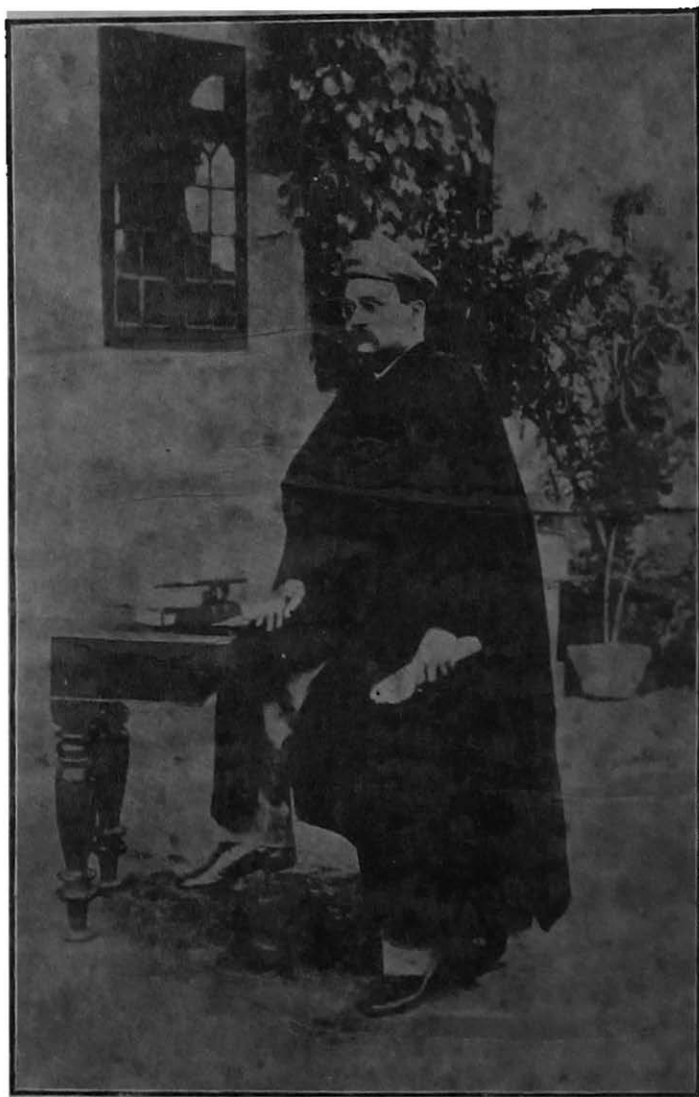


LIFE
OF
GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE



GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE, C.I.E.

Mysore University Extension Lectures

LIFE OF
GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE

THE RT. HONBLE
V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI, P.C., C.H., LL.D.



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PREFATORY NOTE

At the invitation of the organisers of the Extension Lectures of the Mysore University I agreed to deliver at Bangalore and afterwards at Mysore three lectures on the life and work of my master G. K. Gokhale. They were actually delivered in the beginning of 1935. At Mysore I did not exactly repeat what I had said at Bangalore, but varied the matter considerably. The Bangalore Press, which undertook to publish the lectures in book form, entrusted the editing to my friend Mr. A. V. Ramaswami. With much skill and ingenuity he has contrived to fuse the two threes into one three, so that what appears in the book as the first lecture is really an amalgam of the first Bangalore lecture and the first Mysore lecture; and so with the second and third lectures. The plan has its defects and the acute reader will not fail to discover a few loose ends. Still the Publishers and I venture to think that some continuity is maintained, and the lectures, though each a trifle too long, read more or less together.

It is much to be wished that the book had been brought out soon after the delivery of the lectures. The Publishers would assure the public that the delay, regrettable as it is, was unavoidable.

V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI.

BASAVANGUDI,
June 30, 1937.

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FIRST LECTURE
EARLY LIFE

FIRST LECTURE.

EARLY LIFE..

INTRODUCTORY.

MR. GOKHALE died twenty years ago. Though in the latter part of his life he filled a large place on the non-official side of Indian politics, it is perhaps too much to expect that his name is much more than a word to the large numbers of young men whom I am happy to see before me. He was, in many ways, a true and accredited representative of the Indian side of most problems of his day. But things have changed so much since we lost him. New questions have come up; old ones have either diminished in importance or passed away from the political field; emphasis and urgency have shifted so much that, to one like me who knew the past and still lives in the present, the change is something remarkable. It is, therefore, somewhat of a rash undertaking on my part to make him live again, so that you may understand with sympathy his life and his work. Still it appears to me that we shall not mis-spend our evenings if we are to study the life and career of a great man of the past generation, because we find that, while the topics that held him may not hold us to the same extent, the principles for which he lived, the cause to which he devoted his fine powers and the example that he has left to us are still capable of yielding benefits of a rare kind to the younger generation. I should esteem myself, therefore, particularly fortunate, if I succeed in holding your attention for three evenings; and I should beg you also to think that you, on your part, will not find the time wasted that you give to these lectures. It would be impossible for me to do more than dwell on a few selected episodes in that great life. It is with

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the object both of abridging my task and also of enabling you, without actual guidance from me, just to have an idea of the events of his life, that I have placed in your hands a brief sketch,* noting them merely against the dates upon which they occurred. So aided, it will be possible for me to pass over, without actually mentioning, a great many points, which, otherwise, in a regular biography, would claim detailed attention.

EARLY YEARS.

Now a few words about his early career before I take up the main topic for to-night. He was born in 1866 in the Ratnagiri District of the Bombay Presidency. His parents were poor. His education, therefore, was a matter of some difficulty, and he owed it to his elder brother that he was enabled to pursue to its last stage the ordinary university career which is open to poor people in India; his brother, some five or six years senior to him, had to cut short his own educational career in order that he may be able to earn enough to support a somewhat indigent family and maintain Gokhale himself at school and college. For this act of brotherly and paternal care, Gokhale remained grateful through life, and it was noticeable how tenderly he provided for the education and upbringing of his brother's children.

In his school days Gokhale was not known for any brilliant gifts. But he was very industrious and, as his old school-fellows loved to say, very ambitious, desiring to excel at the same time both on the playing field and in the class-room. It is said that he had a prodigious memory which was noticeable even while he was at school. Some of the text-books that he had to study, it seems he knew by heart; and in later life it has been often said that he knew by heart

* See *Appendix*.

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great parts of Burke's speeches and orations. It is curious that to my knowledge he never quoted Burke. It may be because Burke's exuberant and ornate rhetoric did not suit his somewhat downright and straightforward style. Stories are told of how his playful class-mates would occasionally seek to test his memory. Often he would lend a text-book to a mate and ask him to hold it while he went on reciting by heart. There used to be a bet, it would appear, that he should pay down an anna for every slip he made (laughter). Nobody made a fortune out of his mistakes (laughter). Likewise, when he had taken his degree and become a teacher on Rs. 35 a month in a high school, people noticed how conscientious he was in his work. For example, it is said that he had to teach Southey's "Life of Nelson," a pleasant enough book to read occasionally, but I am afraid, a very unsuitable text-book for a class (laughter). In order to be able to explain the various parts of a man-of-war and to explain the nautical terms, with which Southey's passages are strewn liberally, he made week-end excursions to Bombay and observed a man-of-war lying in the harbour. There are many such things said about him. One story, however, I cannot keep back from an audience so largely composed of young students. Once, when he was still at school, an exercise was given to him in Algebra along with his class-fellows. Next day nobody brought the solution except Gokhale, and the teacher, well pleased with him, asked him to sit at the top of the class. But Gokhale would not move and was in tears. He explained that the solution was not his, but that he had had the assistance of some senior student, and he felt, therefore, some scruple in taking the promotion that had been awarded. Now when these things are mentioned in young people's lives, their significance is lost on those who have taken their plunge in the

affairs of this world. But to you, young men, the beginnings of a great career are of profound interest.

It was in the eighteenth year of his life that he took the B.A. degree. A part of his education was received in the Rajaram College at Kolhapur. Then he went to the Deccan College, Poona, a Government institution. But when he took the degree, he actually belonged to a Bombay institution, well known as the Elphinstone College. Here he came under the influence of an eminent Professor of English, Dr. Wordsworth, grandson of the great poet, a person to whom many other eminent men on the Bombay side owed not merely their education but the principal inspiration of their lives. After he graduated, he knocked at the doors of the Engineering College. The Engineering College in Bombay, as in Madras, for many years, offered prize posts. I have heard it said by one who also entered the Engineering College at the same time, personally well known to most of you here, the late Mr. Karpur Srinivasa Rao, that when Mr. Gokhale found him and two or three others with eminent attainments in mathematics, he turned his back upon the college, using some remarkable words, "there are some devils here with whom I may not compete" (laughter). Then he had recourse to that place to which most of us have gone, to which most of you, I dare say, will go, the Law College (laughter). Here he did more than knock. He found admission and not only did he put in a full course, but he passed the First Examination. To the end of his life he used to regret that he did not study law with more application. For in the kind of life that he led, a knowledge of the fundamental principles of law and jurisprudence are of infinite help. But soon after, he joined a noble band of educationists, who had formed themselves into the Deccan Education Society, of which the chief object was to bring higher education within the reach of the poor; for the upper classes in the

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Deccan were naturally as poor as the upper classes in this part of the world. For this purpose some of the finished products of the Bombay University, hailing from the Deccan, enrolled themselves as life-members of this Society, pledging twenty years of their lives to work in the college, receiving only a sum of Rs. 75 a month and not more. Even the Principal, who, you know, was at one time a Senior Wrangler and is at the present moment more than a Senior Wrangler, a Smith's Prizeman, received only this amount, the only additional emolument being the free occupation of a house (hear, hear). That college stands still as a monument of patriotic self-sacrifice in the cause of education. I hardly know of any institution similar to that in this province. I may, however, mention the National High School in Bangalore. It is meritorious that it follows the lines of the Fergusson College, and although it has confined itself to high school education, it has, I believe, won a position amongst high schools which is not very different from the position that the Fergusson College has obtained among institutions of its class. To this institution Mr. Gokhale was accorded a welcome by two eminent men of the time, Mr. Tilak and Professor Agarkar, who, although of no less importance, is not so well known all over India, because, while Mr. Tilak chose the world of politics, Professor Agarkar, for a long time Principal of the institution, devoted himself mostly to social service. Soon, however, the figure of Tilak fades from the stage. Mr. Gokhale was much more attracted to the other individual, with whom he had many things in common, and until the great Mr. Ranade came into his life, Professor Agarkar may be said to have been his chief mentor.

FERGUSSON COLLEGE.

Now Gokhale gave twenty years of his life to the work of this college. He taught Mathematics at first,

and then for a time, lectured on English and then turned his attention to History and Economics. In all three he reached a high standard of efficiency. People called him a "professor to order"; because he had to change his subject so often. But he used to say that, in his early days, it was necessary for people to be all-round men. To specialise, he said, may be the privilege of later generations when there was a sufficiency of talent available for the work of education. But in those days, which witnessed the beginnings of higher education, Mr. Gokhale thought that it was not a bad thing for a man to be able to fill any chair with tolerable efficiency. Gokhale's work, however, was not confined to mere lecturing. The college had to struggle against great difficulties; the chief of them was finance. Men had to go about all over the Deccan, and wherever there were liberal people, to obtain donations and contributions of all sorts. It is said that during two or three years Gokhale gave every holiday he could get to the work of collecting funds for that college, and it is believed that he was responsible, in the main, for placing the college on a basis of security. His position naturally was one of dominance in its administration and its inner counsels. Although the mistake of fact is often made, you may take it now from me that he never was Principal of the college. He was only one of the senior lecturers; and when the Principalship became vacant, he was pressed hard to take it. But he refused and passed it on to the young man who had just then won distinction as a Senior Wrangler, Dr. Paranjpye. Among those who tried to persuade him to take the Principalship was a gentleman whom I must mention, Professor Selby. He was then Professor of the Deccan College in Poona, a Government institution, to whose conduct England contributed some of her most famous educationists of the time. Professor Selby belonged to a class now

EARLY LIFE

comparatively rare. His knowledge of Indian conditions, his love of Indians, his sympathy generally with Indian aspirations in every branch of national life were all well known and won for him a foremost place in the hearts of the Indians of that Presidency. Gokhale himself, it would appear, never was Professor Selby's pupil; but he was one of his warmest admirers and his staunchest supporters later on. It is curious, as significant of Professor Selby's position in the educational world of Poona, that, although he was Principal of a rival college, the authorities of the Fergusson College, to which Mr. Gokhale belonged, did not hesitate to ask him to take the place of President of the governing body of their institution. That honourable and responsible position Professor Selby occupied for many years. And it is noteworthy when, in later years, Mr. Gokhale spoke upon the Universities Act in Lord Curzon's regime, he mentioned two European educationists as having obtained a secure place in the affections of the Indian people; one was his own Professor of English, Dr. Wordsworth, at whose feet he sat in the Elphinstone College in Bombay; the other was Professor Selby.

RANADE AND JOSHI.

There are many great men who play a considerable part in Gokhale's life. I wish it were possible for me to detain you, while I was speaking about them at adequate length. But it is impossible. I can only mention on this occasion two more people, both Indians of distinction, to whom Mr. Gokhale looked up as his masters in political and public life generally. One was the great Ranade, whom perhaps the most compendious way of describing would be to call him the "father of modern India". But it would be enough to say that his official position as Judge of the High Court of Bombay was only a small part of the

numerous activities to which he gave himself. There was not any department of knowledge where he did not hold an eminent position; there was not any department of public activity where he was not a leading light; there was not an aspect of national welfare where he was not a devout worker. Mr. Ranade was an unrivalled figure, and he had, what few leaders have, the marvellous gift of attracting young and promising men and giving that turn to their minds and hearts which renders them great instruments of public welfare. Ranade was great in every sense of the word. And for fourteen years, Gokhale had the unique privilege of sitting at his feet, learning the great things of the world and profiting by the example of his experience, knowledge and industry. It was under his inspiration that he took up the Secretaryship of the Poona Sarvajanika Sabha and the editorship of its quarterly, called the *Quarterly of the Sarvajanika Sabha*. In doing work under him, Gokhale learned how to pick up useful knowledge from government records, whose secrets are not within the knowledge of everybody. Statistics had no terrors for him. For a time he took up also the writing of the English columns in a social service paper, *Sudharak*. In these capacities he won such distinction that he was early given the charge of the Provincial Conference of the Presidency. And after two years' service in that capacity, he became the secretary even of the Indian National Congress. We now come to the time when disaster overtook the Sarvajanika Sabha, the year 1896. Well, such things happen all over India; and it is no wonder that this Sarvajanika Sabha, of which Mr. Ranade was the life and soul, became a sort of general association to which all the active, energetic and vivacious intellects of the time were drawn. Some of these, however, were not exactly sources of amity and peaceful work. As you know, when many people join an institution, there are

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some who wish to try their strength at destruction (laughter). Now one or two of these members gave trouble to Mr. Ranade and Gokhale and their school. Ranade was not a man easily to yield. He struggled hard to keep his position and keep the Sarvajanika Sabha, if possible, on the straight road. But it became difficult. The dissenters, to use a mild word, had attained such power that very soon he was compelled to start another body where he might continue his great work undisturbed; for he was a busy official and could not, in addition to his public duties, engage in daily wrangles merely to maintain his position. Now before the starting of that new body, which was called the Deccan Sabha, which belongs to the year 1896, Gokhale along with Mr. Ranade, suffered a good deal from the taunts, insults and obstructions of their adversaries. So much was done in violation of the ordinary rules of decency to oust Ranade and his followers from power, that Gokhale, who was very sensitive personally, exhibited, in a somewhat striking manner, one of the qualities upon which it will be necessary for me, now and then, to dwell. That was a disposition to take things somewhat too seriously, almost tragically, as one would say. He gave all his spare energy to the work of the Sarvajanika Sabha; and when he found that he was misrepresented, opposed and even ousted from his place, he lost heart to such an extent that he poured out his grief in a letter to a great friend of his, whose name I must presently mention, a letter which I propose to read, the first of the many documents which, if you will permit me, I will introduce to your notice. You must permit me in the course of these lectures to read from these letters and other documents now and then. I hope they will not hamper the narrative nor dim the interest; but they are of the first importance, and you who are students will realise that in any biographical literature the most valuable part is often the

contemporary documents which you are enabled to read at first hand. That sort of help is most valuable for this reason, that it gives you the very words and the very thoughts of those who lived in the time of the subject of the biography, and a lecturer like me (hear, hear) may for a moment enable you to establish first-hand contact with him who forms the chief theme of these lectures and with those with whom he worked.

Now I must say a word about the gentleman to whom these letters were written. He is a figure not so well known as some others of his time, but one of almost transcendental importance. His name is G. V. Joshi. If I were to call him the right hand man of Ranade, I should perhaps indulge in a slight exaggeration, as Ranade seems to have had more right hands than one (laughter). Mr. Joshi was only the Headmaster of a High School in the Bombay Presidency, sometimes at Sholapur, sometimes at Nasik, sometimes at Satara and finally when he came to retire, in Poona. But he was, as Mr. Ranade was much more than a judge, very much more than a mere headmaster. A headmaster is a great person (laughter). But it was a small part of his greatness. Joshi was an unrivalled student of all matters pertaining to Agriculture, Economics and Financial Statistics, which he handled very much as we handle class-books. There was no one who could give their inner meaning and significance with so sure a lead as Joshi; and Ranade leaned on him trustfully for all the conclusions to be drawn from these heavy tomes, which are so much of a terror to ordinary students of public affairs. For many years Mr. Joshi contributed most informing articles on these dry topics to the *Times of India*. He only signed them as 'J'. Occasionally his friends used to say, "Do not put the initial; we can find who writes by the wealth of statistics; being an official you may come under official discipline." Upon

him everybody relied for the accuracy of his statistical knowledge; and you will be astonished to hear that when the great Welby Commission was appointed, to which I shall refer presently, in the year 1896, not only was the Indian evidence presented to that body mostly the evidence gathered and formulated by Mr. Joshi, but later on, when a minority of that Commission, of which Sir William Wedderburn was the leading member, desired to draw up their minority report, it was still to Mr. Joshi that they made continual references for their facts and their figures. He was, therefore, a person somewhat unique; and it is no wonder that for many, many years, Mr. Gokhale regarded him as his guide, philosopher and friend upon all public topics of intricacy. Mr. Joshi was the embodiment of a unique virtue; he was, I must say, almost culpably modest; and he has left nothing behind except a huge volume of writings and a few speeches to remind us of his encyclopædic learning upon every branch of knowledge. Now I must mention him in such detail, because he is to play a great part in moulding Gokhale's life. How much Gokhale respected him, venerated him and loved him will appear from one or two letters which it will be my privilege to read. The first, however, conveys to Mr. Joshi his great disappointment at the turn things had taken in the institution to which they gave their marvellous powers.

*From a letter of Mr. Gokhale to Mr. Joshi, dated
8th February, 1896.*

"Our recent misfortunes make it incumbent on me that I should devote as much of my time as I possibly can to my school and College. I have besides grown absolutely sick of the public life of Poona. Recent events have opened my eyes very wide indeed, and I am anxious to be relieved of all public responsibilities and to lead hereafter an entirely retired life."

To think of retirement at the age of 30 is to fly against facts! He only retired when he was called away from the world.

"Of course a great deal depends yet on Mr. Ranade's wishes, for I don't wish to do anything that would in any way displease him. But personally I wish now to wash my hands of all political work in Poona. There is so much that is selfish and ignoble here that I would fly from it to the farthest extremities of the world if I could."

That is the first reaction that every sensitive soul makes to the harsh realities of public life.

THE WELBY COMMISSION.

I will now pass on to the main topic of to-day's address. In 1896 was appointed a great commission of enquiry in England, a commission over which Lord Welby presided and which came, therefore, to be known as the Welby Commission. Its main purpose was to enquire into the conditions of Indian Finance. Special emphasis was laid upon the way in which the Home Charges fell on Indian Revenues to a much greater extent than they should have fallen. That was our contention. The point is not yet settled to our satisfaction. Charges were made for War Office and other expenditure in England on Indian finance, which ought really to have fallen upon the British Exchequer. Complaints had been so bitter that the authorities were compelled to appoint a commission to enquire into this and allied topics. Some great friends of India were members of this commission. There was an Indian member also, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji. At that time, this commission was hailed in India with the liveliest satisfaction, and we thought great things were going to come. Like most commissions, it ended with a report (laughter), upon which, however, very little action was taken. Still it made a great

deal of noise at the time, and India wished to send forward, to give evidence before it, its most eminent public men. From our Presidency we sent Mr. G. Subrahmanya Ayyar; Bengal sent the great Mr. Surendranath Banerjea; Bombay sent Mr. Wacha. You would naturally ask me, "where did Poona come in?" But, believe me, in those days, Poona considered itself the real intellectual and political capital of the Bombay Presidency. I have heard it said that Ranade was so proud of the position of Poona that he sometimes called Bombay its *suburb* (laughter). Poona would not be content without its own representative. It would have been quite satisfactory if Mr. Ranade or Mr. Joshi could have gone. Neither of them, however, was available; and they decided between them that the best person to send would be young Gokhale. Gokhale had then studied under them to such good purpose that they both felt that if they only finished him up to the task they could do nothing better. For three or four strenuous months, they took him in hand, and being well satisfied with the way he shaped, they sent him forth with confidence to give evidence before the commission. It is just as well to say at once that Mr. Gokhale cut the most important and attractive figure of all the witnesses that appeared from India. I wish to keep myself in the background as much as possible and let you hear Mr. Gokhale. I now read another letter written to Mr. Joshi from England soon after the evidence was over. You will see in the concluding part one of the most attractive parts of his character, his love and veneration for his master and the way in which he always whole-heartedly acknowledged his debt to him.

