I felt a thrill of satisfaction in seeing people who were not white running affairs. On the boat Indian service was confined to menial work while white men directed everything. On shore the customs officials as well as the coolies who carried our luggage were Indians. All over India afterwards I found Indian bankers, hotel officials, professional men of every kind, government officials, railroad officials and workers. And so great is the efficiency of these people that I believe that they would be fully prepared to run their own government in the event that they achieved their freedom from British control. In saying this I am not underestimating the tremendous handicaps along other lines to be overcome. My reference is simply to efficiency. One great handicap to Indian progress is division along caste and communal lines. But I have been pleased to note that there is no color prejudice among Indians themselves. They vary in color from the almost white population of Kashmir to the pure blacks of Southern India. A Brahmin is a Brahmin whatever his color may be, and so with other castes. Of course there is the Anglo-Indian who forms a somewhat separate group but plays no very important part in the life of the nation.

VI.

Bombay - Jan. 24, 1937

Politics and the Present Leadership of India

With the exception of highly paid government officials and businessmen who do not want

the status quo interfered with, Indians are desirous of national independence. A new constitution supposed to point the way to complete dominion status is being indifferently received all over India and actively opposed by the All India Congress of which Mahatma Gandhi and Jawarharlal Nehru are the leaders. The Congress party is now the most powerful organization in the entire country and, if it can overcome religious differences between Moslems, Hindus, Parsees and Sikhs, will press forward to dominion status if not complete independence. Mahatma Gandhi is still an advocate of the philosophy of non-violence, believing that if caste and religious lines are modified to the extent that political unity is realized, and the masses are taught to develop simple home industries for sustenance, political freedom can be won without bloodshed. Nehru on the other hand, while very respectful of the opinion of Gandhi, is a believer in more aggressive methods. As president of the Congress he is loved and respected by millions of his followers and feared and hated by the opponents of national independence. He comes of a wealthy and distinguished family, was educated at Cambridge University and was a practicing lawyer when he threw in his lot with Gandhi and the cause of national independence fifteen years ago. He has served several prison sentences and always emerged with greater power and influence than ever. Nehru is undoubtedly the coming man of India.

Regardless of the fact that he has for the past two years taken no active part in politics, Gandhi is still the idol of the masses of India. He is now living in an aschram or hut in a village of outcastes in order to set the example for high caste Indians to abolish caste. Recently the Maharaja of Travancore, one of the strongest of the Indian states, issued an order opening all of the temples of his state to the untouchables as well as high caste people. Gandhi made the journey from his home to take part in the opening of these temples. It was while he was on the way to Travancore that I had the great privilege of spending two and a half hours with him. I shall tell of that interview and disclose his message to the American Negro when I return home.

VII.

Bombay - Jan. 27, 1937

The World Conference of the Y.M.C.A.'s

The World Conference of the Young Men's Christian Associations was held from January 2nd to 10th at Mysore, the capital of Mysore State, which is the third largest of the states ruled by native Indian princes. More than two hundred delegates from thirty-eight nations were the guests of the Maharaja of Mysore for the entire period of the conference. Entertainment was at the expense of the State. The Maharaja and his Diwan, or Prime Minister, made addresses of welcome and gave a state reception at the opening. This reception and all sessions of the Conference were conducted in an open park. This was possible because in India at this season of year perfect weather is assured. There were twelve American delegates, two of whom (Dr. Benjamin E. Mays of Howard University and myself) were Negroes. Dr. Mays was a member of the delegates committee (the most important committee of the Conference), and at the closing session was elected to membership on the World's Committee, filling the vacancy left by the death of the lamented John Hope. Dr. Mays rendered distinguished service throughout the Conference, and, as a lay leader, will prove of great assistance to our American Associations because of his experiences at Mysore.