*Extract from a letter of Mr. Gokhale to Mr. Joshi
from England dated the 16th April 1897.*

* * * * *

* "My evidence was taken on Monday and

Tuesday and everything passed off first class—far better than I had ever ventured to hope. On Tuesday, after the whole thing was over, Sir William Wedderburn came up to me and said: 'You have done most splendidly. Your evidence will be much the best on our side. Let me congratulate you on the signal service which you have rendered to your country. Our minority report will be based practically on your evidence.' Sir W. Wedderburn added that I had made a great impression on Lord Welby and other members of the Commission. Good old Dadabhai is also quite pleased. Mr. Caine, who attended only for a few hours on the first day, writes to me as follows: 'I have spent about seven hours in a careful study of your evidence. Permit me to say that I have never seen a cleverer or more masterly exposition of the views of an educated Indian reformer on all the subjects dealt with. And though I do not agree necessarily with *all* your views, it must of necessity have very great weight with the Commission. You and Wacha have rendered splendid and unique service to your country, for which your countrymen ought to be ever grateful.' Mr. Courtney was much struck by my evidence and all through he was extremely sympathetic, always ready to help me with questions as against Peile or Scoble. On the whole everything has passed off in a most gratifying manner.

"And now let me say that I have thought it my duty to tell you all this because all this high praise belongs really to you and to Rao Saheb* and not to me. And if it has been bestowed on me, I have received it only as your representative, and now I lay it at your feet and Rao Saheb's as our

* Ranade's name in intimate circles.

ancient honoured *gurudakshina*. For the most part, my work has been that of a mere conduit pipe or Edison's phonograph, and I have told Sir William and Dadabhai so. Pray accept once more this expression of deepest gratitude for the splendid assistance which you so cordially, so cheerfully gave me and which has enabled me to discharge satisfactorily a great national duty."

From a letter of Mr. Wacha to Mr. Joshi dated the 16th April, 1897.

"Mr. Gokhale gave his evidence on the 12th and 13th instant. He has most splendidly come out of the ordeal and you and Mr. Ranade will be delighted. He manfully stood the cross-examination, so much so, the papers have thought fit to give a part of it—touching railways and poverty—in the shape of question and answer with the sensational heading 'Startling the Royal Commission'.

* * * * *

You and Mr. Ranade deserve the whole credit in the first instance. He held your brief; but the brief has been admirably handled by the advocate. His will be *the evidence* and I am delighted that it is so—both from the personal and public point of view..... Mr. Caine has given a capital certificate of evidence to Mr. Gokhale which he should preserve, coming as it does from a friendly judge but also from one who has sat on many Commissions. He has been very kind to us both."

THE APOLOGY INCIDENT.

Now, life is not all of one tenor. At the moment of greatest triumph it sometimes pleases Providence,

doubtless for our own real good, to send us also humiliation and sorrow. Mr. Gokhale was not allowed long to enjoy this feeling of satisfaction. Just then both Bombay and Poona had been visited for the first time with plague. Now neither Mysore nor Bangalore is a stranger to this fell disease. In Poona especially its horrors were beyond description, and for a time the Government did not know how to cope with the difficulties caused by it. Instead of Government and the people working together, as they should, when they found this mortal enemy threatening their peace and welfare, as so often happens, they found themselves at loggerheads. The people did not understand the motives of Government, and Government did not understand the feelings and the intimate customs of the people with whom they had to deal. Naturally the discord at that trying period was of the most acute character. And in the rage and fury of the conflict, there was the assassination of Mr. Rand and Lt.-Col. Ayerst as they were returning home at about midnight from dinner in Ganeshkhind Palace. The excitement of the European community was beyond words. Very natural. While he was in England, Gokhale received letters describing the ravages of the plague in Poona and the neighbourhood and the steps that the Government had taken to mitigate its horrors, detailing the day to day events in graphic language. Both in Bombay and in Poona, evacuation was then regarded as one of the chief means of combating the spread of the disease; and in Bombay, it would appear, non-officials were always associated on tours of visitation with officials, and things passed off smoothly and quietly. In Poona, however, the mistake was made of permitting officials alone to form the chief agencies of inspection and clearance, and at one time, it would appear, when the sufferings of the people were most acute, the Government resolved to appoint European soldiers for plague duty, their

work being to inspect private houses and habitations, to examine people suspected of having caught the disease and to remove them forcibly, if necessary. You can easily imagine that that situation would have resulted in a good deal of misunderstanding and conflict between Government and the public. There was one story current at the time and reported from mouth to mouth that two women had been violated by these soldiers and that one of them had committed suicide a little later. This story was duly transmitted to Gokhale in England. When he heard that his own dear city was passing through such a crisis and when he read corroborative statements from friends about this particular mishap, his sorrow knew no bounds. He consulted eminent friends in England and they all advised him to take the public into his confidence. He was introduced by Sir William Wedderburn, then a Member of Parliament, and spoke to a small committee of influential Members of the House. After that, he gave an interview to the representative of the *Manchester Guardian* and later on wrote in that paper. He mentioned this incident, not as from his knowledge, but as having been communicated to him. Now, this produced a tremendous sensation both in England and in India. Enquiries were set on foot at once and the Bombay Government cabled back to say that the whole thing was a 'malevolent invention'. This emphatic contradiction was made on the authority of Lord Sandhurst, the Governor of the day. Naturally it was reported to the House by the Secretary of State and the whole community turned on the man who had told the story, and it was at once stigmatised as falsehood. Well, Mr. Gokhale went through hell, briefly speaking, for a time. Severe were the castigations that he received. He and Sir Wedderburn and other friends who had been the means of spreading the story were the recipients of foul abuse from all kinds of people. In the House itself

protests were raised. Gokhale was referred to in contemptuous terms. But it pains me to think that, as always happens in such situations, the worst abuse did not come from the European side, but from our own. There was then in the House an Indian member in addition to Dadabhai Naoroji, also of the Parsi community, Sir Mancherji Bhownagree, who, it is pleasant to recall, made amends subsequently by becoming a warm-hearted and ceaseless champion of our countrymen in South Africa. I think I ought to read to you what he said about Gokhale. It is not pleasant to read. It gives just an idea how when we are down the people who dance on our prostrate body are our own kinsmen.

Extract from the Proceedings in the House of Commons.

Sir Mancherji Bhownagree said the apology of the Hon'ble Baronet did not wipe away the great error which he committed in putting a blind reliance upon the statements of a man who had now confessed that he perjured himself in a despicable manner.

Extract from the speech of Sir Mancherji Bhownagree in the House of Commons on August 5, 1897.

There had appeared before them the precious Mr. Gokhale, who had, under the guidance of the Hon'ble Member for Banff, defiled the threshold of the glorious building.

* * * * *

He denied that Prof. Gokhale was sent to this country as a representative of a large number of people, and asked why the names of the Professor's correspondents were withheld. He was not entitled to keep their names up his sleeve. As long as these letters were not forthcoming, they were entitled to believe that they were merely fictitious.

That is but a part of the tribulation that fell upon Gokhale at the time that he was about to return from England. When he returned from England, he set on foot some enquiries and he asked his correspondents to come forward with evidence. Nothing was forthcoming. Like a gentleman, he owned the entire responsibility himself. He was not willing to publish the names of his correspondents, although repeatedly pressed to do so. He said they were correspondents whom he trusted; they gave him information trusting that "I should keep it absolutely private; they did not authorise me to publish the news in England. I did so in the public interest. I am, therefore, entirely responsible. I cannot divulge the names of those who trusted me." That is the first obligation of honour he fulfilled. Then he was advised by people in whom he had the greatest confidence, among them Ranade himself, that the only honourable course for a gentleman was to offer an unqualified apology to those whom he had defamed. It was a bitter pill to swallow. But Gokhale was equal to this emergency, and he tendered an apology in public to those whose character and whose public service he had done something to blacken. His apology was then published in full. I cannot read the whole of it; it is too long. I must read the concluding paragraph for which he was specially blamed. The concluding paragraph mentioned the people to whom he tendered this apology. It was said that the apology was too long and extended to a class of people to whom no apology was due, namely, the soldiers. Now, upon this matter, it is no use trusting to the judgment of members of the Indian community to whom the traditions and the honourable obligations of public life were not so familiar as they are to members of the English community. It is these who are entitled to judge, and it is to their contemporary testimony that we must turn for a right appraisalment of this question.

Our own people condemned Gokhale in unmeasured terms, vilified him, abused him, hooted him when he appeared in public. They made his life a terrific burden for many, many months. But I must read to you the concluding paragraph of his apology and then some words of testimony as to the nature of his conduct from competent English people in whom he trusted.

"Before concluding, I respectfully beg to be permitted to make one more observation. In doing what I did, I felt I was discharging a most painful duty. I said so to the members of the Indian Parliamentary Committee. The late Mr. Rand was lying in a critical condition when I addressed them, and I said at the outset of my remarks that it was an odious position for any one to occupy, to have to criticise the Poona plague operations, while the officer who had suffered for them was lying in a condition which called for the deepest sympathy and respect from every quarter. And even now, when I fully realise the humiliating position in which my action has placed me, my bitterest regret is caused by the thought that I became the instrument of adding to the anxieties of H. E. the Governor at a time when he must have had the greatest difficulty in preserving the equanimity of his mind. I also feel most keenly that while a few Englishmen at least in this country have been not only just but even generous in judging me, I have been much less than just to their countrymen, the soldiers engaged in plague operations, and have made grave unwarranted charges against them, when they were engaged in work which required that their critics should be not only just to them but even generous. I once more tender an unqualified apology to all, to H. E. the Governor, to the members of the Plague Committee, and to the soldiers engaged in plague operations."

This concluding paragraph is not now within the knowledge of many people, and if I rescue it from oblivion, it is merely for the purpose of showing that when, as gentleman to gentleman, gentlewoman to gentlewoman, in future, you intend at any time to tender an apology, remember, please, that your apology must be full, otherwise it does not give satisfaction; the apology must be sincere and must leave no sore behind; it must be such as is calculated to wipe off the matter.

Now see how he was rewarded by the Governor. It is painful to see that the Governor did not reciprocate the spirit in which Gokhale tendered his apology. On the first occasion when the Legislative Council met after the incident, Lord Sandhurst permitted himself to say these things:

“Then it is true that an apology and a withdrawal has been made by a gentleman whose name was prominently for a few days before the public, but it is very easy thousands of miles from here to make statements which have not a shred of foundation, but which such a man may deem good enough for the English people—statements which show this and show that. That is very easy. It is also very easy to come back and say “I was misinformed, and I apologise”, but the harm has been done in spreading abroad these foul unfounded accusations and attacks, and while I recognise that the apology has been made, I might tender the advice that in future when it is thought necessary, as it may be at times, to offer criticism—and I have never complained of criticism—if it is necessary to make statements of that kind, they should be made here where they may be enquired into, and, if untrue, contradicted, and not made so that they gain currency all the world over before an answer can be given.”

You see, the sting of these remarks lies in the fact that Lord Sandhurst would not permit his lips to pronounce the name of Gokhale.

Now I will read to you just a passage from Sir William Wedderburn's letter :

"Please do not speak of withdrawing from public life. The very ferocity of the attack upon you testifies to the importance and value of the work you did in England on behalf of your countrymen."

This is what Mr. Hume, the founder of the Indian National Congress and the father, as he is called, of that great political institution, wrote :

"I don't care two pence about this incident. I don't think you have injured the cause *at all*. I see no earthly reason for your withdrawing from public life. * * * * *

"Well, this is just the time for a brave and a good man to cheer up and show an example. Have done with despondency and with talk of withdrawing from public life. Be more zealous than ever ; only be more cautious than ever not to put your hand beyond what provable facts justify. One more point. Do not fancy you have lost any ground with us. Do not apologise to us. We look upon you as a martyr to the cause and are more ready than ever to aid and so far as we can, to stand by you. Keep up a brave heart and pursue the right course modestly but steadfastly and disregard the ravings alike of the Anglo-Indian and the Indian.

Yours ever affectionately,

(Sd.) A. O. HUME."

Now Mr. Gokhale gathered up his courage once more and gave up thoughts of retirement and then when the time came, attended the next session of the Indian National Congress, which was held in Amraoti

in the Central Provinces. Unfortunately the delegates who came there did not treat him properly. They remembered this incident rather too vividly, and as it happens when an unpopular man appears in a prominent place, they treated him very shabbily. It would appear it was the Bengali delegates that made themselves specially prominent in this demonstration, and they would not allow him to figure as a speaker on the platform. Now that incident caused him the greatest possible misery. He felt this in a way which I cannot describe fully. In the end he was compelled to issue another statement, this time as long as the original apology, and he has been particularly blamed for this course, because he allowed himself to be dragged to the press once more. Many of his friends regretted that he wrote at all. But, as Mr. Caine is anxious to point out, every single word that he wrote in that long letter was perfect, was appropriate, was characterised by tenderness and by courtesy. The offence was that he wrote at all. Well, from that letter, I think, I will read the last paragraph. The concluding part of that letter contains sentiments which are worthy at this distant date of recalling and pondering.

Extract from a letter of Mr. Gokhale to the Press relating to the Apology Incident, dated 8th January 1898.

"I have no doubt about the ultimate verdict on my conduct. The day will come when it will be generally recognised by my countrymen that this most unfortunate incident deserves to be thought of, as far as I am concerned, in sorrow and not in anger, and that under most trying circumstances I had taken the only course which was consistent with duty and honour. Meanwhile, I am content to wait. Trials and troubles, accepted in the right spirit, only chasten and elevate. All that is

necessary for me to do is to go on doing my duty, whether it be sunshine or shade. Public duties, undertaken at the bidding of no man, cannot be laid down at the desire of any one. Whether one works on a higher plane or a lower one is a matter comparatively of small importance. One is always glad of the approbation by the public of what one has done. It is an object of legitimate satisfaction; it is also more—it is a source of strength and encouragement, and, moreover, in this country, it constitutes the only reward in public life. But it is not the highest purpose of existence, nor nearly the highest. If it comes—to use the words of Herbert Spencer—‘well; if not, well also, though not so well.’”

A Bengali, gifted with a great amount of sympathy and understanding, wrote to him a nice letter expressing his admiration of the virtue that Gokhale showed in this misfortune. To him Gokhale wrote words which it is worth while for you to hear.

*Copy of a letter addressed by Mr. Gokhale to
Atul Krishna Ghose re: the Apology Incident on
15th January 1898.*

“I feel most grateful to you for the very kind sentiments, so touchingly expressed in your letter which I received last evening. I am glad all your doubts are removed and you are satisfied that the course adopted by me, however painful, was the only course left open to me consistent with duty and honour. Pray do not suffer any more on my account. Obloquy, such as I am gesting under, is to a sensitive mind the hardest thing in the world to bear and it is made even more unbearable than it would otherwise be by the knowledge that it is causing distress of mind to relatives and friends. For myself, I am bearing the blow with composure,

and conscious that I have done only what duty required of me and confident that justice may be done to me some day. Thanks to the teaching and example of Mr. Justice Ranade, I have long learnt to make my conscience—and not popular applause—the spring of my actions. Moreover, remember that the best part of our nature is manifested not in what we enjoy, but in what we endure. There is a sublimity and moral elevation in undeserved suffering which nothing can equal and which is almost its own reward.

"Yes, I remember what Mr. Surendranath Banerjea wrote about my apology about the time. He was one of those very few who then stood by me. I shall never forget his kindness."

Now, I must mention when he visited England he took care to get himself introduced to Mr. Morley. That was the first occasion. He was the person with whom he had many dealings later on. I shall have frequent occasions to mention Mr. Morley, sometimes as Mr. and sometimes as Lord Morley. I am now glad to recount how Mr. Morley received this apology. This is an extract from Mr. Caine's letter to Mr. Gokhale.

*Extract from a letter of Mr. Caine
dated 29th October 1897.*

"For instance, I spent Wednesday with John Morley, and he laughed at the whole thing, spoke in the warmest terms about yourself and evidently has most pleasant memories of his interview with you when you were here."

Now Lord Sandhurst, the Governor, changed his attitude two years later (hear, hear), owing mainly to the way in which Gokhale bore all this indignity. Mr. Gokhale, true to his resolve, instead of retiring and nourishing a grievance against the public, came forward with the utmost resignation to undertake duties of the greatest possible

hardship and danger. Plague raged severely next year also, and he was one of those who visited house after house with a small corps of trusted workers, rendering useful work of the most marvellous kind; and then he took part in a commission which was appointed to enquire into the real efficacy of inoculation. For all this he was rewarded by the gratitude of the public, who had only a few months ago treated him with the greatest ignominy. Officers of Government who had been mollified by his humble and perfect apology now saw what solid virtues there were in the man, who rendered meritorious service to his own people in danger; and Lord Sandhurst, like others, softened in his heart and found it necessary to bear testimony to Mr. Gokhale's work in these words:

Lord Sandhurst's Speech dated 1899.

"Two years ago, it will be remembered, it was my duty to comment somewhat severely upon the report which had been spread by Prof. Gokhale, owing, no doubt, to his having been misinformed. I pointed out then that, at any rate, he should have been more careful about his information before propagating such damaging statements. Anxious as I was, however, to refute these statements on that occasion, no less am I to avow there is no more hardworking, generous and sympathetic worker amongst the plague volunteers than Prof. Gokhale."

Lord Sandhurst mentions him by name now (laughter).

Now, I wish to say at this point, without wishing to be didactic in any way, that to one other besides Mr. Gokhale life has brought these trials. Occasionally it is at the moment of one's signal triumph that one also has to face a reverse of a severe character. Laughter and tears seem somehow to come together to most men and women. I remember Lord Sinha saying to me in a

voice choking with tears towards the end of his days, "I am particularly remarkable for this : that the great distinctions and prizes that came to Indians have come mostly to me in the first instance. My satisfaction and pride, therefore, should have been very great. On the contrary, I say to you, as a friend, that upon no occasion was I allowed to remain for a moment either proud or self-satisfied. For upon each occasion, the honour or distinction came along with public attacks and criticisms, not merely ignorant and prejudiced, but positively inimical and uncharitable. Every time the sweet and bitter were so mixed that I could not be happy." As you remember, it was Mr. Sinha who first became Advocate-General, then he became member of the Executive Council of the Viceroy, then he was chosen to be India's representative at the Imperial Conference. He had the high honour, which he shared with the Maharaja of Bikanir, of signing the Treaty of Versailles, he was thus appointed His Majesty's Privy Councillor, and later on he became, as you know, Under-Secretary of State for India and then sat in the Upper House as a Peer and took a great part in piloting the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Scheme. These distinctions, which came one upon another, should have rendered his life not merely remarkable, but almost a triumph both for himself and for his relatives. But I heard him speak of all these things in a spirit of the utmost humility, because, as he said, his enemies made it impossible for him to enjoy any one of them at its full value.

In like manner Mr. Gokhale was assailed in his life by critics and enemies. His troubles began when he was still a professor in the Fergusson College. Very early in his association with Professor Tilak, for he was then a professor, differences between them broke out. When Mr. Tilak withdrew from the Fergusson College, there came a good deal of conflict upon questions regarding religious and social reform.

These differences subsequently widened and embraced all political matters. Upon political matters they sat in opposite camps for a great number of years. At first confined to the Deccan, these differences subsequently comprehended the whole of India, and on the stage of the nation's public affairs they once more met each other as life-long and determined combatants. At the end of Gokhale's life they still grappled with one another. And it is well known that in his ebbing strength he had to answer charges of a deep and grave character, and it is also generally believed that this struggle hastened his death.

Now, I mention these things to show that they are wrong who think that Gokhale was the favoured minion of fortune. He was not. He had about an equal taste of sweet and bitter in life, and it was only because his patriotism was pure, his religion was intense, and his ideals were high, and he never lost sight of the true and the noble in all his struggles, that he was enabled to crowd into so short a life—for he passed away at the age of 49—services of such magnitude and splendour.

EXTRACT FROM DIARY.

I have to read to you a most important document revealing the profoundly earnest and devoted nature of the man whom we are studying at this distance of time. Now Professor Gokhale (I am speaking of the days he was professor in the Fergusson College) started, it would appear, being somewhat agnostic and like most young men, he did not keep his beliefs to himself. Once, it would appear, when there was a public condolence meeting held for the memory of Charles Bradlaugh, he delivered the principal speech and proclaimed himself an agnostic. But due to the influence of Ranade, to advancing age, maybe, also, to more mature reflection, he seems to have wholly changed his views; and it would appear Mr. Ranade himself

expected that the man who in a public meeting proclaimed his agnosticism would embrace an early opportunity of similarly proclaiming in a public meeting his return to the ways of the good old faith. But the public declaration never came. Nobody knows precisely the views on religion and other profound matters that Mr. Gokhale held. Once he told me that he did not think it proper to speak about his views on the great mysteries of life and death. A man's religion he considered entirely his personal and private property. As far as I could judge, he felt during his later life that he lived and functioned under the guidance of some unseen power which he felt all about him. Further than that perhaps he did not go. I have heard since that he was a very good student of the *Bhagavad Gita* and that he was also a great admirer of *Shanti Parva* in the *Mahabharata*. Curiously enough I have heard him quote but once a Sanskrit verse to me, but never refer otherwise to his knowledge of Sanskrit. I was much surprised to hear the other day that he knew the whole of *Vikramorvasiyam* by heart. He used to admonish me as a collector of public funds for one object or another, not to go and beg of anybody and everybody on behalf of the Society. "For this Servants of India Society," he told me, "go only to those of whose good intentions and of whose principles you are sure"; and he quoted me the verse—

यं वं पश्यसि तस्य तस्य पुरतो मा ब्रूहि दीनं वचः ।

("Do not utter imploring words to any and every one whom you see").

This thing that I am going to read to you is from the diary where he occasionally recorded his thoughts. I must tell you, parenthetically, that he never maintained a diary. He asked us, his followers too, never to do so. Do you know why? Just at the time when the Society was started, the whole of India was in political ferment,

and a part of the activities of Government was the institution of enquiries of all sorts into the conduct of young men, especially those who enrolled themselves as members of public bodies and went about for public service. In many political prosecutions, the diaries of the unhappy accused had been taken as evidence against them (laughter). So he told us, "though you will be perfectly innocent, something you write may bring, it may be, other public workers into jeopardy. Well, we cannot afford to keep diaries." I hope to make the significance of this note from Gokhale's diary clear, as regards a certain phase of Mr. Gokhale's inner life. Always he looked into himself, examined his conduct in the light of great principles and ideals; and it is said that if he had done wrong, nobody could have castigated him more severely than himself. If he had done right, nobody was more ready to give credit to those who had inspired him and look upon successes as stepping stones to obtain greater opportunities of service. Soon after this humiliation of the apology, he examined himself in this way and made resolutions, which he committed to paper in a certain document which I mean to read to you, only saying beforehand that you must listen to it with the respect, in fact reverence, due to a man's ideals at the time when he was suffering most acutely, living as it were in the very presence of the Most High and desiring nothing so much as to make his life an instrument of God's will and an instrument for public welfare under His guidance. This is what I found amongst his intimate papers. It is dated 5th February 1898:

"By the grace of Sree Guru Dattatreya, I will endeavour humbly but firmly, to acquire or achieve the following:—

1. I will practise Yoga regularly.
2. I will acquire a good knowledge of:—
 - (a) History—Ancient and Modern.

- (b) Philosophy—Ancient and Modern.
- (c) Astronomy.
- (d) Geology.
- (e) Physiology.
- (f) Psychology.

Now, no more "ology".

(g) French.

3. I will try to become a Member of:—

- (a) The Bombay Legislative Council.
- (b) The Supreme Legislative Council.
- (c) The British Parliament.

In all these assemblies I will try to do good to my country by all means in my power.

4. I will try to become a preacher of the highest philosophical religion and I will preach this religion to the *whole world*."

Now, this may seem a somewhat grandiloquent document. When you remember the circumstances that drew it from him, one or two facts become clear. Even at the age of 32, for that was his age at the time, he retained a great part of his early ambition. He was not easily to be put down by the severest of calamities. His desire was to become a perfect instrument for India's welfare, and to equip himself sufficiently, whether in the intellectual or other directions, and lastly, you see, all this vast knowledge and these great opportunities he seeks only for public service. That remained to the last hour of his life his great characteristic. He was a patriotic man. In fact he put patriotism so high among the qualities of our poor nature that when he spoke about Ranade, as he did several times after Ranade passed away, he explained the greatness and the profundity of Ranade's teachings as having been based upon a desire to serve the Motherland. It appeared to him that of all Ranade's great qualities, the most underlying and fundamental was his love of his country and its advancement; to serve her was his greatest ambition. Night and day,

whether he sat on the High Court Bench and delivered judgment, whether he directed the proceedings of the Social Conference, whether he gave tone and direction to our industrial developments, whether he wrote on the Rise and the Growth of the Mahratta power, whether he lectured on profound topics of morality or theism and so on, whatever he did in his great life, he sought only the public welfare. In fact, Mr. Gokhale's insistence on patriotism as the groundwork of Ranade's character was so marked that it drew a note of hostile criticism from his own other teacher, Mr. Joshi, equally an admirer of Ranade and his faithful pupil. Mr. Joshi thought that Ranade's greatness lay rather in the religious aspect of his character. He said, "Ranade was great and he has done great things. Because he was so fundamentally religious, everything was to serve God and if he took up all these things, it was merely because he wished to serve God by serving his fellowmen." Now, you and I have no means of judging where exactly the truth lay between Gokhale and Joshi. We may take it, however, that both love of God and love of country played a great part in Ranade's life. In Gokhale's own life it would be true to say that burning patriotism, self-sacrificing patriotism, sacrifice and sufferings in the cause of the country, patriotism of that character, was truly the most marked trait of his whole nature.

One thing also must be noticed. It would be, I think, of great value to the youthful section of my audience. In Mr. Gokhale's character there was a great element of reverence and gratitude to those that taught him, nothing but admiration for those who had done great things and undergone great trials for the sake of the country, reverence to elders, reverence to senior workers, reverence to those whom he regarded as his exemplars or his instructors in any matter. It was marvellous how, even when he became a great man himself, he spoke in terms of the utmost humility, when he spoke

of Ranade or Joshi or a person like Sir P. M. Mehta. Even when we discussed the person who assailed him continually and against whom he frequently defended himself, Mr. Tilak, he would not allow any one of us to speak lightly or disparagingly of him. He would always say, "Tilak might have his faults. I have many accounts to settle with him. But who are you? You are nowhere near him. He is a great man. His natural endowments are first-rate. He has improved them for the service of the country. Although I do not approve of his methods, I never question his motives. Believe me, there is no man who has spent so much for the country; there is no man who has had in his life to contend against the powerful opposition of Government so much as Tilak; there is no man who has shown grit and patience and courage, so rare that several times in the course of these struggles he lost his fortune and by his indomitable will put it all together again." We of the Society heard these remarks more than once from his lips. I wish, young friends, that you take that lesson into your heart. Whatever your fortune be, however eminent you may become, greatly as life may endow you with all its attractions and glories, never forget what you owe to others; never let this peculiarly Hindu quality of reverence be banished from your hearts. One notices, now and again, a little abatement of this quality (laughter) in this generation. If you wish in any way to be like Gokhale, you may not emulate him in his greatness, but it is quite easy, I think, with a little self-discipline and self-control, to emulate him in this respect: to carry all through life this feeling of humility and reverence towards those who either taught you or who have led great lives for your example and instruction.

Now, I must refer finally to the time when Mr. Gokhale retired from the Fergusson College. He gave twenty years according to his pledge to the service

of this college, drawing a salary of Rs. 75 a month, and no more (laughter). When he retired he obtained a pension from its funds of Rs. 30 a month (laughter). When he took leave of the College, there was a great demonstration, a public meeting at which people said good-bye to him and he said good-bye to them. It was a most tender meeting. He made, upon that occasion, a speech of such grandeur that I would advise you all to read it. It is much too long for me to read here in its entirety. But I have marked a passage. It runs over 30 or 35 lines. I mean to read it myself, if I may say so, to give you the rare privilege of listening to a beautiful passage. The whole of it is now published, I think, in one of the text-books which students like you have to read in Northern India. I forget in which University. I only envy those boys who have it amongst their texts. It is worth your while to take Mr. Gokhale's speeches and read that passage. You will catch from it something of the spirit that actuated Gokhale throughout his life, what high ideals he cherished, how humbly he worked among his colleagues and how devoutly he gave the very best that was in him for the service of these high ideals and the pursuit of these high principles.

"Years ago I remember to have read the story of a man, who lived by the side of the sea, who had a nice cottage and fields that yielded him their abundance, and who was surrounded by a loving family. The world thought that he was very happy. But to him the sea had a strange fascination. When it lay gently, heaving like an infant asleep, it appealed to him; when it raged like an angry and roaring lion, it still appealed to him; till at last he could withstand the fatal fascination no longer. And so having disposed of everything and put his all into a boat, he launched

it on the bosom of the sea. Twice was he beaten back by the waves—a warning he would not heed. He made a third attempt, when the pitiless sea overwhelmed him. To a certain extent this seems to me to be my position to-day. Here I am with a settled position in this college, and having for my colleagues men with whom it is a pleasure and a privilege to work, and whose generosity in overlooking my many faults and magnifying any little services I may have rendered has often touched me deeply. And yet, I am giving up all this to embark on the stormy and uncertain sea of public life. But I hear within me a voice which urges me to take this course, and I can only ask you to believe me when I say that it is purely from a sense of duty to the best interests of our country that I am seeking this position of greater freedom, but not necessarily of less responsibility. Public life in this country has few rewards and many trials and discouragements. The prospect of work to be done is vast, and no one can say what is on the other side—how all this work may end. But one thing is clear. Those who feel in the matter as I do must devote themselves to the work in a spirit of hope and faith and seek only the satisfaction which comes of all disinterested exertions. This is not the place where I may speak of my future hopes or lines of work. But one thing I know, and it is this:—Whether I am permitted to press onwards and prove of some little use to the public in another capacity, or whether I have to return a weather-beaten, tempest-tost shipwrecked mariner, my thoughts, as you have said in your address, will constantly be with this institution; and, on the other hand, I shall always be sure of a warm and hospitable welcome within these walls whenever I choose to come here.”

I ought to say in explanation of this passage that when he left the college he had made up his mind to devote the rest of his life to public service. He was not going to earn anything for himself. He was going to live on the pension of Rs. 30 a month and such income as a book of arithmetic that he had written was bringing him every year by way of royalty. Living upon this subsistence, he was going, he said, "to lead the life of a servant of the public," service of the kind for which he was to ask many others to join the Servants of India Society.

It will be our task, high and purposeful, to examine, to-morrow and the day after, what fortune lay in front of Gokhale when he left his college and dedicated his rare qualities to the exclusive service of his country.

SECOND LECTURE
PUBLIC WORK

SECOND LECTURE.

PUBLIC WORK.

AS MEMBER, BOMBAY LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

We left our subject yesterday fully recovered from the eclipse that threatened his career, and of that proof was forthcoming pretty soon. Towards the end of 1899, a vacancy occurred amongst the elected members of the Bombay Legislative Council; and he stood as a candidate and found that he had an easy victory. During the time that he held office in that Council, there were some measures of importance upon which he expressed his views fully. The subject upon which he made the most famous speech of the session was the "Land Alienation Bill", which provoked bitter controversy. That gave occasion to a famous scene in which Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and three of his non-official colleagues, after being defeated on a certain amendment to which they attached the greatest significance, walked out of the Council, anticipating by a long period the tactics of the modern day (laughter). Mr. Gokhale, who seemed at first to have taken exception to this procedure, also followed when he had delivered his speech and found that it found no more favour than the speeches of the others.

DEATH OF RANADE.

I must pass on to some other topics, the chief of which is the death of his master in 1901. Mr. Ranade passed away amidst the lamentations of the whole of India; and all the rest of his life Gokhale used to say that the world after Ranade's death was not the same to him as it had been before. He delivered a few speeches on the life-work of his master, and for many years it was expected that he would write his life and

publish it for the benefit of the country. A letter that he wrote a few months after Ranade's passing away to a friend* of his deserves quotation: "I have set my heart," he said, "as you can well believe, on publishing a study of Mr. Ranade with selections from his writings and speeches. The work, no doubt, will take time. But you may rest assured that, if love, reverence and gratitude can accomplish such a task, it will be accomplished." I suppose it will be a matter of universal regret that this promise was not destined to be fulfilled. There is no good life of Ranade to-day. Doesn't it strike you that Gokhale has been punished for this? None of his pupils, none of those who learned public affairs at his feet, has yet written his life. Well, perhaps, you expect me to say why I have been wiser than Mr. Gokhale, in my time. I never undertook seriously to write his life. But there has been a very general expectation, and I have been blamed in some quarters for not performing this most necessary duty. I plead guilty. And may I say that the lectures that I now deliver here may, God willing, form the foundation, if not for a full-blown biography, at least for another course of extended extension lectures where I may treat adequately the life and career of Gokhale?

AS MEMBER, IMPERIAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

In that same year Sir Pherozeshah Mehta retired from his place in the Imperial Legislative Council, and Gokhale succeeded him, keeping the place till the end of his time. It was in the year 1902 that Mr. Gokhale's work in the Supreme Legislative Council began. It would perhaps be true to say that the greater part of his reputation is founded upon the nature and extent of this portion of his labours. There was hardly a year in which subjects of the first importance were not discussed by him or, at his instance, in that body. Perhaps the

* Mr. G. K. Gadgil, Bar-at-Law, Poona.

most famous of his speeches were those that dealt with the annual budgets. The budget discussion of those days was something very different from its successor now-a-days. Now-a-days we attack particular items of the budget, move resolutions on them, and ask for the reduction of the salaries of people concerned with them or for a drastic cut in the items that may be put down under various sub-heads. In those days our representatives had no such power. But they had the liberty to discuss in a very elaborate way all the items in the budget and all those other things of interest that were not in the budget (laughter). So it was a sort of general confession of political faith on the part of our members. They went into great detail over what they believed to be the basis of India's welfare and attacked the Government for what they did and for what they omitted to do and made suggestions of a most detailed character upon all subjects connected or not connected with the budget. Many of those contributions were really of an uninteresting character and must have wearied the House. But everybody looked forward to Gokhale's contribution. Although he did not detain the House for a considerable time, the way in which he addressed himself to all the important topics of the day arrested the attention of all and, in fact, those of us who were privileged to attend the budget debates of those days can testify to the intense interest aroused by his debates. The galleries were found crowded, and the Finance Minister, who replied, generally took elaborate notes of his speeches and answered them in detail, and, generally speaking, in a spirit of perfect cordiality. There were many things that proceeded from him as suggestions which, in later years, were actually given effect to by the Government. In fact his work in the Supreme Legislative Council must take first rank in any survey of his contribution to the discussion of public affairs in India.

You remember, yesterday, I dwelt at some length

upon his own estimate of his work. That was of a most humble and modest character. He realised, and gratefully acknowledged, the immense debt he owed to senior workers in the field. And it will be, now, my duty to read to you some of the letters that he wrote to his master, Mr. Joshi. Parenthetically, my intention to-day is, if possible, to keep myself rather in the background and develop the theme more or less through letters and documents of contemporary interest. You will see that the change is on the whole beneficial. For, it is of much greater use for you to know what actually the people of the time said and did than what I think now of what they said and did. Also there is another little advantage that I might claim for this procedure. The letters that I read may not bring before you the entire substance of the subject or the issues with which we are concerned. Really, they are out of date. It is not the subjects themselves that are of so much interest to us to-day as the spirit in which they were approached by our hero and by the feelings that he entertained with regard to those who were labouring in similar fields. So, I think, you will really welcome the change. This is what he wrote to Mr. Joshi in April, 1901.

Extract from a letter of Mr. Gokhale to Mr. G. V. Joshi dated Poona, 19th April, 1901.

"I duly received your letter of the 15th instant. It is indeed most kind of you to congratulate me in such warm terms on my election to the Viceregal Council. My colleagues in the Bombay Council have entrusted me with a great responsibility, and while I will spare no pains to justify the confidence they have so generously reposed in me, I sometimes feel oppressed with the thought that I have been much too bold in accepting such a trust. However, now that the election is over, I can only pray that

Providence will enable me to discharge the duties of my new position to the satisfaction of well-wishers like yourself and also of the general public.

"Now that Rao Sahib is gone, you are the only one to whom I can turn for light and guidance in the study of public questions. You have never repulsed me in the past whenever I have thus come to you and now that the need for your help and guidance is greater than ever, I hope you will continue to extend to me the same kindness and generous forbearance that I have experienced at your hands all these years. Since Rao Sahib's death, I have been feeling like one in whose life a sudden darkness has fallen, and though new "honours" are coming to me, as the world understands them, they bring me very little comfort, and no real pleasure. And when friends press their congratulations on me, I feel like one who is asked to sit down to a sumptuous meal when he has just returned from the funeral of a dear departed. Of course our sorrow—however overwhelming—must not be allowed to interfere with our allotted work with which we must go on, feebly, it may be, owing to the loss of old supports, but steadily and ever in faith and in hope."

This gentleman, Mr. Joshi, was still in Government service as the headmaster of a big public school, and it could not be made public that he was rendering assistance to one who was a somewhat unsparing critic of Government.

Now, his work in the Council was admitted to be of first-rate quality even by those whom he criticised without mercy. Young friends, you will allow me to address a word to you. It is an honourable feature of public life in England that even your enemies, whom you may have assailed upon occasions, admit the benefit that they have received from your work and pay encouraging tribute to those qualities

which have underlain your work. Lord Curzon, able and unsparing of himself and his subordinates, was generous in his appreciation of Gokhale's merits. And in the year 1903, Gokhale received the distinction of C.I.E. at his hands. It is usual for the Viceroy in communicating this honour to send a personal letter of recognition. Sometimes it is merely a convention. But you will see in the words that I read from Lord Curzon's letter, dated 31st December 1903, they were somewhat more than conventional. There is a note of sincerity and real warm praise in the last sentence.

"PRIVATE.

DEAR MR. GOKHALE,

I hope you will allow me to accompany the announcement in to-morrow's gazette of the C.I.E. bestowed upon you by H. M. the King by a personal line from myself to say that the honour is offered to you in recognition of abilities which are freely bestowed upon the service of your countrymen and of which I would ask no more than that they should continue to be so employed. I wish that India produced more such public men."

And now, how did Mr. Gokhale's work impress observers from a more distant point? There are many documents I can produce that prove that the public were not lacking in admiration of his work or in gratitude. But, perhaps, you will value most the testimony of a man like Gokhale himself, also in public life, who added to that advantage—that is, that he laboured in public life—the additional advantage that he had spent nearly the whole of a life-time in the service of Government as a member of the Indian Civil Service. His name is very well known. And I do not know whose writings are read with greater avidity by students of Indian Economics, whether Mr. Gokhale's

or Mr. R. C. Dutt's. Now it is R. C. Dutt's letters, two of them, that I propose to read to you :

A letter from Mr. Dutt to Mr. Gokhale, dated March 22, 1904, from Calcutta.

“You have performed a noble, and a patriotic duty, both with regard to the Official Secrets Bill and the University Bill and a grateful country will not forget your services. You have lost all along the line, as you yourself put it, but there are defeats which are more brilliant and more honourable than victories—and the fight that you have made during the last and worst years of a heartless and ungenerous Imperialism will be historic and will never be forgotten by our countrymen. I have myself fought this battle in another sphere for the last seven years of a blatant Imperialism, and I have failed in every single endeavour that I have made. But I have ever felt, and feel to-day, that every blow which you and I have struck will have its effect and I have more hopes from the increasing efforts and persistence of our countrymen rallying around us than I have fears from the repressive acts of despots. A nation becoming more and more conscious of its just rights and of the strength of its endeavours, *cannot* be repressed. I have faith in my countrymen more than you have—they have within the last thirty years done more to unite and to strive for progress than any other subject nation in the world has done or could have done, and God helping, they shall win in the long run when a blatant Imperialism shall perish in shame. And even if this be not so, if this Imperialism gathers force in England and makes administration more and more despotic in India—even then, we have the proud consciousness of having done our duty. It is better to fight and to fail in such a

cause than not to fight at all ; or as Krishna says

‘ कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ’

Excuse my having written all this rigmarole—but I wished to pay the honest tribute of an honest friend to your noble endeavour, to your high purpose, and to your magnificent and unyielding fight against overwhelming opponents—containing in their ranks some who ought to have been in our ranks. The fight is over for the present, but history will not forget it.”

No amendment that he moved was accepted by the Government.

A letter from Mr. Dutt to Mr. Gokhale, dated August 12, 1906, from Malvern.

“Words cannot express what I feel about *your* labours. You have worked like a true patriot and a *great patriot*, and you have achieved a *patriot's reward* in advancing the cause of your country. More than this no man can do. You had my unstinted sympathy and admiration the day I read your *historic* speech in the Viceroy's Council ; and to-day I feel more than admiration for you—I venerate you with all my heart and all my soul. Accept the sympathy, the love, the honest and true appreciation of a humble worker. Move onwards in the noble path you have chosen for yourself ; and the blessings of your country, and your own consciousness of a noble duty nobly done, will sustain you in your endeavours and lead you to success. May I, as an old man, live to see you higher and greater in the performance of the patriotic task you have begun.”