The program dealt with the usual great social, economic and religious questions of the world today as they affect youth. While there were impressive platform deliverances the main interest in the Conference centered on group discussion commissions. I had the privilege of serving as chairman of the Commission on Race Relationships. The most important resolution urged by this Commission and passed unanimously by the Conference was that national movements request their local associations to do away with racial exclusion policies in membership. Of course the big job is to get local associations to do this. America and South Africa are practically the only countries in the world where racial exclusion is practiced in Y.M.C.A.'s. The Jewish question arose when the German delegates defended Hitler's treatment of the Jews. I could not resist the temptation of telling what Julius Rosenwald had done for Negro Y.M.C.A.'s in America.

The findings of the Conference will be published and sent to the participating organ-

izations. John R. Mott, who presided throughout, was re-elected chairman for the next five years.

At the close of the Conference most of the delegates went on deputation visits to the Y.M.C.A.'s in India. My visits have taken me to Agra, Delhi, Lahore and Bombay.

VIII.

January 29, 1937

Enroute to Ceylon

Our last days in India were spent in Bombay. They were days crowded with sight-seeing, speaking and social engagements. The principal sights seen were a Hindu cremation on a burning ghat; the "Tower of Silence" where the Parsis dispose of their dead by permitting the vultures to devour them (this they do because fire, earth, air and water are sacred to all followers of Zoroaster and must not be polluted); the wash tubs of the dhobis who are the laundrymen of India and whose process of washing clothes is to dip them in water and beat the dirt out on rocks (this process they follow whether washing in tanks or on river banks); the shopping bazaars where trade along all lines is carried on, and the public buildings that are similar to those in the great cities of the west. My speaking engagements included an address before the Student Y.M.C.A., and one in Brabatsky Hall under the auspices of the Young Men's Parsi Association. The Parsis, 'tho comparatively a small group, are the most highly intellectual community in India. The daily papers were very generous in the amount of space given to my addresses and interviews.

Social events included luncheon with Lord Brabourne, British Governor of Bombay Province, a territory in which 20,000,000 people live. The luncheon, with their excellences Lord and Lady Brabourne as host and hostess, was served at the Malabar Heights Palace. Following the luncheon there was coffee on the veranda at which time I sat at table with the Governor and Mrs. Tobias with Lady Brabourne for informal conversation. Courtesy and diplomacy require that I not reveal the nature of my conversation with the Governor. Sufficient to say that altho I appreciated the invitation and the delightful hospitality of my host, we were poles apart in our views on public questions affecting

India. Next we were dinner guests of Mr. and Mrs. Vergese, prominent Indian social workers, at which time we met a few outstanding Indian leaders. Then we were privileged to attend the Annual Exhibition of the National Indian Women's Council where we saw some of the marvelous art needlework and handicrafts of the women of the country. What a beautiful sight it was to see nearly two hundred Indian ladies attired in their native saris of many shades and ornate trimmings. The Exhibition was held in one of the University buildings.

It was with something of sadness at leaving that we bade goodbye to friends who came to see us sail, for India with its beauties, its extremes of wealth and poverty and its vexing political and communal problems had fastened its grip upon our affections.

We shall have much to say about India when we get home.

IX.

Colombo, Ceylon

February 2, 1937

As we stepped ashore at Colombo and were greeted by courteous Ceylonese dressed in spotless white western clothes I could not help thinking of the old hymn in which appear the lines:

"What tho the spicy breezes
Blow soft o'er Ceylon's Isle,
Where every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile."

The more we became acquainted with the delightful people of Ceylon the more we realized the absurdity of such a reference to her citizens even in the days when they were not as advanced as they are now. The Ceylonese are of the same blood as the Indians altho on the average they are darker in color. The political problems are different largely because Ceylon rather accepts British rule with little or no protest. She has advanced beyond the status of a crown colony in that there is a legislature and partial control of internal affairs. I had the pleasure of being received by the Minister of Home Affairs, a native Ceylonese

and Buddhist leader. He is also president of the Buddhist Young Men's Association, patterned after the Y.M.C.A. While he admitted that Ceylon was not the paradise politically that it was physically, still he felt that the future success of the Island depended on maintaining close relationships with the seat of empire. Personally I could not help but compare the self-complacency of Ceylon with the turmoil and struggle of India to the disadvantage of Ceylon. Europeans doing the same kinds of work as that being done by high grade Ceylonese are paid twice as much for their work. This is of course resented privately but little is said of it publicly for fear of disturbing the status quo. In spite of poor pay the Ceylonese middle classes are developing a home life very similar to that enjoyed by colored people of like standing in America. Altho there were no discriminations in any public places between Whites and Ceylonese, the natives are very definitely lined up in their world sympathies with the darker races. Of the speakers who have visited Ceylon in recent years none has made a more profound impression than our own Howard Thurman of Howard University. Just as is true in India, his messages have left indelible traces behind them.