You see the note of pessimism running through that letter. It is owing to the reactionary character of Lord Curzon's regime.

Now, may I ask your leave to read a letter written by Gokhale himself to a friend in Madras, Mr. G. A. Natesan? That letter describes briefly the effect of some of his efforts in the Imperial Council. This was in the year 1906 when he had delivered the budget speech, which Mr. R. C. Dutt described as "historic".

Extracts from a letter addressed to Mr. G. A. Natesan from Poona dated 2nd April, 1906.

"You will be glad to know that my Budget speech this year was extremely well received in the Council. The Viceroy specially sent for me at the conclusion of the proceedings and congratulated me in very flattering terms. He further assured me that it would be his ambition to advance, to some extent at any rate, on the lines indicated by me, during his regime. Mr. Baker, with whom I had a long interview at his special request the next day, has assured me that he would provide funds in the next year's Budget for making a beginning in the direction of free Primary Education.

(The Viceroy was Lord Minto, who had just then taken office. Free Primary education, not yet compulsory.)

"He said very kind things, which I need not repeat here, but you will judge how friendly he is when I tell you that he made an earnest appeal to me not to retire from the Council next year, as he knows it is my intention to do. He said, 'Give me two or three years and I will make a beginning in regard to most of the things you are advocating, only you must continue to be in the Council to back me up by your criticism and your demands.' He explained to me confidentially his difficulties, but with the retirement of two of his senior colleagues, his voice will prevail more and more in the Executive

Council and you may rest assured that that voice will be raised who by in our interest."

THE FOUNDING OF THE SERVANTS OF INDIA SOCIETY.

Now, I come to a subject of great importance to myself, that is, the foundation in 1905 of the Servants of India Society, which Mr. Gokhale had long contemplated. Perhaps this is a trite matter to the senior portion of my audience, but I am addressing several young men, to most of whom this subject will be new and invested with fresh interest. You will, therefore, not mind my dwelling for a few minutes on this subject.

Mr. Gokhale had long felt that what was most needed for the furtherance of the objects of our public work was a select, compact and trustworthy corps of young men who had fully prepared themselves by study, by patient observation, by travel through different parts of India and by work of a probationary character, young men who had in these ways trained themselves, to take a real part at their own initiative in public life. For let me tell you, at once, Mr. Gokhale loved India and her welfare so intensely and so deeply that he would not willingly see it injured by the labours of unprepared, immature, crude workers, whose only equipment consisted in a genuine call of patriotism. Patriotism by itself is not enough. It is a noble, powerful, exalted emotion. It is only an emotion. It has got to be directed into useful, fruitful channels, and that can only be the case, if every worker prepared himself by arduous study, by patient survey of the realities of India's life and by an appreciation on the spot of the variety of things and circumstances of each particular locality. He, therefore, laid it down that, when young men came to him for training, they should remain for five years with him, during all that time studying and travelling and working under trusted leaders, but never making themselves responsible either for a

speech or for a newspaper article or for any public action. When you remember that admission to the Society was open only to graduates of distinction and high calibre, you can see what a five years' further preparation, superimposed upon this university equipment, must have meant to the young men whom Gokhale had in view as genuine, trustworthy public workers. Moreover, his own observations led him to the belief that in India, deeply imbued with religion and the religious spirit as its people were, a religious or moral appeal must be made before they would trust a person who approached them on weighty and delicate matters. Therefore his desire was that the young men whom he admitted to the Society should take upon themselves a vow of a simple and pure life; that they should as a principle openly eschew channels of profitable employment; that they should be contented with just that provision that the Society's funds may allow, from time to time; and that in a pure missionary spirit they should devote their whole lives to the work that he assigned to them, or, he in consultation with the Council which after five years came into existence. For the first five years he was the absolute master of the situation. The young men were to trust him completely, as it were, surrendering their prepossessions and their judgment, putting them and their own lives in his keeping. You see at once what demands he made upon university graduates, who believe that their freedom as individuals is everything. These demands, however, were noticed by many people as excessive. One letter that I wish now to read pointed out this feature to him as somewhat in excess of propriety. But before I read them, will you allow me to read the *seven vows*? Perhaps they are well known; but still the minutes will not be ill-spent, if I read them again to you.

"Every member at the time of admission shall take the following seven vows:

- (i) That the country will always be the first in his thoughts and he will give to her service the best that is in him.
- (ii) That in serving the country he will seek no personal advantage for himself.
- (iii) That he will regard all Indians as brothers and will work for the advancement of all, without distinction of caste or creed.
- (iv) That he will be content with such provision for himself and his family, if he has any, as the Society may be able to make. He will devote no part of his energies to earning money for himself.
- (v) That he will lead a pure personal life.
- (vi) That he will engage in no personal quarrel with any one.
- (vii) That he will always keep in view the aims of the Society and watch over its interests with the utmost zeal, doing all he can to advance its work. He will never do anything which is inconsistent with the objects of the Society."

I think these vows explain themselves. Their inner meaning, however, is somewhat subtle. But I should be taking you too far out of the course that I intend to follow, if I were to dwell on their real nature.

Now this letter that I wish to read is the first judgment pronounced upon the constitution of the Society by that professor whom I mentioned to you yesterday, as one who was the Principal of the Deccan College in Poona, a Government College, but, at the same time, was so trusted by the public that he was appointed to be the President of the Governing Body of the Fergusson College. This is Principal Selby, a man whose letters to Gokhale are of surpassing interest. He was steeped in literary and historical matters. He had a sound judgment and was a true liberal at heart. He loved Indians and had great admiration for

Gokhale. His letters, therefore, contain something of great interest and great importance. The only difficulty about them is that they are written in a vile hand. It is impossible to read them without difficulty. I have, however, deciphered most of these letters and in order to be sure that my labours should not be wasted, I may inform you parenthetically, I have then and there written in my own hand the words in Mr. Selby's hand (laughter) but even I, at a subsequent reading, am not able to make them out easily.

A letter from Principal Selby to Mr. Gokhale.

"I have looked through the rules of your new Society. It is rather an awful thing that you should ask men to surrender absolutely to you their conscience and the right of private judgment for five years. This is popularly supposed to be the first condition of admission to the Society of Jesus and is the main ground of Protestant condemnation of that Order. It reads to an Englishman rather like a rule of a Russian Secret Society. Why is the copy of the Rules sent to me marked *Private*? As it is so marked I will keep it to myself. The uncomfortable part of it, however, is, that such a thing can't be kept secret, and that when it comes out, I may be unfairly suspected of having spoken about it, especially as the universal criticism on it 'from an Englishman at least' is sure to be the one which I have made at the beginning of this note."

BRITAIN AND INDIA.

There I must take your leave to drop this subject of the Servants of India Society, for I have now to pass on to the year 1907, when in the beginning, immediately after the famous Dadabhai Naoroji Congress held at Calcutta, Mr. Gokhale undertook a tour in Northern India, for the express purpose of combating the spirit

of some political doctrines which he abhorred. For some years past, the counsels of the Indian National Congress had been divided and torn, and national work had been impeded by the growth of parties at mortal variance with each other. The doctrines, subversive of order, unfavourable to the British connection, threatening the very basis of constituted society, began to spread; and Mr. Gokhale, aware of the immense danger to national life if these reached their culmination, determined to arrest, if possible, this downward process by undertaking to visit some important stations in Northern India. This tour is believed to have been eminently successful. Several of the speeches he then delivered were followed with the most intense interest and exerted a considerable calming influence on excited young men. You may find them in the edition of his collected speeches and writings. They will bear reading even to-day. Those lectures, repeated in several places in the course of two or three months, were then regarded by the lovers of continuity in national life as amongst the very best services that Gokhale had so far rendered to the country. But they brought him also a good deal of bitter attack from the upholders of the doctrines which he combated. For a wonder, a great paper in Bengal called *Bande Mataram* called in question his patriotism, his loyalty to the nation, and his title to be regarded as a Servant of India. You will be astonished that the rancour and criticism went so far that there was a leading article which startled the whole of India, headed *Exit Bibhishana*, meaning that by this campaign Gokhale had proclaimed himself a traitor to the cause of his brethren, that he had left the national camp and gone over to seek the protection of Sri Rama. The tragedy of the thing is, that the great name of Vibhishana, revered as that name should be, was degraded from its meaning and applied to signify a traitor, and that Mr. Gokhale should

receive for the first time that opprobrious appellation. Well, you see at a glance how in those days political controversy went down and down in standard, until even the career of one who had proved himself again and again of the truest quality was not safe from envenomed attacks. But it is ill dwelling at length on such a subject.

LALA LAJPAT RAI'S DEPORTATION.

About the year 1907, there occurred a political event which excited all our people from top to bottom. It was the deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai in the Punjab. Now I wish that we pay some attention to Mr. Gokhale's reaction to this act of Government, because Lala Lajpat Rai was, by a great part of our countrymen, regarded as belonging to a school of political thought quite different from Gokhale's. That is true to a great extent. But what I wish to notice particularly is the deep and profound attachment these two men had for each other, which continually brought them upon the same platform, working with the same spirit, notwithstanding their strong political differences. When Mr. Gokhale heard that Lala Lajpat Rai was deported, he felt that Government had made a big blunder. Lala Lajpat Rai could not have been guilty of anything that deserved such drastic punishment; and he, therefore, threw himself into the work of obtaining Lala Lajpat Rai's release as early as possible. With this object he worked hard indeed for several months. But just to give you an idea of how deeply he felt in the matter and what far-reaching results it had on the general tenor of Indian politics, I wish to read two letters. This one he wrote to Sir William Wedderburn, with whom, for many years, he maintained an unremitting correspondence:

Extract from Mr. Gokhale's letter to Sir William Wedderburn, dated Poona, 24th May, 1907.

"I think we must not rest till we have secured Lala Lajpat Rai's restoration to liberty. I went yesterday to Matheran specially to discuss our plan of operation with Sir P. M. Mehta. I had a three hours' talk with him and we were in entire agreement as to the steps to be taken in this country. Of course, it is necessary to wait till the Indian debate in the House takes place, for it is possible, though not very probable, that Mr. Morley will make some statement on Lala Lajpat Rai's case, indicating in a general way what the Government charge him with. After your debate there, we propose getting up a memorial to the Viceroy signed by all Members and ex-Members of Legislative Councils, ex-Presidents of the Congress and ex-Chairmen of Provincial Conferences. I will myself go to the different provinces to obtain signatures to this memorial and I will then go to Simla with it. There I will work privately with the different Members of the Government before presenting the memorial formally. If we fail at Simla, as is not unlikely, a deputation of three men from the country will proceed to England about October to lay the matter before the British public. Very probably the deputation will consist of Mr. R. C. Dutt, Mr. Surendranath Banerjea and myself. If Nawab Syed Mahmud of Madras is prepared to go, we would like to have him with us.

* * * * *

"Lala Lajpat Rai's deportation has literally convulsed the country from one end to the other. All sorts of hard things are being said about Mr. Morley and we have so far practically nothing to urge on the other side. It is sad—inexpressibly

sad—but for the present at any rate there seems to be no help.”

THE MINTO-MORLEY REFORMS.

I will now come to the next year and deal with the subject of what are known as Minto-Morley Reforms. In the shaping of these reforms it is well known that Gokhale took a great part. They are called by the names of the Secretary of State and the Viceroy in whose time they took shape. It was in the early part of 1906 that honest John took over the Indian portfolio. The expectations that were then raised in India were very high ; and among those who came under his influence and looked forward to the inauguration of a new and happier time, Gokhale was the most prominent. He went to England in successive years after Morley was installed in Whitehall. He had several interviews with him. It is even now quite difficult to settle between Morley, and Minto as to which of them made the better contribution to this work or deserves the greater credit. Morley, being the able and astute literary man that he was, anticipated the verdict of posterity by publishing his *Recollections* long before the Viceroy could ever have thought of it (laughter). And as he published only the letters written by him upon this great topic the impression had been established firmly that his part in the work of founding the new constitution was the greater. Some time afterwards it occurred to people interested in the great name of Minto that something should be done, if possible, to redress the balance. And they entrusted the task of editing his Diary to an author of great repute, named John Buchan. His book has been in the field for some years now. But in the first place he was not a strong partisan and his book has not the same literary value as John Morley's. No doubt he put certain matters correctly, showing that Lord Minto also from his side really took a very significant part in the making of the

new constitution. But still the honours lay with the senior member of the fraternity. Quite recently, a further attempt has been made from the side of Lord Minto. The Countess of Minto has just now published a book containing more extracts from the diaries and writings of Lord Minto, supplemented by passages from her own diary. I cannot say that the book is very interesting reading, but it bears upon my own subject to-day, because she brings to light certain passages which make it clear in what light Minto regarded Gokhale.

Now I am constrained to say that these extracts that have appeared in recent days are not quite favourable to the life and reputation of our hero. But I am by no means disconcerted by these facts, for I can prove at once that the Countess of Minto still suffers from some prejudices which had been firmly implanted in her mind by some of those advisers of obscure character who gather round Simla and Delhi (laughter). It is extraordinary how our public men are completely misjudged by these high dignitaries. Although they meet our leaders personally and could form their own judgments, they seldom permit themselves to do so; they are content to let their own testimony be counteracted by the testimony they receive from those accredited representatives and purveyors of truth who belong to the C.I.D. They trust these people better than they trust themselves. In the very opening pages of the book of the Countess of Minto, there occurs a remarkable passage, which may serve as a sample. I will mention it to you at once.

It is said that in 1906, just after the accession of Minto to office, their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales were about to visit India, that is, the present Emperor and the present Empress. It seems (this is a fact discovered by their informants; I have no knowledge of it, nor you, I am sure) that there was an attempt to boycott their visit on behalf of the

public and that, somehow or other, the chief agitator who was responsible for this threat was Gokhale. Nobody in the world would believe this canard, but it is solemnly put down in the book. The fact is, that the talk that there might have been a possible boycott could not in any way be connected with Gokhale. For it was well known that in the Congress of 1905 held at Benares, under his own presidency, he had himself scotched a feeble attempt made by men of the new school, not to boycott the visit, but to introduce a resolution slightly altering the terms of the one by which Their Royal Highnesses were to have been welcomed in glowing terms. Nothing more was done. Gokhale was responsible for the resolution being restored to its original shape and the standard of public decency being maintained. For anybody to pretend that, a few days later, he suddenly turned into a promoter of an agitation for the boycott of royalty is a strange perversion of the truth. The diary seriously records that Minto sent for Gokhale, and spoke to him firmly and emphatically, with the result that, as he left his presence, Gokhale told the Private Secretary who was standing near, "Look here, I think that this new Viceroy is quite a sympathetic man. I undertake to stop the boycott" (laughter). If, he could make himself, in the first place, seemingly responsible for such a movement, he was the last person in the world to have said "I will stop the boycott"; that was not his way. He never pretended to have such power. Well, really, I have mentioned that to you as an example of the way in which some of our most eminent men are regarded in the private minds of high potentates. What they say in public, the encomiums that they pour on their work and the great praise they give to their comradeship, loyal assistance, co-operation, they seem all for public consumption. Really, Mr. K. Natarajan, the Editor of the *Indian Social Reformer*, is justified in administering a serious warning to all leaders of the

public in India that they must not take at face value the praise that they receive at the hands of the powers-that-be, for, all the time, these may be holding opinions somewhat in derogation of those they publicly avow. But I will not say the same thing of the testimony that Mr. John Morley has borne to the character of Gokhale and the assistance that he received during all these years from him. Well, he has not given the most unmitigated approbation to Gokhale's work. It is not to be expected of any two men occupying prominent positions in public life. But this much is certain, that whatever annoyance Mr. Morley may have received now and then, he maintained an attitude of friendliness and even high personal regard for Gokhale, which, so far as we can judge from the *Recollections*, never seriously wavered. Of course people have written a good deal in refutation of the view that I have just stated. For example, it has now become well known that Mr. Morley was a very sensitive man. In fact two things have significance: that he did not tolerate free and hostile criticism, that for many years, for instance, he regarded with contempt and disapproval some members of his own party who accused him, in his conduct of Indian affairs, of having forgotten the principles of a lifetime. Let us remember, however, with gratitude that he began well. In the first months of assuming office he accepted the resignation of Sir Bampfylde Fuller, which was a great relief to harassed Bengal. And then he went further. In a famous speech he repudiated the interpretation that Lord Curzon had placed upon the Queen's Proclamation. He rescued that great document, which we regarded as our charter, from the gross abuse to which that great Viceroy had subjected it. Moreover, he for the first time recognised that the Congress was a perfectly legitimate political body (hear, hear), and avowed that he would pay to its resolutions

that respectful attention that should be paid to the representations of loyal citizens. Well, in these two or three points, he won our hearts. But, unfortunately for him, the political sky in India continued overcast for a long time. I will not say he deported; he supported deportation. He sanctioned repressive laws and he was responsible for defending these harsh measures in Parliament with great strength and tenacity. You all know how the phrase "settled fact" has got into the political vocabulary. He used it, in the first place, in connection with the B ngal Partition, curiously enough, after saying that he disapproved of that measure altogether and that it had been passed in the teeth of popular opposition and with every circumstance of popular aggravation. To have said such a thing is to have marked himself out for continued vituperation. He got it in plenty. Moreover, he was responsible for the declaration, coupled with the adumbration of reforms that, as long as he held office, he would not become responsible for the establishment of anything like parliamentary institutions in India. Well, his great object, really speaking, seems to have been to buy off the opposition of the Conservative section of Parliament. In order to please them, to please the great bureaucracy that held in its firm grip the destinies of India, Morley went out of his way to sanction all the repressive measures that they desired, provided only they gave him a clear field for the sanctioning and inauguration of certain reforms in the constitution on which he had set his heart. But this brought him, as I said before, into odium; his own colleagues, some of them, spoke harshly about him; they wrote also very unfeelingly. The chief gibe against him was that he was a Conservative in disguise; that he had betrayed life-long principles and that he would end his career with nothing to show for himself as a Liberal except the repressive laws that he had sanctioned as Secretary

of State, the deportations without trial and the detentions without the possibility of trial, for which he had made himself responsible. I must say that Lord Morley on his part showed an extremely quick temper, and he was rather sensitive at seeing that his good intentions were not appreciated and that there were even in the Liberal ranks people who so thoroughly misunderstood him as to expect nothing good from him. It is said, however, that Mr. Morley intended at one time to modify the Bengal Partition and that the plans were all ready. But before the announcement could be made, somebody or other, as often will happen, put an untimely question in Parliament and wrote in the press about it. Then Mr. Morley thought that he should draw back from what he had undertaken, and I have heard it lamented as a sad feature that, owing to the indiscreet action of someone in Parliament, a great measure of amelioration was delayed by five or six years. But Mr. Morley's career is only partly concerned with India, and although, in my opinion, the leading politicians of India did not do him perfect justice so long as he was in office, the publication of his book of *Recollections* and the testimony of those who judge from within, certainly mark him out as one of our greatest benefactors.

Mr. Gokhale knew of course all the difficulties of Mr. Morley; he had had many talks with him, and he was not without appreciating the realities of the situation. But at the same time he felt that it was an irony of things that while they had such a great man as the Secretary of State, two or three years should pass without their being able to show anything of positive benefit to India. That is why he often writes of Morley in this strain :

*Extract from a letter of Mr. Gokhale published in India,
June 14, 1907.*

"Of course it is open to the Government to say that the tranquillity at present prevailing is

due to the drastic measures adopted by them. But the people of this country believe, and will continue to believe, that there was never any real chance of a second mutiny and that Lajpatrai has been sacrificed to the nervous apprehension that suddenly seized the authorities. It is possible that Mr. Morley may throw some further light on the case of Lajpatrai. He certainly owes this to himself, not less than to the people of this country, over whose destinies for the time he presides. I think public agitation in India must now be directed for some time to securing Lajpatrai's restoration to liberty, or at any rate to securing for him an opportunity to meet the charges on which the action of the Government has been based. Mr. Morley spoke the other day of the interest which the Indian party who are anxious for changes in the administration of the country undoubtedly have in the prevention of disorders. We certainly do not want any disorders in the land. But the reforms contemplated will lose their meaning if they cannot be had without the deportation of such earnest and high-minded workers in the country's cause as Lajpatrai."

Well, of these reforms the first statements were by no means promising. You can study the gradual way in which the public estimate of Lord Morley's promise of political reforms changed its hue from mild approval to disapprobation and finally to condemnation. If you study the letters written by Sir D. E. Wacha to Gokhale, they form a wonderful testimony to the way in which the public opinion of what Morley was doing in the India Office varied from day to day. Well, I do not think I shall be justified in taking up your time in describing the features of the constitution, when it has been replaced by another, and this other is about to be replaced in its turn.

Mr. Gokhale's part in the fashioning of these reforms was then regarded as great and meritorious. I do not think anything that has appeared or will appear in the press will take away from the credit that belongs to him. But so great was the fear in the minds of critics that it is interesting to recall now, how, when Morley first enunciated these reforms in outline in the House of Lords, one noble lord after another stood up and in criticising these as almost revolutionary in character, traced their origin to the malign influence of an astute Hindu who had gone over from the Deccan. John Morley defended himself with vigour at the next opportunity he had. He asked in direct terms, "What would noble Lords desire? I am here, having to frame proposals for the reform of the Indian constitution. Do they wish me not to consult the chief representative of those whose fortunes would be affected for all time by these proposals?" Mr. Gokhale he mentioned as one of those who gave him advice, and it was then that he brought out the fact that he requested Mr. Gokhale to put down on just one sheet of paper the proposals of reform that lay next to his heart; and Morley went on to add, "I have made a similar request of a Mohammedan gentleman as well," for it was urged by some people that he had taken only Hindus into consultation and forgotten Mohammedans altogether. Now, one secret of Lord Morley is that by some element in his training or in his education he avowed himself much more attracted to Mohammedans than to Hindus, and it hurt him doubly to be told that he had neglected the community with which he claimed some sort of distant intellectual or political kinship. He said, "I have consulted Mohammedans as well and these are the results of the talks I have had," and further went on to say, "I have asked every Indian whom I have met and it is my regret that I have not asked more Indians for their opinions, for it seems to me

they are the materials upon which any constitution must be based."

Now the Marquis of Lansdowne, who was the Leader in the House of Lords, got up in his place and taught Morley what he called a lesson. In a playful way he said that the Secretary of State was a very able and learned person, but he ought to remember his Boswell. Dr. Johnson, it appears, once fell into the habit of visiting a Scotch minister named Dr. John Campbell every Sunday. He kept up this habit for some time; and it was then discovered that he gave it up. Boswell was an indefatigable questioner. He asked him one day, "Why, Sir, don't you go to Dr. John Campbell any more?" The Great Khan of Literature turned round and pompously said, "Look here, if I say anything great and wise hereafter, these Scotch people here around me will swear that I got it all from Dr. John Campbell."

Mr. Gokhale's own defence was quite different. He showed clearly that none of the reforms that he had recommended to Morley was different in character from the reforms recommended by the Government of India and other accredited authorities. He said "That Lord Morley has taken some hints from my note-paper is no wonder because my note-paper runs along the lines of the Government's own recommendations. Well, is it my fault," he went on to ask, "that my proposals were so moderate and well-judged in their nature that the Government of India approved of them? Supposing I had recommended some drastic steps and no Government approved of them and Morley found it necessary to reject them, then these people would have said, 'Here is this Hindu gentleman, supposed to be wise, making wild and impossible recommendations'. No doubt you are in a safe position to criticise me; one way or another, we Indian politicians must come under your lash." But he also pointed out that all his recommendations

were not accepted by Morley, that, while he had asked for a non-official elected majority in all the Legislative Councils of India, Lord Morley had given a non-official majority in the legislatures of the provinces but refused this in the Central Legislature.

Well, it is now history how he encountered the most fierce opposition to the appointment of Mr. Sinha to the Executive Council of the Viceroy. He appointed two Indians to his own Council. But he found it very difficult to get on the Viceroy's Cabinet a really good and capable Indian. The opposition came from unexpected quarters. But Mr. Morley mentioned delicately how the most difficult feature of this opposition came from the King himself. His firmness and tact overcame even this opposition, and when Mr. Sinha was appointed to the Viceroy's Council, it was regarded as a triumph of statesmanship. As soon as the reforms took shape, Indian members began to be appointed to all the Executive Councils of the various Provincial Governments as well. For the first time our representatives got the power of moving resolutions on matters of public importance; they could discuss the budget and even divide the House on proposals connected with it; besides, they obtained the power of putting supplementary questions in the Houses. Now these various steps were really in the nature of a great advance upon the existing constitution of the time, and it was in the Madras Congress of 1908, which was the First Convention Congress, that Mr. Gokhale gave a clear and masterly exposition of the various details of this scheme and in fact was instrumental in getting it accepted by the Indian public almost with enthusiasm. It is not his fault that when the Government of India subsequently framed Regulations under this Act, a great deal of the benefit of this legislation was taken away. And when, later on, the subject was discussed in Lord Minto's Legislative House, Mr.

Gokhale found it difficult indeed to defend the Regulations, while he gave his warm praise to the original Act itself.

I now wish to read a few extracts, illustrative of the spirit in which Mr. Morley and Gokhale met. The first of these extracts refers to the year 1906. This is what he wrote from London :

Extract from a letter of Mr. G. K. Gokhale to Mr. Krishnaswami Ayyar from London, dated 8th June, 1906.

"In fact I may tell you privately that I have been able to establish excellent private relations with Mr. Morley. One little incident will give you an idea as to how cordial he is. Our first interview was taken up wholly with Bengal affairs. At the close Mr. Morley said to me that he would like to have a second talk with me on the subject. I replied of course that I should be delighted to have that talk, but that I had come to this country for urging on his attention questions of more importance and permanent interest and I said to him 'If I am not able to lay before you all that I want to urge next time, will you give me a third interview?' Thereupon he said, 'The question is not how many interviews I will give you, but how many you will give me. And if you are equal to ten interviews I would like to have all ten of them.' My second interview lasted for over an hour and a half. We talked again for some time of Bengal affairs and then I turned to the more immediate demands of the Congress. I am to see him again on Tuesday next and I mean to take full advantage of his offer to give me ten interviews. He has agreed to go over the whole field of Indian administration with me point by point. Last time we discussed the controlling machinery here—especially the Secretary of State and his Council. We

also discussed the Viceroy and Provincial Governors and their Executive Councils and then we were discussing the question of Legislative Councils, when the time was over, and Mr. Morley had to hurry to the House for an important debate on the Education Bill. As I had said above, Mr. Morley has made it a condition that these interviews should be treated as confidential, and I am not at liberty to write anything about the statements made on either side. But this much I may tell you—that I am delighted with these interviews more than I can tell. It was worth while coming to this country even for these two interviews I have so far had with Mr. Morley.”

*Extract from a letter to Mr. Dravid from London,
dated 3rd August, 1906.*

“I had my last interview with Mr. Morley the day before yesterday and it was in the highest degree satisfactory. Mr. Morley spoke without reserve and spoke with much feeling, and he indicated to me what he proposes to do during the next few months. I can tell you that we never had so true a friend of our aspirations in a responsible position since Lord Ripon’s days; and those who can realise the tremendous difficulties against which he has been struggling in his endeavour to advance our cause will understand me when I say that we are only playing into the hands of our opponents in impugning his sincerity or doubting his desire to help us. Every fresh day that he spends at the India Office our cause gains and the official side loses and if only our countrymen will have a little more patience for, say, six months more, they will have no cause to regret their confidence in the present Secretary of State. And now I want you to do what you can to prevent any *ungenerous*

criticism of Mr. Morley in the press. See Mr. Kelkar and with him see Mr. Tilak if necessary and beg them in my name to exert their influence for the sake of our common country to discourage any declaration on the part of the Indian Press just at present of want of faith in Mr. Morley. By all means, let us criticise what he says or does freely, but let us assume for a little while longer that he is a real friend, not one who merely makes professions of sympathy and that where he fails to give satisfaction it is due partly to his ignorance and partly to the extraordinary difficulties which surround him on all sides. Remember that he can act only through the officials on the spot and he is bound to give them a full hearing, even when he is satisfied that they have not acted rightly and further that in matters in which he has a doubt, he cannot set aside the view of men responsible for the administration lightly. I mention all this to show the great need there exists for more patience and more indulgence on our part. He is the one friend fighting night and day in our interests (and I know this to be no more than the truth) against overwhelming odds, which are rendered all the more overwhelming by his comparative ignorance of Indian questions, and let us not leave the true enemies alone and direct our arrows at him. I am sorry I am not at liberty to say more, but you must beg our friends to trust my judgment a little in this matter, and exercise their influence in the directions indicated above."

I must now proceed to say a few words and read a few documents concerning the relations between Lord Minto, the Viceroy, on the one hand and Mr. Gokhale on the other. Between them, I believe, on the whole there prevailed a general good understanding, each recognizing a valuable ally in the other. Now and then, however, Lord Minto wavered in his appreciation of

Gokhale's work ; and this displeasure and dissatisfaction have been expressed in letters that he wrote to Mr. Morley, which were long unpublished, but, which have just been published, not very discreetly, by the Countess of Minto ; for they make it appear that Lord Minto's appreciation of Gokhale could not have been genuine or deep. I have heard nothing from Gokhale, nor has any one heard, nor has any witness appeared in these letters to show, that he for a moment doubted Lord Minto's sincerity of purpose or his desire to bring peace and welfare into the land. I cannot believe, therefore, that this occasional doubt that poisoned Lord Minto's mind arose from anything that happened between them. It must have arisen from something or other in the nature of those secret reports which are always poured into the ears of high government officials from the operations of the department which we know as the C.I.D. (laughter). I have already mentioned one particular feature of these relations. It is now my purpose to mention two other points which illustrate this. Otherwise they would not be of great importance. They illustrate the difficulties that surround the mutual relations of high officials of government and non-official public workers. It is of the highest importance that these relations should be cordial, and that the understanding should not at all be disfigured by any suspicion. Should anything of the kind happen, however, between leading men on the one side and leading men on the other, the results to public life and to public progress are in the nature of a disaster.

This is what Lord Minto writes to Lord Morley in the year 1907. My own belief is that he writes this after reading those letters of Mr. Gokhale which appeared in the public press at the time, regarding the deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai. As often as you criticise one action of Government, so often are you mixed up with the extreme agitators in the country, however

high your character and reputation may be otherwise. "As to Gokhale," this is what Lord Minto writes,—

From Minto to Morley, August 7, 1907.

"As to Gokhale, if he chooses to play with fire he must take the consequences. We can't afford to let him tamper with the army,

Mutiny! whoever heard that! What he means is that he demands justice for people like Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, who were suspected to have tampered with Indian Sepoys.

"and if he says anything to me as to what has occurred, I shall tell him straight to his face. I think, however, he has good reason for letting the subject drop..... I am thoroughly disappointed in Gokhale.

So we are in the author of this letter!

"I had liked what I had seen of him and believed he was honest at heart, but the part he has played of late has disgusted me. As an honest moderate he has lost a great opportunity of discountenancing rank sedition, and what you tell me of his references to your speech shows either that he is incapable of understanding the real friends of India, or that he is, as you say, as big a revolutionist as Lajpat and rest of them. It is very disappointing."

I wish to draw out a little lesson from this letter. You see that the root of discontent in Lord Minto's mind is the expectation that as soon as a person like Lala Lajpat Rai, whom they suspect of sedition, appears on the scene, it is the bounden duty of those whom they trust, like Gokhale, to come forward and denounce the offender (hear, hear). This is impossible in public life. No honourable man will abandon his compatriot the moment the C.I.D. has reported against him. No honourable

Indian, having the authority of Gokhale, will denounce his brother-patriots, disclose their activities in public and hand them over as it were to the tender mercy of a bureaucracy. It is impossible. And yet, that is what some Conservative Viceroys would expect of those whom they call their "allies" and their "colleagues".

I am now reading to you a letter written by Morley to Lord Minto. This letter quotes great portions of a letter which Gokhale wrote to Sir William Wedderburn. I am not able to obtain a copy of it in our records. It is apparently a letter written by Gokhale to Wedderburn, and Wedderburn, as was usual with him, communicated this to Morley and he has taken sentences from this letter. It is of the greatest importance, because it has recently become the subject of a correspondence in the *Manchester Guardian*. That is why I refer to it.

"One of the most interesting Indian things that have come my way this week is a letter from to dated 11th October. The one absorbing question, he says, is how the split in the Congress, now apparently inevitable, is to be averted. 'The outlook at this moment is as dark as dark could be.' He has no hope that any solution can be found, short of removing the sittings of the Congress from Nagpur. But this 'means a split as the New Party in that case will probably insist on holding their own separate Congress at Nagpur'. 'If a split does come, it means a disaster, for the bureaucracy will then put down both sections without much difficulty.' They will brush Gokhale and his friends aside on the ground that they have no large following in the country ;
The fate of the Liberals to-day !

"and will put the New Party down on the plea that the most thoughtful people are against them. I have often thought during the last twelve months

that Gokhale, as a party-manager, is a baby. A party-manager or for that matter any politician aspiring to be a leader, should never whine. Gokhale is always whining, just like a second-rate Irishman between Dan O'Connell and Parnell. There was never any whine about Parnell (unless may be at the bottom of the useful fire-escape)... Now, if I were in Gokhale's shoes—if he wears shoes, I forget—I should insist on quietly making terms with the bureaucracy on the basis of Order *plus* Reforms. If he would have the sense to see what is to be gained by this line, the 'split' when it comes should do him no harm, because it would set him free to fix his aims on reasonable things, where he might get out of us sixty or seventy per cent. of what he might ask for. 'The feeling against Mr. Morley in the country is so strong at present, that no one who puts in a word for him has a chance of being listened to. In fact it is no longer mere 'regret' or 'disappointment', or even 'dislike' or 'distrust': it is, I grieve to say, *disgust and detestation* and God knows if it ever will improve.' There is a terrible tale for you."

This is in 1907; those events were taking shape which culminated in the Surat catastrophe. Mr. Gokhale, like many others, had a fear that at Surat the Congress would be wrecked. Therefore, he mentioned it to Sir William Wedderburn.

The situation is similar to what obtains to-day, and has obtained as between Liberals and the Government. I am, therefore, reading this passage to you and would ask you to mark every word of it. This is what the Government demands of Liberals at every stage, that these Liberals should denounce their fellow-countrymen, should swear that they will have nothing to do with them, and having said that, should convert themselves into mere gramophones of the Government.

They should say to the public of India, 'the Government and we are in alliance. We are determined to support Government and you must follow.' That position is impossible for any self-respecting political party to take. We have got our independent views; we may be friendly to Government; we may be appreciative of the special difficulties of Government; we may be willing and ready to make allowances for the exceptional position in which Government is often placed. But that we should lose our identity and provide the political influence for the time being of the authorities that be, is an impossible position. We desire one day to be a political party in our country, with the right to determine its policy and shape its destinies (hear, hear). How can we become, I ask, the mere mouthpiece of Government and identify ourselves completely with them and trust the fortunes of India completely to their hands? That is what Mr. Morley wanted. Hear now what Minto writes to Morley.

Dated November 23, 1907.

"What you tell me of Gokhale's letter is an excellent indication of the times. I never for an instant thought that our reforms would be welcomed by the Extremists. But I hardly expected that Gokhale would play such a stupid game as he is doing. It is such trash his talking about the bureaucracy putting down the Congress and brushing him and his friends aside. He could have played a great game, if, while asserting his own political honesty, he had recognised our good intentions and done his best to assist the Government of India. I spoke very openly to him on these lines, but he has evidently no intention of coming to our support and what he has now written 'entirely gives him away.'"

I shall read another letter written in 1910. This letter is again from Minto to Morley.

Dated October 19, 1910.

"I am glad you sent me the extract from Gokhale's letter to his friend in England. It is very important as showing his hand, I am sorry to say. I can only call it mischievous, and written with the intention to mislead. Gokhale would not have spoken in the same sense to me. And that is the worst of him, that one cannot rely upon his absolute good faith. I know him well, admire him much, and am on most friendly terms with him. In ability and breadth of view he is a long way ahead of any Indian in political life. But he must know quite well that the picture he gave in his letter is not a true one. Our repressive measures are certainly not severe and the suggestion that they will be hardly used

'hardly used' means, will be used in a harsh manner. That arises from the ambiguity of the adverb 'hardly'.

"is unjustifiable. The tendency of local governments will be generally the other way. Then the suggestion that the official world is opposed to reform is quite untrue. There has been an extraordinary change in that direction. No doubt the Reforms were originally unpopular generally with the bureaucracy, but the people who do not recognise their value now are very few and far between..... But the worst symptom in what Gokhale writes is that he apparently does not mean to accept the reforms with the goodwill which is so important for their success. I had a hint the other day that this was the line he unfortunately meant to adopt. I had hoped that he was a big enough man to accept them as the machinery the Government of India has now to work with and that he would devote himself

to public affairs in accordance with that machinery, but if he goes on the lines of at once picking holes in it and asking for further alterations, he will make a great mistake in a patriotic sense. After all Gokhale represents a very small minority in India, but it is a dangerous minority in that undue weight is attached to its views. It is most important that Gokhale should speak, write and act sensibly and I don't at all like the tone of the extract. If I get a chance of speaking to him in the above sense, I shall do so."

Now, one word before I part with this subject. It is of the utmost importance. So far as I know, Gokhale never once in public or in private depreciated the Minto-Morley Reforms. He had a sense of pride in them because he had contributed greatly to their formulation. He held himself partly responsible for them. In his letters to us he was always saying, "these reforms, you will find, are on the whole satisfactory. They cannot be entirely so. Our public men should learn to reconcile themselves to the difficulties of Morley. He has done as much as he can in these circumstances. I assure you it is a noble instalment of progress and the country will do well to adopt them in good faith and work them for what they are worth." This was the spirit in which he was writing to us. As for his public utterances, they never once gave a hint that he was dissatisfied. On the other hand, those who remember the speech that he made in the Madras Congress must have formed an impression of the powerful advocacy he made of the various measures provided in this scheme; how he hoped a great deal from them. This last letter of Minto is written, however, after Gokhale had expressed some public dissatisfaction, not with the original scheme of reforms, but with the detailed Regulations that the Government of India made in order to carry out these reforms. And,

as you know, the bureaucracy in India know how to defeat in detail what they cannot frustrate in principle. The Regulations that were made were so reactionary, were so calculated to divide people from one another and detracted so far from the spirit of the Reforms, that, like the safeguards of the new constitution, they ate up nearly the whole of it; that is what Gokhale objected to. It was after Gokhale's expression of disapprobation of the regulations that Lord Minto wrote to Lord Morley in that strain.

TILAK'S ARREST AND THE AFTERMATH.

Moreover, as often happened to him, for his great work Mr. Morley did not receive full meed of praise in India for the reason that, at some time in 1908, the Government of Bombay found it necessary to prosecute Mr. Tilak and have him sentenced to six years' imprisonment. I was present during the whole of that trial, and I cannot tell you how it affected the public mind at the time. I was, if I may say so, very much struck with the great ability with which Mr. Tilak defended himself and his heroic stand against formidable opposition; and when the sentence was pronounced against him, my colleague, Mr. Dravid, and I thought that he was a man whom an undeserved fate had overtaken. We were very anxious that these facts should be thoroughly well known in England, and we therefore wrote full letters giving accounts of what had happened, and further requesting that Mr. Gokhale should interview Mr. Morley and see that in jail Tilak received as lenient a treatment as was possible.

I beg leave to read two or three letters that we received in reply from him. I promise that these will be brief passages. It is now twenty years and more since this event occurred. But I still recall with the greatest possible pain and humiliation the slanderous statement—made in certain sections of the public press—

that he was primarily responsible for the advice tendered to Government here and in England against Tilak and his followers. I will just read two or three lines which throw some light upon these events.

Extract from a letter to Mr. Patwardhan from London, dated 17th July, 1908.

"The telegraphic summaries of Mr. Tilak's defence have made a very good impression. We shall all heartily rejoice if he is acquitted. I think his prosecution has been a fearful mistake. I gather from the telegrams that he is taking up in his defence the position of a worker for constitutional reforms. If he makes this quite clear and if he is acquitted, I think that will strengthen the Constitutional Party in India."

Extract from a letter to Mr. Patwardhan from London, dated 23rd July, 1908.

"This morning's papers contain telegrams about the shocking sentence inflicted on Mr. Tilak. There is of course no doubt that he will be brought back and set free after things quiet down, and if and when they quiet down. Still the conviction and sentence will really be a great blow to our party, for part of the resentment against the Government is likely to be directed also against us. However, there is no help in the matter and we must go on with our work as well as we can."

Extract from a letter to Mr. Patwardhan from Vichy, dated 13th August, 1908.

"As regards Mr. Tilak, I have not the least doubt in my mind that after a little time, he will be treated with every consideration and that next year, after the proposed reforms have been inaugurated, if things are quiet in India, he will be brought

back and set free. *You may rest assured that I will do everything that I possibly can in the matter, though I don't like to say so, for it might be misunderstood by our Extremist friends.* Nothing can now be done in England till the autumn session begins, and even after that the matter will really rest with Sir George Clarke, for whose judgment Lord Morley has the highest respect. I will prepare the ground while I am in England during the autumn session and on my return to India in December I will follow up the work with personal appeals to Sir George Clarke, though everything will naturally depend upon the state of things in the country in general and in the Bombay Presidency in particular during the next few months.