As to the tropical beauty of the Island one is so overwhelmed by it that description through written word would be in the nature of a sacrilege. If there is any such thing as balm for heart wounds in observing natural beauty, we must have been helped in Ceylon.

X.

Singapore

February 9, 1937

Singapore is an island on the tip end of the Malay Peninsula that belongs to the British Empire. Its population is made up of the native Malay people who live for the most part in shacks built on piles in the river or bay near the mainland of Malaya, the Chinese who constitute at least two-thirds of the inhabitants, a sprinkling of Indians and quite a colony of Europeans and Americans. We found this island a paradise for natural beauty and climate. Tropical flowers abound everywhere and the climate is nearly ideal because of a year round temperature average of about seventy-eight degrees. Chinese are the leading business men altho there are Britishers

and Americans in some of the most important positions of financial leadership.

The outstanding feature of our visit was a seventeen-mile drive from Singapore to Jehore, a native state ruled over by a Sultan. His rule, however, is so generously assisted by the British government as to make of the kingdom little more than a British protectorate. The drive to Jehore is interesting mainly for the rubber plantations and pineapple farms seen along the way. There are thousands and thousands of acres of rubber trees. The method of gathering rubber is somewhat like that of turpentine production in our own Southern states. A cut is made in the tree and a receptacle placed under it into which the raw rubber liquid flows. The liquid, whitish in appearance, is then poured onto flat surfaces where it dries into small sheets. After a smoking process these sheets are packed into bales for manufacturing purposes. Pineapples, bananas and rice are grown and shipped in great quantities.

As far as I could determine there were no political problems, the British being in unquestioned control. It was interesting to note that the government had imported from India hundreds of stalwart Sikhs to serve as policemen. I found out later that the British used Sikh policemen in practically all their far eastern possessions.

XI.

Shanghai, China

February 28, 1937

Our two weeks in China, embracing visits to Honkong, Shanghai, Nanking and Soochow, abounded in interest from beginning to end. There were so many courtesies extended to us and so many opportunities given to see, hear and be heard that I find it impossible in the brief space of this letter to do more than write of general impressions and mention a few striking events. To begin with it was very significant and impressive that our hosts in Shanghai, Nanking and Soochow were Southern white friends from America. Never have we been the recipients of finer hospitality than that shown us by these friends from Texas, Virginia and Mississippi.

I could not help but reflect upon how sad it was that racial prejudice back home so often operates to keep real friends from the contacts they would normally enjoy.

Shanghai is a great modern city divided into what amounts to three smaller cities, - the International Settlement which is controlled by Europeans and Americans, the French Concession which is controlled by France and the Chinese City which is under Chinese control. We lived in the French Concession. The extra-territorial arrangement by which foreign powers have established zones of influence and control is seriously resented by the Chinese government and people, and I predict will be done away with before many years have passed; for China is at last awake and is making preparation for self-defense on a scale that I have never witnessed before in any nation. Nanking, the capital, has been transformed in six years from an old Chinese walled city into a modern capital that would do credit to any country. Chiang Kai Shek, the generalissimo and real ruler, is a strong man who is unifying the once divided provinces into a nation with respect for the control government.

Besides Y.M.C.A. and church speaking engagements, I delivered addresses at Nanking University and Soochow University on interracial relationships. Altho most of my addresses were given through interpreters, the reception of them was most cordial. The truth is that all the peoples of the Orient are tremendously interested in the Negro problem in America and listen with eager concern to anything that is said about it. I shall have much to say about this when I return. Indigenous leadership in education was given a great push forward a few years ago when the Chinese government ordered that the heads of all educational institutions must be Chinese. This means that all foreigners working in Chinese schools must serve under Chinese presidents or principals.