"What I have written above is a reply to your own suggestion as also to Shastriar's. I am not writing separately to him, because I have already transgressed the doctor's instructions in writing at this length to you."

This shows clearly that Lord Sydenham was not acting in any collusion with Mr. Gokhale in prosecuting Mr. Tilak. As is usual in public life, Gokhale's enemies began to spread stories of how he was at the bottom of the prosecution, how he had induced the Governor of Bombay to prosecute Tilak, and how, having gone to England, he prevailed on Lord Morley to support the Bombay Government and deal once for all with his enemy. Now these stories obtained credence in unsympathetic quarters, and the air was full of the most malign and foul charges against Gokhale. Indian newspapers were sent to him by every mail. He read them with the greatest anguish, and one day finding it impossible to bear these charges he wrote to a colleague of mine, Mr. Patwardhan, asking that he should send him careful cuttings from these papers to show exactly the nature of the things said against him.

Week after week certain papers made it their special business to dwell in vivid detail upon the part that Gokhale was supposed to have played. Particular papers made themselves prominent in this connection. Gokhale bore them all with patience. It was suggested to him by a friend that he should prosecute these papers. This is what he wrote to Mr. Patwardhan :

Extract from a letter dated 2nd September, 1908, from Vichy to Mr. Patwardhan.

" You write in terms of strong resentment and disgust of the attacks which the *Bande Mataram*, the *Hindi Punch* and some other papers have made on me in connection with the Tilak case. It is true that such attacks are particularly cowardly and detestable in this instance, because they are made against an absent man and in the present state of inflamed feeling in India, they are wickedly suggestive. But the malevolence of these men is no new thing. It has pursued me for years past with a virulence which I alone know and which at one time used to cause me great mental distress but now does not affect me much. The truth is that the bulk of our educated countrymen have as yet neither a true sense of justice nor true manliness nor magnanimity. And it is no use quarrelling with the fact that our work has been cast among such people. Of course things may exceed at times all bounds and then further patience may become in itself a kind of cowardice. And if you think that the libellous statements which these prints have published have really damaged me seriously and that they are clearly actionable, I have no objection to your getting a lawyer to serve them with notices demanding an immediate and full retractation of the charges. But if the matter is not so serious, drop it altogether. You have not sent me any papers

except the *Bande Mataram* and so I am not in a position to judge."

Extract from a letter to Mr. Patwardhan from London, dated 25th September, 1908.

"I don't mind confessing that I have been feeling sad since despatching that telegram on Monday last. During all these years of public life, I have often been pursued by similar malevolence but hitherto I have succeeded in ignoring the attacks. Somehow I feel that I have not been loyal to the teachings and principles of my departed master in asking you to proceed against the offending journals as I have done."

What he means is that Mr. Ranade would not have approved of the prosecution if he had lived.

"But the heart is sad, the brain tells me that the course I have urged is the only course now left open to me. Our public is so gullible that it simply swallows such stories. And the public mind is at present so inflamed that it is positively dangerous not only to me and mine but to those who, like the members of our Society, are closely associated with me that such odious accusations should be allowed to circulate."

Now I am going to read a letter which, on hearing this decision, I wrote to Mr. Dravid, the senior Member of the Society, who was in Poona.

Copy of a letter from Mr. Sastri to Mr. Dravid dated 12th October, 1908.

"MY DEAR NATESA RAO,"

I cannot say that I have read with satisfaction of F.M.'s* decision to prosecute the defaming papers.

* F. M. means First Member, which Gokhale was of the Servants of India Society.

The libel is outrageous; nor can I deny that it is believed by a certain class of people. But these are mostly those that have engaged their hearts on the other side of politics and are violent partisans. On such no legal proceedings of a vindictory character will have any effect. The bulk of educated Indians are either ignorant of the scandal or too large-minded to believe it. A few simple persons that now believe there must be something in the scandal may be undeceived by a court's finding. This, however desirable in itself, is hardly a result that I should care to secure, considering the embitterment that it will cause. Mr. Gokhale has borne so much, more perhaps than I know: shall he not bear this too? Does his good name need to be buttressed by the judgment of a law court? Ill-conditioned men there will be to the end of time; and the ingenuity of malice will never be so barren, but it will invent fresh charges as often as old ones are repelled. Mr. Gokhale's favourite saying is that public life in India has more penalties than rewards; and I should like to think that the most malignant personal attacks were not sufficient to exhaust his patience. I remember once his saying to me that he had made a vow never to lift his hand against a brother-Indian. Perhaps I give it a more unqualified form than he gave it. But I was struck by its magnificent courage, and the profound, if unconscious, self-confidence that it betokened in one familiar with the depressing conditions of Indian public life. That the hand is lifted only in self-defence and for the protection of large interests is a consideration that gives me pause. Still, after making every allowance for it, I cannot help wishing that the rule had been observed in this instance as well.

“ I have thought it my duty to speak out my mind on such an occasion. Certainly it can do no harm to any one but myself. If you agree at all with me, please convey our opinion with due submission to Mr. Gokhale. It may annoy him. But would he not be even more displeased if he knew that we felt so differently on an important matter and did not deal candidly with him ? ”

Now I need only say further upon this subject that these papers were prosecuted, and Mr. Gokhale went into the witness-box in one case. They were speedily brought to book; they paid heavy fines and these fines were given away to funds of public utility with which Mr. Gokhale was in sympathy. That is the end of this story.

I should not have troubled you with these details and ventured still further to include something of a personal character but for the sad thought that this tendency of our people to believe ill of their best men, to be ready to think that they are traitors to their own countrymen, is not a thing of the past. In my own poor life, humble as I have been, an incident occurred which I cannot but recall with the most intense regret. I mention that to you merely to show that you cannot be too cautious in receiving stories against the leaders of public life. When you hear these stories, if there is to be bias in the matter, let it be in favour of the accused person. You must make it a point to demand the most positive and incontestable proof before you will consent to drag the name of a leader into the mire. You remember the occasion when, in Lord Pentland's Government, Mrs. Besant was interned. Upon that occasion I happened to be a member of the local Council. And it was well known that I stood on a somewhat friendly footing with Lord Pentland. With these facts, and with the further information that I stood on a different political platform from Mrs. Besant's, that I had

declined to be a member of her Home Rule League and that I had ventured to dissociate myself from certain further activities of hers, upon these facts, a number of her followers spread the story that I was responsible for this internment ; that Lord Pentland consulted me, as if that was necessary for fortifying himself, and on being so consulted I gave my verdict against Mrs. Besant. I spoke in public against the measure. I wrote. And being on friendly terms with Mr. Montagu I also cabled to him about this matter. These facts were known, but they did not weigh so much as a feather against the story that passed from lip to lip and with every possible embellishment. Everything was done to mar the good relations that subsisted between Mrs. Besant and myself. I am glad to say that some of those who said these things about me came to know the truth in time and acquitted me completely, and it gives me great pleasure to testify that Mrs. Besant herself never lent her ear to these aspersions. But they were in the air. There is always a possibility of our good men being slandered in this unscrupulous and unfounded manner, and if any words I say on this serious topic will induce a better state of mind, a more disciplined state of heart amongst our young friends, so that, when they come to fill places in public life a higher tone will prevail, I shall not have taken this opportunity of mentioning a personal matter in vain.

THE INDIAN PRESS ACT.

Now, may I come, in the next few minutes, to deal with a subject of great importance that cropped up in the first days of these new reforms? For it was an irony of things that when these beneficent changes took place, almost the first big measure to which the new legislature had to pay attention was the drastic Press Act. Now, as regards this Press Act, the part that Mr. Gokhale took in its discussion in the beginning and at the final stage has brought on him a good deal of

adverse criticism, and I take it as illustrative of the difficulties which confront a public man who desires to play a prominent part in the management of great affairs. Now I must be rather quick in dealing with this Press Act. This Press Act, when it was first shaped, was exceedingly severe, and Mr. Sinha, who was then the Law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council and who had taken the office only recently, was unwilling to give his name to this measure and to stand up in its defence in public. He demanded certain great changes in it as a condition of his taking part in this work. Otherwise he threatened to throw up his job. Now, Lord Minto feared this development very much. Mr. Sinha had not been in office for a long time; if he threw up the job and published his reasons for doing so, it would be a disastrous blow to the experiment of appointing an Indian member to the Viceroy's Executive Council, besides of course its reaction on the general character and popularity of Government itself. He, therefore, desired that the Bill should be altered so as to please Mr. Sinha. But there were great difficulties attendant upon its importance; the Home Member refused absolutely to have anything to do with the measure that had been so softened in order to please Mr. Sinha. Let me say, in passing, that the Government of India like Provincial Governments somehow or other were most unwilling that they should seem to act in deference to a public demand (hear, hear). It goes against their grain to yield even to a reasonable demand. There were two people alone in the whole of Calcutta, who could influence Mr. Sinha—Mr. Gokhale and Sir Lawrence Jenkins, who was the Chief Justice of Bengal. It was at their instance that the three changes that Mr. Sinha demanded were made in the Bill. One of them alone I will mention. It was the interposition of Courts of Law, provided for in the Bill; otherwise it was from start to finish a purely executive business. A man

punished under the Act could not have the action of Government tried by a court of law. For the first time in response to Mr. Sinha's firm stand they inserted a provision at the last stage, that the matter might be examined upon appeal by the High Court. Now Mr. Sinha at the last moment demanded another condition. He demanded it not of Government but of Gokhale. He said, "Just as it will be my duty to defend this measure in the House, you must do the same and support it." How a man is led into these things! Gokhale was unwilling to pay this enormous price. Why should he make himself odious in the public eye? "It is so objectionable that I, as a non-official, cannot stand up in support of it." Well, Mr. Sinha was adamant. "If you do not stand by me, I give up." Mr. Gokhale compromised with him. He said, "You are very obstinate. You have no business to resign. As your resignation is a matter of calamity to the public, I am willing to save it at some risk to my own good name. I will abstain from voting against the measure, at the last stage." It is a subtle distinction, but it is a real distinction. "I retain my liberty of speaking against the measure in all the three stages and of moving amendments." He moved amendments with great ability. As I told you before, Government was not willing to yield in any matter. And Gokhale narrated later on how on one amendment even the Home Member relented so far in response to his pathetic appeal that he went up to the Viceroy and asked him "Why not yield in this matter?" Minto said "NO". So the Bill was passed as it had been shaped.

Now a curious consequence followed. It is a somewhat unfavourable commentary upon the way in which a public man often places himself in an exceedingly difficult position by having friendly dealings with a government over which he cannot exert any influence and which makes it a point of pride that it can defy and will defy public opinion (laughter). It is a very

instructive lesson. Over and over again, the Home Member and other members upon the Government side of the measure undertook in so many words, without leaving the possibility of any doubt, that the drastic provisions of the law were only to be applied in the case of existing presses, in case they misbehaved or acted against the law. Securities were to be demanded of their proprietors only if they transgressed the law. Scarcely had they gone to sleep when all over India magistrates demanded securities from proprietors of existing presses not for misbehaviour, but for the technical reason that they changed their name from father to son or they changed their premises from Basavangudi to Chintadripet (laughter). Perhaps I should have said Chamarajapet (renewed laughter). I accept your correction (continued laughter). This became a subject-matter of bitter complaint, and Mr. Gokhale found it necessary himself to go into the Press and declare that he had been placed in an exceedingly false position by the action of Government. He was able to put things right in the case of the Bombay Government. He had access to Sir George Clarke, who saw the reasonableness of the complaint and had it redressed. Other governments were not equally responsive for a long time. People were saying that Mr. Gokhale and others did not oppose this bill tooth and nail, but lent themselves directly or indirectly, wholly or partially, to the enactment of a measure which went so clearly and so decisively against the liberties of the Press.

Now, I think I have said all, nearly all, that I wished to say. To-morrow I have a great deal of ground to cover. I doubt whether I would be able to do so adequately and satisfactorily to myself. But I will endeavour to round off this series of lectures by attempting, at the end, some estimate of the work of Mr. Gokhale and some description, however inadequate, of the main principles of his political doctrine.

THIRD LECTURE
LAST YEARS

THIRD LECTURE.

LAST YEARS.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION.

WE come this evening to the most crowded part of a crowded life. The last four years are full of events, significant for Gokhale's life and significant also for the welfare of India. It is not possible to do more than select a few topics which seem to surpass others in interest.

First, but by no means the least, is Gokhale's work with regard to elementary education. At first he introduced a resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council asking that a committee should be appointed to examine the question whether free and compulsory education might be introduced and, if so, how. After an interesting debate, he withdrew the resolution as Government intended to oppose it; and when Government opposed a non-official measure in those days, nothing more was to be had out of the venture. Next year he proceeded a step further, being encouraged thereto, not merely by the sympathetic attitude of high Government officials, but by the promotion that the question had received in the country generally. He introduced a bill trying to make education compulsory. It was, however, a very limited and very cautious measure. In fact, the criticism against it in certain quarters was that it was so restricted in scope and drawn up with such minute concern for the susceptibilities of all interests that it was not likely, even if adopted by Government, to do much good. Though there is much in that criticism, it overlooks this great point: that at that time in the history of this country, the question of

universal education had barely dawned on the minds even of the most advanced thinkers. If the principle that all the children born in this country, boys and girls rich and poor, should receive a certain measure of rudimentary education, if that principle were once accepted, it was a gain of no small moment. But it was not to be.

Let me first mention a few of the salient features of the bill. They are not of much interest to-day, because the country has gone beyond those beginnings, and although we cannot say to-day that compulsory education is firmly established in any part of India, the question is now reduced to one of money merely, how to find ways and means. There is hardly a doubt in the minds of thinkers as to the desirability, if only it were possible, of universal education. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to study the outlines of this bill. It is proof in the first instance, of how moderate and how careful Gokhale's work was; and in the second instance, it is proof, too, of how Government, even when confronted with such a modest measure, did not look upon it with favour. First of all, to give the compendious description then common of the bill, it went curiously by the contradictory name of an optionally compulsory bill (laughter). In other words, it sought merely to give to such local bodies, municipalities and district boards, as felt themselves ready for it, the power and therefore only the option, of enacting compulsion in their jurisdiction. It was, therefore, purely permissive. If its provisions had been adopted, elementary education would not have become compulsory automatically. Each separate local area had thereafter to announce its intention and desire to avail itself of the permission granted in the bill. Compulsion was to be adopted only in the case of boys; the case of girls, being then very much more difficult than in these advanced days, was postponed until a more auspicious season came round. Moreover, the period during which children were to be

compulsorily at school was restricted to four years, whereas in countries that had adopted similar measures, the usual period was six years. One criticism was that the four years' course would be scarcely sufficient to give permanent literacy to children. Besides, not every local board, municipality or rural area could adopt it. Government, in their wisdom, fixed a certain minimum of educational spread which the local body was to show before it could enact compulsion for itself. Gokhale himself suggested that the requirement should be that 33 per cent. of the boys should be at school; where that condition was satisfied, a local body was free, if it chose, to avail itself of this provision. Then, a very slight financial provision was made. The Supreme Government was to direct, whether uniformly throughout India or differentially for different areas, the principle on which the additional cost was to be divided between local governments and the local bodies concerned. That arithmetical proportion having been once disposed of, Gokhale stipulated that the Government of India should, out of its annual surpluses—for those were days of surpluses (laughter)—provide a considerable sum to disburse to the various provinces, so that each provincial authority may be able to give to each local body the amount that had been fixed by the Government of India. As for the local body itself, it had to find its quota, say a third of its additional cost, either out of revenues it was already collecting, or if they were inadequate, out of a cess specially to be levied for this purpose. Then followed more detailed provisions as to the nature of the exceptions to be provided for. For any measure of this kind to be introduced in an agricultural country, it was necessary that large classes of pupils should be exempted from its operation. Certain exemptions were provided for in it, which it is unnecessary to go into. Then the machinery was the usual machinery of standing

committees for this purpose to be called Compulsory Education Attendance Committees. In each locality prominent leaders were either to be elected or nominated and form themselves into a body for exerting moral persuasion upon the parents of pupils in order that they may send their children to school and not merely allow them to wander in the streets or to labour for a very small and insignificant wage. One other thing of importance. It was also provided that every area adopting compulsion, should, thereafter, within a certain period to be prescribed by the provincial government, provide a sufficiency of schools in the localities prescribed by Government; otherwise compulsion would be merely a hardship upon the parents. Now, that in outline was the bill.

While in some quarters it was criticised as breaking new and risky ground, in other quarters it was criticised as being too slight to prove beneficial. Government, however, at first, were willing to grant time for Mr. Gokhale to go round the country and prepare opinion as it were in favour of the bill. So its consideration was postponed for one year during which he and his followers of the Servants of India Society were active in promoting the bill. I am very glad to think now that I had a share in this important work, although it bore no fruit in the end (laughter). For, as Gokhale said, this was one of the numerous failures to his credit (laughter). Really, don't you think that Mr. Romesh Chunder Dutt was quite right in describing certain failures as more glorious and profitable in the long run than certain triumphs? This was one such. Next year he came to the House and asked that the bill be committed to the consideration of a Select Committee. At that stage the Government put its veto upon it. The Government said, "We are not going to allow it to go to committee." When they said that, there was an end to the thing. But, although

for the moment Gokhale's efforts stopped, the ideas that he then started have since gathered momentum and there are several provinces to-day, which have on their statute book a Compulsory Education Act. I am not, however, very pleased with the results of this legislation. Everywhere there has been a great constriction of finance and not much stands to the credit of this movement, although we might say that the principle itself is no longer under any risk. We shall there leave the elementary education bill. Only you may allow me, an educationist myself, to express a doubt, upon surveying the whole of Gokhale's life work, whether, after all, his political work, superb as it was, was more valuable in the long run than the totality of his educational labours. Remember for twenty years he was a professor in one of the leading colleges on his side of the country. Afterwards, he took part in University work. Then he criticised with great acumen and experience the universities' legislation undertaken by Lord Curzon, and in the last years of his life, he made three successive efforts in order to promote the cause of compulsory education to the children of India. Those that read the educational speeches alone will find that they show an uncommon grasp of the realities of the situation, of the fundamental needs of the country and of the basis, as it were, upon which alone could be surely built anything like the welfare of the nation.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN PROBLEM.

Let me now, as illustrative of Gokhale's method of work, state what he contributed to the question of the status of our countrymen in South Africa. This is a subject which would keep me many days, if I were to deal with it adequately. I am, however, proposing to confine myself to a very short account of what he did when he visited South Africa in 1912. Mahatma Gandhi, who had brought this question of the treatment

of Indians in South Africa into the forefront of Indian politics, had asked him, during many years, to visit South Africa and study the question himself on the spot. For it had been realised that he was a statesman of first-rate calibre in India, whose handling of the question, if it had behind it some study on the spot, although brief, would give it at once an importance which otherwise it never could obtain. It proved true. When he visited South Africa in the year 1912, although he could give only a very short period to the study of the problem, he came away having left behind him something like the beginning of what then seemed an understanding between the Indian community and the Government of the Union of South Africa. Among the many questions to which he devoted his attention, the most prominent, being a very great hardship to our people, was what was known as the £3 tax. This, to put it briefly, was a penalty imposed upon every Indian, man, woman and child, in the case of a male child above 16 and in the case of a girl above 13, in South Africa who, after the period of his or her indenture was over, chose to remain in South Africa without returning to India and without reindenture. You see what it means: there was no room in South Africa for a free Indian! The Union Government, which was, of course, supported in this measure by the public opinion of the time, desired that every Indian there must be an indentured labourer and not a free citizen. So they said, "If anybody wishes to remain here without reindenture, then he or she must pay a fine of £3." To a labourer who had the barest possible subsistence and was out of employ, so high a tax was certain to have caused untold hardship and misery. Nevertheless, pressure was put on our poor people to pay this tax. The hardship was admitted by everybody, so Gokhale says in his speech; no one to whom he had spoken, European or Indian, had any word but that of the utmost condemnation for that

tax. He obtained from the Ministers of the South African Government an undertaking that this tax should be abolished. There were other undertakings of similar moment. But this one seemed at the time to be a really big thing to have obtained. Unfortunately, however, as soon as Gokhale came home, the Ministers were not quite clear in their recollection (laughter) as to whether they had made a binding promise or as to whether they had made that political promise which statesmen know how to make (laughter), 'that the subject would receive *the most sympathetic* attention' (laughter). Word came that the Ministers said that they were under no promise and that there was no intention to abolish the tax. And Gandhi was obliged to resume passive resistance on a much larger and more intense scale than before. I wish to leave the story at this point and pass on to make a reflection.