Our social engagements included a luncheon with Dr. Buck, the former husband of Pearl Buck, the author. We saw the house in which "The Good Earth" was written. Dr. Buck is Professor of Rural Economics in Nanking University. It was our good fortune to be guests at Soochow in the home of Mrs. Park, the aged sister of the late Bishop Walter R. Lambuth of the Southern Methodist Church, who,

together with the late John Wesley Gilbert, established a mission in the Congo many years ago.

XII.

Yokohama, Japan

March 12, 1937

Our visit to Japan began at Kobe where we landed on the Yasakuni Maru, the same ship on which the new Foreign Minister Sato was returning from France. A tremendous crowd was on hand to welcome him. After visiting points of interest in the city and addressing a boys' evening school, we went to Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan where the imperial palace, in which even the present emperors are crowned, is located. While in Kyoto we stayed at the Miyako Hotel which is the place where the conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations was held several years ago at which time James Weldon Johnson was one of the American delegates. In looking about the Library of the Hotel, Mrs. Tobias discovered a copy of Jessie Fauset's, "Comedy - American Style". It was interesting that this book should have a place in such a library.

Other cities visited were Nara, another ancient capital; Osaka, the great industrial center of Japan with nearly three million inhabitants; Yokohama, the great eastern port; Tokyo, the capital and third city of the world with nearly six million inhabitants; Nikko, the center of shrines and temples situated in cryptomeria forests in the Nikko Mountains; and Kamakura, where the famous bronze Buddha is located.

Our nearly two weeks spent in Japan were divided between visiting the ancient temples, shrines and centers of art, and studying the social, economic and political life of this great miracle nation of the Far East. It is a well known fact that Japan in the past seventy years has taken on modern civilization to the extent that it is now one of the five great world powers. At the present moment it is outselling and underselling all the other nations of the world. This is made possible, first, because the people live simply and inexpensively. For the most part they live in small frame hous-

es with no such furniture as is to be found in western homes. A typical Japanese room consists of straw matting on the floor, a small low table in the center with cushions about it, an alcove in one corner in which is placed a single pot of flowers and above it a single picture which is changed with the seasons. The bed which is in the form of a mattress roll is kept in a closet by day and rolled out upon the floor for sleeping by night. Such is the interior of the average Japanese home. In the second place, Japan eats simply. Rice is the basic food, as it is of all the countries of the Orient. Of course there are meat and vegetable combinations but all Japanese food is inexpensive although wholly adequate to meet their needs. Finally the dress of the Japanese is simple. The men have adopted western dress, but ninety per cent of the women still retain the kimono and obi. They wear no hats, fur coats or modern shoes. The popular form of footwear is a wooden block sandal.

Japan is the cleanest country I have seen anywhere in the world with the exception of Sweden. In the great city of Tokyo I did not see anything that looked like a slum. Also it was refreshing to see so few beggars on the streets, which was in contrast with the thousands that one sees in India and China.

Another outstanding observation was that all of the government and business work of Japan was carried on by Japanese. In other countries of the East, Europeans are usually found in the government offices and leading business houses.

I had the honor of visiting a session of the Upper House of the Diet which corresponds to the United States Senate. It happened to be the day when the Minister of Finance was presenting the budget. As I saw the members, dressed in semi-formal attire, sitting attentively in their seats, my mind ran back to our own Senate where with a similar presentation two thirds of the senators would have been in the smoking rooms outside the Chamber.

If Japan is contemplating war with China or Russia in the near future there is no evidence of it in the actions or words of the Japanese people. To be sure the Militarist Party has strong backing in some of the leading newspapers and in the Diet itself. There

may or may not be war. One thing is certain, Japan stands ready to fight if necessary to hold the gains that she has made.

I think also it should be said that if Japanese statesmen appear to be militaristic it is largely because they feel that so long as the diplomatic game is to be played as it is being played by the leading European nations in the Far East, she is justified by reason of her situation in that part of the world in insisting upon taking those steps that will keep the prestige of the Empire unimpaired.