When Gokhale came back to India he was subjected to severe criticism at the hands of our countrymen; this time, not those who usually criticised him on account of political or other animosity, but even his friends; for instance, the great Sir Pheroze Shah Mehta condemned this compromise in no moderate terms. He said, it was quite wrong in principle. Now what was it? It is of the first importance that you should try and understand a little of these difficulties that confront people when they handle national affairs. When you read about them in newspapers, they seem to be extraordinarily simple to handle; you may think that if only you had a hand in them, you would take steps for consummation in a moment and that somehow people over forty make mistakes. Gokhale was condemned by those who had a right to judge the matter, because in return for the abolition of the £3 tax and for certain other similar considerations, he had agreed that there should be a limit placed upon the emigration of our countrymen to that

sub-continent. The ill-treatment of our people was due primarily to the fear of the small minority of South African whites, that if this large and well-peopled country should make South Africa an outlet for its population, they would soon be outnumbered and swamped in a country where they had determined to make their home according to their own standard, according to their own civilization, where their ideas of public polity were to be realized. They said they could not afford to keep the Indian population here and treat them well, so long as there was a fear that hundreds of thousands would crowd into that area and deprive them of those standards and methods of government which they highly valued. Now Gandhi thought that there was a good deal in this and in his judgment Gokhale concurred. Between them, therefore, they agreed that in order to secure good treatment for the Indians already settled there, there should be no more influx of Indians and that the Indian Government here should promulgate an order in due course, prohibiting the emigration of the Indian people to that part of the world. That deprived the Indian people of what we had hitherto regarded as our birthright, that, having been born in the British Empire, we were free to go anywhere within the limits of that empire, we were free to make any part of this world where the Union Jack flew our own home if we could; we were free to practise any profession we pleased anywhere within the British Empire. That was our original idea. You see, at once, in order to secure good treatment for about a hundred thousand Indians already settled in South Africa, Gokhale and Gandhi resolved that they would surrender the right of free and unrestricted emigration to South Africa for the Indian people here. To secure their rights, they gave away one of our imagined rights (laughter). I say *imagined*: it is now being cut out everywhere. Pheroza Shah Mehta and

others contended that this was too big a price to pay for the welfare of about a hundred thousand Indians. "If they were all going to be ill-treated, let them be. If they are going to be shipped back to India, let that be done. It is not wise, by our own free consent, to give away this right which belongs to Indian people. It belongs not merely to the present generation who conduct these negotiations, but to succeeding generations." Now, this compromise being questioned, Gokhale had great difficulties. As soon as he landed, he was faced with the necessity of addressing a large public meeting in Bombay and trying to persuade them that the course adopted by him and by Gandhi was the right course. But the Bombay public were by no means satisfied and there was a good deal of opposition to this in the whole country, opposition which naturally subsided when, at the next session of the Indian National Congress held in Patna, Gokhale delivered one of his stirring, persuasive addresses. The result was that a compromise of that kind which gave away something in order to obtain something was considered a legitimate procedure in the conduct of public affairs, and, that is why, I wish young people to understand this. This is what is called *Compromise*. A very difficult situation containing many important sub-issues comes up. We want 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 things. All of them seem to us indispensable, matters of first-rate principle, which must not on any account be given away. But, if you are to serve your countrymen in your generation, you must learn this: that in a conflict with another nation like yours, who hold their rights equally dear, it is not possible for you to get all these 1 to 6 *at once*. Some of those might have to be given up in order that certain others may be gained. So managed, compromise is perfectly legitimate; it is honourable. It is, in fact, the only course practicable in politics. Unfortunately, how often do we hear people saying of a man "He is a man

for compromise as if that was a discredit." There is no man who could hope to do anything unless he understood the secret of compromise. Gandhi began his life by this great act of compromise. I mention it with some emphasis in order that you may dispel from your heads the false idea that some people are constantly putting forward,—that Gandhi knows no compromise (laughter). It is injustice to him from one point of view. It is an absurd claim on his behalf from another point of view. He knows the secret of compromise. Like every man who seeks the welfare of his countrymen, he knows that he must surrender in order to gain. And now, you will ask, what did India gain by this compromise? In the first place, it gained some amelioration in the fate of the hundred thousand of our countrymen in South Africa. That was what we wanted, and we got that. But so tangled, my friends, so tangled, is this unfortunate world that this compromise, wise and necessary as it seemed at the time, did not, however, give a hopeful turn to the solution of the South African problem. The compromise did not result really in much good to our people. And although many further stages have been passed in the development of this problem, it is impossible even now to say that the position of our countrymen in South Africa is a substantial improvement on what it was in 1912. For that neither Gandhi nor Gokhale nor any of those who went as Agents subsequently under the Cape Town Agreement is responsible (laughter). The whole of this is due to the very unfortunate circumstances in which our people live there. And as far as I can see, there is no permanent solution to this problem until, maybe, India gets a place of complete equality with South Africa in the sisterhood of Dominions called the Britannic Commonwealth (hear, hear; and continued applause). Until that consummation is reached, we shall not be able to assert our full voice in the Imperial

Councils. Although this point is lost sight of in our national demands of equality, although this point seldom finds prominent mention in the speeches of ordinary statesmen in this country, most of us who have paid careful attention to this problem feel that this is one of the additional reasons why we seek, as early as possible, the attainment of dominionhood (hear, hear); that we cannot secure to our countrymen and countrywomen abroad a self-respecting status until we have achieved it here ourselves.

But as the promise that the Government made to Gokhale was not kept at the proper time, trouble broke out again in a much more drastic shape. So harrowing were the stories that reached us here in India of the sufferings of our countrymen that they formed a subject of complaint throughout the country. Lord Hardinge, then Viceroy, happened to be touring in the Madras Presidency. The Madras Mahajana Sabha presented an address to him, which, I remember, I had the honour of reading. That address contained a pointed reference to this topic. Lord Hardinge in his reply made observations upon the subject which have since become historic. It is worthwhile reading them, for they strike a note which would be considered, from the official point of view, a breach of propriety. They were so considered, and although they were in themselves quite just and proper, I am afraid, if the secret may be told, the Viceroy who was so rash as to make them was taken to task (laughter). But he was a brave man, a just and chivalrous man, and he did not mind the rebuke so long as his point of view prevailed. I will just read the reply that he made to us in Madras. It was in December 1913.

“ Recently our compatriots in South Africa ”,
look at the language he uses, ‘ our compatriots in South Africa ’,

" have taken matters into their own hands by organizing what is called passive resistance to laws which they considered invidious and unjust. This is an opinion which we, who watch their struggles from far, cannot but share. They violated, as they intended to violate, those laws, with full knowledge of the penalties involved and ready with all courage and patience to endure these penalties. In all this they have the sympathy of India but also of those like myself, who, without being Indians themselves, have feelings of sympathy for the people of this country. But the most recent developments have taken a very serious turn and we have seen the widest publicity given to allegations that this movement of passive resistance has been dealt with by measures which would not for a moment be tolerated in any country that calls itself civilized (hear, hear). I am sorry Lord Hardinge is not here to-day to hear this applause.

" These allegations have been met by a categorical denial from the responsible Government of South Africa, though even their denial contains admissions that do not seem to me to indicate that the Union Government have exercised very wise discretion in some of the steps which they have adopted. That is the position at this moment. And I do feel that if South Africans desire to justify this in the eyes of India and the whole world, only one course is open to them, and that is to appoint a strong impartial committee upon which Indian interests shall be fully represented, to conduct a thorough and searching enquiry into the truth of these allegations and as the note that has appeared in this morning's paper will show you, I have no hesitation to press that view upon the Secretary of State."

When these terms were conveyed by cablegram to South Africa, you can easily realise how warm was the

response that they received at the hands of our countrymen. Mahatma Gandhi himself had no words to acknowledge adequately the sympathy and helpfulness of this Viceregal utterance. And I remember even now, whenever he refers to this timely word of admonition that came from India to South Africa, how grateful he feels for the help that he and his followers received in a moment of supreme crisis. Well, after a while, when matters had gone still further and the situation had become even more critical, the Government of South Africa appointed a commission. But in consonance with the theory of competence in South Africa as to the rights of coloured races, nobody of Indian extraction was appointed to the commission; no one who was known to be a friend of the Indian community was appointed to it. But the members included two persons who were notorious as enemies of the Indian community (hear, hear). Gandhi, who is very sensitive on these matters, quoted to the South African Government these significant words from Lord Hardinge's utterance, "upon which Indian interests shall be fully represented," and he demanded in the first place that Indians should be appointed to the commission and afterwards said that, even if Indians were not appointed, well-known European friends of the Indian community should be put on the committee. Of course, even in India, a request of that kind some generations ago would have met with refusal. It is only in recent decades that we have begun both to claim and to obtain representation on important commissions of that kind. In South Africa such fairness was unthinkable and the Government returned a stout and final negative. Gandhi felt compelled to resume the passive resistance struggle, this time with larger numbers, including women and children. Two things kept them on a high key of determination and union, a sense of deep wrong and the unique personality of Gandhi. In solemn meeting

they swore to boycott the Commission and to cross the forbidden provincial boundary. A catastrophe seemed imminent and in India there was general consternation. Lord Hardinge counselled moderation and would have the South African Indian community lead evidence before the Commission and make the best of a bad situation. He sought the aid of Gokhale, who then became the medium through whom code telegrams passed night and day between Gandhi and the Viceroy. Gokhale exhausted his powers of persuasion, but Gandhi and his followers had registered a vow before God, and nothing could shake them. I was then in Poona and saw the agony through which Gokhale passed. His disease, diabetes, became particularly acute and brought on a pain in the heart. He was in the habit of moving to and fro when he was agitated or dictated important letters and statements. I remember during this crisis he held his heart with his right hand and walked with a stoop. Occasionally he seemed to have come to the end of his tether and we watched him with a feeling of tragedy near. Once he burst out: "Surely the Viceroy is right. Gandhi has no business to take a vow and tie himself up. This is politics and compromise is its essence." But Gandhi knew his followers and the way to hold them on the straight path of duty, and he knew also the unfeeling Government against which he had to carry on an unequal fight. He declared that he valued highly the support of the gallant Viceroy; but if he must do without it, he would,—and rely exclusively on God. Lord Hardinge in the end nobly acquiesced and stood by his people.

During the last year of his life troubles came upon him thick and crowding. At that time he was also engaged in the work of the Public Services Commission which had already conducted two of its tours. He had still to go to England for the third time in connection with that Commission. You all know how terrible is the work that falls upon a member who

has to do the work of cross-examining European witnesses, most of whom deposed that Indians were not fit for responsible charges. Well, it was great work; it was hard work; and taken along with the South African business, it really tried him absolutely beyond his strength, and one day when the strain was unbearable and the heart-pain was killing him, he addressed me: "Well, Mr. Sastri, you do not realise the danger I am in. If I were you, I would cable to Gandhi and say he was bringing Gokhale to the very verge of death. Won't you do this, just to save me?" I knew that it was the extreme agony of the moment that drew these words from him, not a desire that I should act on them.

THE HINDU-MUSLIM QUESTION.

Now let me pass on to another topic of equal importance, illustrating the secret of compromise. Unfortunately, it also is a problem with regard to which the compromises that we have made every now and then, as in the case of South Africa, have not given us anything like a solution, no, anything like an approach to a solution. That is the Hindu-Muslim problem. In my description of the Servants of India Society, I read one of the vows to the effect that we were to treat all Indians in this country as our brethren, making no distinction based upon creed, colour or religion. Now, that means that, in our judgment, an Indian is an Indian, Hindu or Mohammedan afterwards. So we made it a rule that we should not join any purely sectarian body and should not give our energies to the accomplishment of any task, however great it may be, which concerns only the welfare of a particular community. We work for all Indians alike. Now Gokhale put this in the very forefront of his political and social programme and therefore the solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem formed one of his most anxious

endeavours. It was in the year 1906 that, for the first time, the Mohammedans obtained the recognition of their being a great and powerful minority, entitled to representation in the legislative and other bodies commensurate with their importance. I cannot linger over the various stages through which this problem has passed. I must pass on to the point where Mr. Gokhale touched it. About the year 1908, the great Reforms to which Lords Minto and Morley gave their names took shape. Amongst them, the question that gave no small trouble was the way in which the seats in these legislatures were to be apportioned. The Mohammedans claimed that they should be enrolled in separate electoral registers; that they should elect none but Mohammedans, and that Hindus or other communities should have no part in these elections. This was believed, by some of our advanced nationalists, as a shrewd blow, as an irretrievable disaster which would kill the growth of an Indian nationality, and was objected to. Nevertheless, Lord Morley, unable to resist the pressure put upon him, was faced with the necessity either of introducing his reforms with this principle of separate electorates, disfiguring and taking away from their worth, or giving up the whole show. Now, like a man of compromise, the doctrinaire and honest John surrendered his principle. He said, "I do not like this at all. If I have to pay this price in order to get what I believe a good progressive constitution for India, let me pay it. Maybe a fortunate generation coming later on will be able to get rid of it." So hoping, he and others who advised him granted this separate electorate. It was fiercely opposed by many prominent statesmen, amongst whom was Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, in the Imperial Legislative Council. And then Gokhale made a strong pronouncement on this subject of a pacifying character, the principal elements of which it is now my business to tell you.

Gokhale took up this position: "Undoubtedly this is a pernicious doctrine, that any community in India should abstract itself from the general nationality and for election purposes consider itself a separate unit. This will impede the growth of a nationalist sense in the country. Nevertheless, there is that feeling and no government can afford to ignore it. Therefore, we must compromise with that feeling. We must see that, as we cannot kill it altogether, the best thing is to give it a narrow and restricted scope so that in more auspicious times we might attack it once more, maybe, weaken it. Let there be all over the country a territorial election at first in which Hindus and Mohammedans should take part indiscriminately without any reference to their religion. The Mohammedans will obtain a certain amount of representation from these general electorates. Then, to the extent that this representation is inadequate to the interests of the Mussalman community, let us have supplementary elections later on just to supply this deficiency in the communal quota. First of all, general electorates are to elect; then to the extent that the Mohammedan representation so obtained falls below the proportion that has been set down, supplementary elections confined to the Mussalmans are to be resorted to. But, mind, upon no ground is there to be any proportion in excess of the population to be given to them." He laid down these restrictions, but otherwise supported what was at that time the proposal of the Government of India itself. Unfortunately, Lord Morley, in the House of Lords, having to stand up for this separate representation, apparently blundered; having once consented to give separate representation, he forgot, for the time being, that it was to come after the operation of the general election, and gave his word that the Mohammedans were to obtain their whole representation through separate electorates. And so it happened that, against the wishes of the Government of

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India, backed by the authority of Gokhale and other people, the Secretary of State promised that the whole Mohammedan representation should be through separate electorates. But that was not his only mistake. He went further. The excessive representation that should have been denied was also granted, so that the Mohammedans got, in the first instance, separate electorates, and in the second instance, excessive representation. Now these two points were against Gokhale's wish. But once the Regulation had been made and the new constitution had started working, he considered it inopportune, inexpedient and injurious in the very interests of the growth of national spirit that the Mohammedans should be deprived of what they had obtained only recently. So he argued against Pandit Malaviya that it was far better to acquiesce in it than to oppose and lose all chances of a peaceful working of the constitution upon a higher level than had been known. That was another great matter in which Gokhale, as it were, made a compromise, believing that, when once it had been made, the national forces in the country would be strong enough later on to enable succeeding generations to restrict, within *narrow* limits, this principle of separate representation. But, as often happens, the blunder once made only ramified. It became strongly rooted; and it was impossible to resist the further spread of this poison. The separate electorate was a poison that had been injected into the body politic of India, and could not be removed thereafter, and we find subsequently this improper concession extended to other communities. It has really gone beyond the stage of the Legislative Houses and spread into and disfigured university bodies, municipalities, and district boards and even the public services. After this 1909 constitution, our people have begun to think of themselves always as members of a certain community and not as members of a united and homogeneous nation. But it is wrong

to lay at the door either of Lord Morley or of Gokhale the evil consequences that they could not have foreseen.

This then is the other matter of compromise with which I wish to illustrate a great principle of political conduct. They are both unfortunate instances, because in neither case has the compromise once accepted been the beginning of a *better* solution. In both cases, matters have deteriorated, but still the principle is there; and if we can only take our minds away from the contemplation of evil consequences, the principle stands, it seems to me, sufficiently vindicated. *

OFFER AND REFUSAL OF K.C.I.E.

Now let us pass on to another episode in Gokhale's life. That was reached when the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, thought it necessary that Gokhale should receive some recognition for his great service to the country. He recommended the conferment on Gokhale of the Knight Commandership of the Indian Empire. But Gokhale was then in England. His recommendation was placed before His Majesty by the Secretary of State. His Majesty agreed to grant the Knighthood and then the matter was made known to Gokhale. And, as you know, he declined to receive the honour. I want to read only that portion of the letter wherein his motive is made clear, and as it is necessary that you should know not only the motive but the terms in which he himself described it, it is best that I read the letter.

"I am, I need hardly say, deeply grateful both to H. E. the Viceroy and to Lord Crewe for recommending me for the high honour of a K.C.I.E., and I shall always treasure this most generous appreciation on their part as among the best rewards of my public life. I hope I may venture also humbly to express my fervent and loyal gratitude to His Majesty the King-Emperor for his graciously signifying his approval of the recommendation. Lord

Crewe has added greatly to his kindness by informing me beforehand of the proposed bestowal of this high honour on me ; for it gives me an opportunity to lay respectfully before His Lordship a brief expression of my feeling in the matter. That feeling is that, unless my wish is likely to be misunderstood, I would much prefer, deeply as I appreciate the proposed honour, to continue under my present simple designation. May I hope that Lord Crewe will understand this wish, which I may state, is based largely, though not entirely, on personal grounds? And if it would not be in any way improper or wanting in due respect and loyal obedience to His Majesty, may I ask that His Lordship will be pleased to submit this humble request to His Majesty for his gracious consideration."

THE CONGRESS COMPROMISE CONTROVERSY.

Towards the end of that very year, another painful episode, connected with the famous compromise negotiation, went on within the camp of the Congress. It will take a long time to explain these matters to you: I will just, therefore, in a few sentences indicate the nature of that trouble; otherwise, it would have no meaning whatever. After the Surat split, a Convention Committee met in Allahabad and decreed that in future sessions of the Congress, only those could attend as delegates who had signed what was then called the creed of the Congress. This was a serious departure from previous practice, which had been that anybody could be elected a delegate to the Congress at any public meeting. Thousands of our countrymen felt this to be a radical departure and would rather cease to be Congressmen than observe the new rule. Congress became weaker and weaker, and all over the country the feeling grew that something should be done to bring into the Congress those that thought it necessary upon

patriotic grounds to stand out of it. Gokhale, who was extremely sensitive to popular feeling, felt that something should be done; and for three years he laboured to change the opinions of those who then governed the Congress movement. He found it hard work, but in the end a compromise was proposed, which seemed likely to be acceptable. That compromise was to the effect that the delegates should be elected either by public bodies, affiliated or not to the Congress, which had however accepted Article I or at public meetings summoned by such bodies. Well, this compromise, however, fell through because of some misunderstanding. The misunderstanding arose in Poona after a series of talks, in which Mr. N. Subba Rao, the General Secretary, took part. Some conversation between Tilak on the one hand and Mr. Subba Rao on the other was reported to Gokhale, who felt that Tilak's mind was not then fully prepared for an effective reconciliation. That is a euphemistic way of putting things. He was really unwilling to admit Tilak and his followers upon the terms and conditions that were present in their minds. That would be to subject the Congress to a serious risk. So he withdrew his consent to the compromise. And at the Madras Congress of that year, 1914, his withdrawal was made known to the Subjects Committee. Thus arose a misunderstanding, very natural in the circumstances, in consequence of which, after the Congress was over, a bitter and acrimonious controversy was started in the Deccani Press, Mr. Gokhale being subjected to a somewhat rough handling. It pained him beyond words. He felt he was not only misunderstood, but abused and vilified. He had not the strength to defend himself at a public meeting. But he wrote a long defence, and when it was published in the papers after a great deal of deliberation and hesitation, it gave rise only to another more acrimonious stage of the controversy. In these matters, the good rule derived from the experience of

many, many centuries is, "least said, soonest mended". He who puts in a defence thinking thereby to silence the opponent only gives the opponent so many separate charges for each sentence that he writes, so that controversy goes on and on, widening and widening, ever comprehending more interests and more topics, and perhaps bringing in spectators and others in the street. This controversy really took the last drop of energy he had.