I found that the recent visit of Dr. W. E. B. DuBois to Japan had made a profound impression upon the leaders of thought in the Capital City. His addresses and the forum discussions that followed were widely and favorably commented upon in university circles. This suggests the wisdom of making it possible for more of our men to visit these eastern countries for the purpose of interpreting our history and life to the leaders and people.

XIII.

Honolulu, Hawaii

March 21, 1937

Judged by the stormy weather we experienced between Yokohama and Honolulu, the Pacific is a greatly misnamed ocean. At times we had to hold on to the supports of our berths in order to remain in bed, so violent were the rolling and pitching of our ship, the Asama Maru, one of the best of the Japanese line. On the morning of the ninth day out of Yokohama we sailed into Honolulu harbor. This city is called "the pearl of the Pacific". For tropical beauty and balmy atmosphere it far surpassed my expectations. As attractive as it is for natural beauty it is more attractive as a social laboratory in which problems of race relationships are being worked out satisfactorily. I felt pride in my American citizenship as I mingled with the people of Honolulu, for at last I had found a spot under the American flag that seemed to be devoid of color consciousness. Native Hawaiians, Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, Americans--white and black, all live and work together harmoniously, not so much in the spirit of mutual tolerance as with a sense of pride in the cosmopolitan character of the

population.

The Y.M.C.A. has four branches in the city with a membership embracing all races. Mr. Nolle Smith, an American Negro who has lived on the Islands for twenty years, has served in the legislature, and is now the director of the Honolulu Welfare Council, is a prominent member of the Central Y.M.C.A. This organization gave a luncheon in our honor, which gave us an opportunity to meet some of the leading citizens of the Islands. We were also invited to a dinner given under the auspices of the local chapter of the Institute of Pacific Relations, at which time we heard an address by our old friend, Edward C. Carter, the director general of the Institute.

Our sightseeing tour included such well known attractions as the Dole Pineapple factory, Waikiki Beach and points of historic interest.

Politically Hawaii is somewhat paternalistically controlled because of the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few people. Also it should be said that there is considerable resentment on the part of many people of the policy of the national government in thinking of Hawaii mainly as a naval and army base rather than a prosperous territory righteously ambitious for statehood.

XIV.

San Francisco,
March 25, 1937

Back home

It was a typically bright, sunny California morning when our ship sailed under the majestic Golden Gate Bridge into San Francisco harbor. My wife and I both agreed that we were glad to get back home even though we were coming back to face color discriminations from which we had been free for four months. We are determined that the strength gained by our experiences abroad shall be used in cooperation with friends of all races who are working for a better America.

P.S. The following is part of the written conversation that took place between Mahatma Gandhi and myself, on January 11, 1937 - Gandhi's day of silence.

Question

Negroes in the United States (12,000,000 in number) are struggling to obtain such fundamental rights as freedom from mob violence unrestrained use of the ballot, freedom from segregation in all forms and an opportunity to find employment in skilled as well as unskilled forms of labor. Have you out of your struggles in India a word of advice or encouragement? I ask this fully appreciating how differently situated the two peoples are.

Gandhi's reply

I had to contend against some such thing, though on a much smaller scale, in South Africa. The difficulties are by no means yet over. All I can say is that there is no other way than the way of non-violence--not of the weak and the ignorant but of the strong and the wise.

(See photostat copy of original on opposite page)

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

CORPORATE NAME
"GENERAL BOARD OF THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS"

347 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK

Question II

Negros in the United States (12,000,000 in number) are struggling to obtain such fundamental rights as freedom from mob violence, unrestricted use of the ballot, freedom from segregation in all forms and an opportunity to find employment in skilled as well as unskilled forms of labor. Have you out of your struggles in India a word of advice or encouragement? I ask this fully appreciating how differently situated the two peoples are -

I do not contend against some such thing, though on a much smaller scale in South Africa. The difficulties are by no means yet over. All I can say is that there is no other way than the way of non-violence - not of the weak & the ignorant but of the strong & the wise.

M. K. Gandhi