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I now come to the beginning of 1915. In this year, he passed away, if you remember, on the 19th February. That year another great service had to be done by him. It was the fulfilment of a request made by Lord Willingdon, who was then the Governor of Bombay. Just a few months after the outbreak of the Great War, when the air not only in India but in the whole world was filled with ideas of a most revolutionary character,—India had already borne an honourable part in that Great War, and it was felt on all hands, not only to keep India contented but to reward her duly, that something in the nature of a real advance in the constitution should be made,—Lord Willingdon, the true Liberal that he is, felt that the time had come for the Government of their own accord to do something striking in that direction. He declared that it would not do for British statesmanship to wait until India had found her voice and begun to clamour. The proper thing, the chivalrous thing, the just thing, he said, was, for England straightaway to announce a liberal instalment of political reform. He sent word to Mr. Gokhale asking him to put down on paper what he considered was the minimum reform which would satisfy India, coming from the Government of its own accord. This matter was to be kept *very confidential*. But at this point Gokhale showed one of his marked characteristics. He thought, "It is

a tremendous responsibility and my strength is giving out. I cannot hand over to the Governor of this Presidency a document of that supreme import unless I felt sure that its contents would be supported with some unanimity by the leading statesmen in India." And therefore he took Lord Willingdon's consent that he should consult before formulating these demands both Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and His Highness the Aga Khan, two names which would at once occur to any one acquainted with Indian affairs as of the greatest consequence in Indian politics. Lord Willingdon readily consented. Mr. Gokhale desired that these two gentlemen should come to Poona to consult with him, for he felt that it would not be practicable for him to go to Bombay; though he intended to do so, he could not. He requested them both to come. By the time a date could be arranged to bring these three gentlemen together, time passed away, and we come to the Wednesday before the Friday that he died. Lord Willingdon reminded him, not knowing how he lay sick and dying; but Gokhale summoned what strength was left him, and we now have in the Society a pencil draft in his own hand. It is as strong and unshaken as ever. Well, that document went in three copies outside our Home: one to Lord Willingdon, two copies to the other gentlemen. But as Mr. Gokhale passed away in two days nobody thought it would be proper to publish it. Of course, Lord Willingdon could not do so. He had to transmit it to the authorities in Britain. The document, therefore, did not see the light of day till August, 1917, the time of the famous Montagu declaration. It was published in England by His Highness the Aga Khan, and here before the post could bring it into this country, I published it for general information. This will help you at a glance to see the nature of this document. It has been called "Gokhale's Political Will and Testament". It cannot really be called by that name, if we are to understand by it a document which contains

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what in Mr. Gokhale's view were the advances in political reform which the people of India were entitled to and which they would accept, if any agitation had to be started in that respect. Remember that this only represented what, in his view, if granted *at once* and with grace by Great Britain, voluntarily, without a word being said about it in India, would have kept her contented and happy. Now it is in that sense that we must understand the paper. To read them now you would think that the interval between its composition and now was not the interval between 1915 and 1935, but perhaps three times as long: for affairs in India have gone so far, the constitution has advanced by such leaps and bounds since that day, that you wonder whether really Mr. Gokhale was a man of liberal and bold ideas. That he was. To remember that he wrote in 1915 at the instance of Lord Willingdon, without a word said to the community, nobody knowing anything about it, will give you an indication, like the proverbial straw showing the direction of the wind and its force. Mr. Gokhale in those days was, you remember, working under the Morley-Minto constitution, wherein in no legislature was there anything like a majority for our people, I mean an elected majority. Therefore, the idea of the people's elected representatives passing a resolution or a bill or making a demand and getting it accepted or put on the statute book, was almost unthinkable. That kind of thing had never been known, and Mr. Gokhale himself used to say that public men of his time could only serve the country through their failures. Success they never knew and could never know. Government would rather not let it be known that on any matter they got guidance and wisdom from the non-official side.

HIS POLITICAL DOCTRINES.

In the Imperial Legislative Council, talking upon some important reform matter, he said once, "Well

even if it were possible for me to defeat the Government to-day",—a wild assumption in those days,—“I would not do so”. So necessary to administration was the prestige and authority of Government, both moral and material, that a single defeat would have shaken, in his judgment, the very fabric. Now, fancy, hardly a day passes in the Assembly when the Government does not sustain a defeat (laughter). It used to be said in England, where Government could be turned out of office by the vote of the majority, that, occasionally when political feeling was high, Ministers of the Cabinet would go to Parliament with a halter round their necks. It cannot be said that the members of our Cabinet ever go with halters round their necks. They certainly go with a quiver in their limbs. In Gokhale's time that kind of thing was unthinkable. He did not contemplate anything like real responsibility. That was a feature which Montagu, more radical in his outlook, put into his scheme. I am digressing, but I would like you to remember, in reading this political will and testament, that Mr. Gokhale lived at a time when things compared with those of to-day were really 40 or 50 years behind. I just now told you how Mr. Gokhale felt that the moral authority of Government in this country was of superlative importance to stability. That indeed was next to his heart, one of the corner stones of the Indian constitution. Like Burke, of whom he was a most devoted student and of whom it is said that he could have quoted chapters and chapters if he had cared, but whom in reality he never quoted, like Burke, in his later years, Gokhale began to think that peace and order were the essential pre-requisites of any progress. He did not share the feeling of many politicians of repute both in his day and to-day, who believe that peace and order have been the ruin of this country. They cry in their anguish: “Give us a little turmoil. Let us have blood if necessary, so that we may know

how national troubles are caused and how they grow in intensity and clamour for a solution and how in the end wisdom, desperate it may be and driven to the corner it may be, but the only wisdom useful to the people, out of their own knowledge and experience, comes to their aid and national troubles are solved by national effort, and not by the superimposed authority or political wisdom of another people who stand aloof from things Indian, that no profit can be derived by us from what they plan and what they execute for our benefit." I do not say there is nothing in this point of view. There may be something in it, God knows! But I have been trained in Gokhale's school and I believe most of his teachings were not his own. He took them from the great men of his day like his master Ranade, Joshi and Mehta, wise and great men, who knew affairs, knew how to handle them, could predict what would happen from what events and could really guide a nation along safe and hopeful lines. Well, anyhow to peace and order he attached the very greatest importance. I wish to read two little passages at this point. My sheaf of quotations is very small. Do not think that I shall take much of your time. I wish to show how sincere, and going to the very root, must have been his conviction about peace and order, that he should write to us in a confidential communication how we were to conduct ourselves so as to be proper vehicles for this peace and order.

*Extract from a letter to Mr. A. V. Patwardhan
from London dated 15th May, 1908.*

"I am extremely sorry that I should be out of India at such a critical juncture. There is really some fatality connected with my visits to this country. Every time I come here, something happens in India to throw the country into a state

of wild excitement. Just now I am feeling anxious not merely as to what fresh developments may take place in India, but also as to how the several members of our Society will comprehend the true character of the present crisis and conduct themselves so as to prevent any harm coming to the Society. You must all realise that whatever the shortcomings of the bureaucracy and however intolerable at times the insolence of individual Englishmen, they alone stand to-day in the country for order and without continued order, no real progress is possible for our people. It is not difficult at any rate to create disorder in our country—it was our portion for centuries—but it is not so easy to substitute another form of order for that which has been evolved by Englishmen in the course of a century. You must all conduct yourselves at this time with the utmost caution and restraint and let no thoughtless word be uttered publicly or in private which may be misconstrued."

That would give you in rough an idea of the severe discipline through which we have to pass in the Servants of India Society, the way in which we have to control our feelings and restrain our modes of expression, how the movements in which we can join and take part are strictly circumscribed and how far removed they are in their methods who summon us as Servants of India to take part in a movement, which by our original understanding and statute, if I may call it so, we are precluded from touching. In May 1909, he delivered in the Deccan College at Poona a lecture of great significance from which I take this passage.

Extract from the Speech of Mr. Gokhale delivered at Poona on February 13, 1909, at Deccan College.

"It was only fair to recognise that the present peace and order prevailing in the country has been

the work of the British Government. The tradition of order was comparatively recent; with our inheritance of centuries, it did not take much to stir up disorder even to-day in the land. The India of the future must belong equally to all classes and races inhabiting this vast country. That meant that their progress must depend upon the degree and extent to which a feeling of national unity, capable of bearing a considerable strain on occasions, was evolved among them. Such a feeling had already begun to spread over the land, but its consolidation is bound to be slow work, and unless it was consolidated, it could not be of much use in practice. For such consolidation two things are necessary, a spread of education and a growth of true public spirit. Both those things in their turn required the unquestioned continuance of order, and it was on that account, if for no other consideration, that it was necessary for them now to combat actively all unfair misapprehensions of the intentions and actions of the Government. For nothing weakened the hold of order on the public mind more than such misapprehensions."

(*India*, of March 26, 1909.)

Some of you, inclined to be critical and even captious, think that Mr. Gokhale wrote before the Rowlatt Act, before the Amritsar massacre, before the Khilafat movement, before this and before that, which confront the country and constrain it to movements of a disorderly character. Now, that anyway was not Gokhale's way of thinking. I have read these two passages in order to indicate how in his judgment the British connection with India was necessary and could not be dispensed with, so long as we may look forward. Well, it is not fashionable now-a-days to say such things. It may seem even to offend some modern political tastes, but

the men I have named as the framers of the political thought of the past generation, Ranade, Joshi, Mehta and Gokhale used always to say that in the connection between England and India politically they saw the hand not of a punishing God, but of a wise and benign Providence. This connection to them was, therefore, more or less of a sacred character and they would not have it, even in times of greatest provocation, spoken of lightly. Curiously enough many things have happened which make even the enunciation of such a doctrine in public meetings a matter of some risk to the daring speaker (laughter). But I must ask your indulgence, for I am really living in the past for the moment, and I ask you also to share the life for just a moment.

The idea that the future of this country must be evolved and shaped outside the British fold was to him a matter of extreme unwisdom. He would not think of it. As I told you yesterday, it was that new doctrine which he went about in Northern India especially to combat and if possible to weaken. I do not think it could be said he succeeded in it. For, unfortunately, the British Government, like all governments, cannot remain for a long time without making some desperate blunder or other (laughter). As often as that happens, so often are the foundations within our heart of the British Raj shaken badly. I am sorry to think that at the present moment the strength of the belief in this providential adjustment, which Ranade and Gokhale had, is no longer strong. But we cannot help it. Time moves on. Fate is not quiescent. New times bring in new events and new ways are afoot and vigorous young people are determined to have things done especially according to their wishes, to try conclusions of one sort or another. But the question arises, what would Mr. Gokhale have done if he were alive to-day? I am sure of one thing, nothing would prevent him, not even the threat of lynching, from

talking still of the necessity of the British connection. He would talk of Swaraj because Dadabhai had brought that word into use. To him Swaraj meant the attainment by India of a status politically equal to that which the self-governing dominions enjoy. No more; not outside, but within the ambit of the British Commonwealth. And how would he attain this end? By purely constitutional methods.

Now that word brings in another element of political dispute. There has been no precise definition of what is meant by this expression, "constitutional methods". Gokhale's own definition I had an occasion recently to quote in a political argument.* I will not stir your minds to-day by reproducing it. But believe me, it found acceptance even in Congress quarters. Curiously, however, when this method of constitutional agitation is prescribed by people like me, critics turn round and say, "Well, tell us which country has obtained freedom by strictly constitutional methods. Have you studied history?" they ask (hear, hear). This question was asked of Mr.

* It is here reproduced for the benefit of the readers:—

"Constitutional agitation was agitation by methods which they were entitled to adopt to bring about the changes they desired through the action of constituted authorities. Thus defined, the field of constitutional agitation was a very wide one..... The first idea suggested on a consideration of the question was that physical force was excluded. Rebellion, aiding or abetting a foreign invasion and resort to crime—roughly speaking, barring these three things, all else was constitutional. No doubt everything that was constitutional was not necessarily wise or expedient; but that was a different matter. Prayers and appeals to justice lay at one end; passive resistance, including even its extreme form of non-payment of taxes till redress was obtained, lay at the other end.... As regards the second condition, *vis.*, that redress must be obtained through constituted authorities, it was clear that that implied constant pressure being brought to bear on the authorities and the idea that they should have nothing to do with the authorities was one not to be entertained.... The idea that they should leave the authorities severely alone and seek to attain their goal independently of them was inadmissible and absurd."

Gokhale himself in 1904 in Madras. I remember very well the meeting opposite Pachaiyappa's Hall in the vast maidan, which he addressed. It was a very fine gathering. Towards the end he came up to this point of constitutional methods, and I believe a paper was put into his hand, asking whether he would be good enough to say which country in human history had confined itself to this method and reached salvation (hear, hear). Gokhale was quick with his answer. "Maybe, no country has yet done so. But why not India do so for the first time (hear, hear), and start a precedent in history? The history of the world is not at an end. Many chapters have yet to be added to it, and India and England, acting together for the consummation and fruition of India's destiny, may yet write a bright and lustrous chapter." Brave words! They come back to me now; for I read sometime ago a statement made by no less a person than Mahatma Gandhi asking us the very same question: "People ask us about constitutional methods and ask the Congress to adopt it. No nation in my knowledge has obtained freedom by this means." Two thoughts occur to me. I dare not pit myself against the Mahatma in political controversy. I do not like it at all. But two questions occur to me. Is this the time, when the National Congress itself has by universal consent returned to the constitutional method of political strategy, is this the moment for Gandhi, who has actively blessed this return to constitutional methods and not merely passively acquiesced in it, is this the moment for him to put this question? And then, is it right, I ask, for the progenitor for the first time in the history of the political world, as he says, of a *new* method of peaceful political warfare, possibly bloodless and quite legitimate and honourable, is it for him to demand that the verdict of history should be sought? Has history known of the procedure that he himself has started and of which he seeks

exemplification with his powerful and unparalleled personality, through India and her history? It seems strange! But then, we must all remember that the crisis that has overtaken India at this moment is such that it stirs up the deepest depths of our hearts. In common with peoples of other parts of the world we doubt ancient truths and dig up the very roots of our faith.

Now remember that the politics with which the name of Gokhale is connected were in his day the very acme of wisdom. Gandhi himself has often acknowledged that Gokhale was his political *guru*. True, he seems now to have gone beyond the strict province of his teaching. But, as I said, he may seek justification for this departure in the events of which Mr. Gokhale had no experience and perhaps no forethought. The reputation of Gokhale since his death, it seems to me, has advanced. While he was still alive, Government had perhaps some suspicion, now and then, of his exact tendencies. But now they have none (laughter). His political critics often attack him for his timid doctrines, for his absolutely conservative views and for programmes which were feeble and anæmic in the extreme. But at the same time it is extraordinary they go back to him, and I have been asked often by people belonging to the Congress, "Do you think that, if Mr. Gokhale were alive, he would have acted as you are now acting? Would he not rather have joined the Congress?" I do not know. Speculations of that kind are, it seems to me, misleading and any way unprofitable. "What would he have done were he alive to-day?" is a question which different people answer in different ways. We have, however, to go back to his writings, to his speeches and to his own example to find out what he might have done. So judged, it appears to me—and here I wish to acknowledge in all humility that I may be misjudging the situation altogether—it seems to me that we in the Society are keeping closely to the lines that he would have approved.

Then not only is there much interesting speculation as to what he might have done, but people occasionally make comparisons. Why, they did make comparisons in his time. How often have we heard people say that Gokhale was like Gladstone and regret that the opportunities of Gladstone were not open to him and that he never could take part in such big affairs or play his rôle on a similar stage. Now, comparisons of that kind, whether it be with English statesmen or Italian statesmen like Mazzini and Cavour may seem attractive to the speculative and dreamy mind. But in practice they yield no result. And I remember vividly a strong rebuke that he administered to us, when some one spoke of these great names along with his. "How absurd! Why do you make such comparisons?" He almost shrank within himself when such things were brought to his notice and said, "We are small people, living small lives on a small contracted stage; nothing but sheer flattery and self-esteem for us to have our names in juxtaposition with those which have shed lustre on pages of the historical past." But comparison of a fruitful and instructive character may be made to his own master Ranade, Joshi and others in our country, who with different endowments and different equipments tackled some of the public problems which Gokhale had to deal with. I wish it were possible for me to pass in review the life and character of some of these eminent men who figure on the pages of Gokhale's biography. But I must resist that temptation and pass on now to the last word that I wish to say.

LESSONS FROM HIS CAREER.

Now, in conclusion, for a few words of general import on the career that we have studied not in detail but in rough outline during three succeeding evenings. My young friends, this life is of the greatest possible

instruction to you. There is in this world a great amount of miscarriage of human endeavour, there is considerable wreckage of happiness and there is, probably, also a great deal of unnecessary misery, just because of one circumstance in the arrangement that we see around us in the world. Of one thousand people that you study, occupying various positions and discharging various duties to the community, you will probably find 999 whom you can only describe as round men in square holes (laughter). No doubt in colleges and other places we teach men what is called the choice of a career. But how many people there are to whom a career is open for choice? Most of us now-a-days never find a career at all! And those that find it have no choice in the matter, but take just what they can get. It is no wonder, therefore, that the world is full, as I said, of miscarriage of effort, of misdirection of endeavour, misapplication of energy and therefore a large amount of positive harm to the community where men discharge tasks for which they are not fitted. This matter, therefore, is of the most significant value in life: to find fit men for fit places. I wonder whether there is really one in a thousand who can be described as exactly fitted for the work that he performs in life. I remember reading in the famous drama of Kalidasa, a *sloka* where he says that in the world of matrimony misfits are the rule (laughter), a couple who seem made for each other *very, very rare*. And so, seeing that Dushyanta and Sakuntala have been brought together as bride and groom, the poet exclaims, "Ah! Now since Fate has yoked together two people each of whom is worthy of the other in the matter of high quality, for a long time from now, the world will not censure Fate; he will escape blame." Happy in the same way is the contemplation of a career which has found a worthy person. It seems to me that somehow Gokhale was fitted in every way for the career that he

chose ; and yet nobody who studied him from boyhood upwards would have predicted for many years that he would play a great part in Indian affairs. For, as I told you, he started with many disadvantages. For one thing, his station in life was very modest. His intellectual endowments were by no means what you would call brilliant. Nevertheless, what came to him were great opportunities. Now, here is another matter for contemplation. Opportunities come to us all. Only some of us never see them (laughter). Others, having seen them, do not profit by them. Opportunities of some kind each one of us has. In the case of Gokhale, there is no doubt, his opportunities were superlative; for he came as a graduate to the teaching profession in which men like Tilak, Agarkar and Apte had already taken their places and were doing work which was winning admiration and gratitude from all quarters. Not only that, but soon afterwards, he fell under the influence of Ranade and Joshi and still later of Sir Pheroze Shah Mehta. These were great opportunities. Not every one of us can say that such things would happen to us. But the great merit of Gokhale was that he saw the value of these opportunities at every stage. He had great ambitions, but he knew also that Providence had placed in his hands facilities for realising them. He allowed Ranade and Joshi and Mehta to mould his outlook upon life and to shape his character, to inculcate high ideals and principles, besides teaching him the successive stages of the work that he was to do. But can we say that we have not got similar opportunities, although they may not be really of that order of eminence? We all have something; we all have some supporters, whom we can see; we all have wise people to whom we may go; we all have teachers, relatives and others who have seen more of life and are in a position to advise and guide us. Do we go to them actually?

On the contrary, is it not our one great complaint as teachers that we are continually having to give advice and guidance when we know that it will not be heeded at all? (laughter). That is a sad thought. Advice has been described as that which is sought but never followed (continued laughter). In the case of Gokhale, what I want to tell you is, he conscientiously sought advice of those who could give it, he placed himself conscientiously under their guidance; and when their influence was removed by the hand of Time, he could instruct himself; he could order his daily work, he could carry forward the work that they had left for him to accomplish in his own good time. That is a great lesson to be drawn from his life, that we should seek opportunities, realise them when they are beside us with a determination and a will to make the best use of them. And then having perfected himself, having armed himself with the necessary knowledge, was he content? You remember my reading to you at the conclusion of my first address a certain programme that he laid out for himself at the age of 32, after he had tasted the first drop of bitter in his life. He sat down and thought and thought and then made a big programme for himself which was extraordinarily comprehensive. He wanted to encompass all knowledge, practise Yoga, become a member here and there, all for the sake of serving the country. Now that is a programme, which, to borrow a word from gastronomy, one would call gargantuan. Although he did not accomplish the whole of it, you may be sure that the endeavours that he made honestly to fulfil that programme took him forward a great many steps in efficiency, and in the end he had achieved at 49, when he died, a great deal more than what others when they are seventy can claim to their credit. That, it seems to me, is the great value of Gokhale's life. You have all to aim high in order that you may reach a certain degree of eminence. Because you cannot hope to obtain full grasp

of your ideals, you must not cease to be susceptible to ideals; the contemplation of these high ideals puts you in the proper frame of mind to put forth the maximum effort of which you are capable; and then, your achievements, although they may still fall short of the ideals, would be vastly greater than those that could have been yours if you had aimed low. There is a remarkable passage in John Stuart Mill, where he says of a young student that nothing prepares him for tackling big problems so much as the attempt to solve a problem somewhat more difficult than he can manage. If the problem is within his reach, well within his reach, then it is a matter of comparative ease to him. He does not put forth the full powers of his intellect. The task that he undertakes must be a little in excess of his power in order that his best qualities may be evoked. That is the final observation that I wish to make: that Gokhale never fell below his own standard. He always aimed high and he was never satisfied until he had done the best, the very best that was open to him.

CONCLUSION.

I have really performed a task which has given me the greatest possible satisfaction; and I marvel at the way in which I have been able to stand the exertion and strain of the task. We have a belief—haven't we?—that when a dutiful son performs the obsequies of his father or his mother, the very sacredness and the weight of the task keep him strong and healthy. Maybe the magnitude of the task that I have, with your good leave, performed these three days has kept me in full vigour both of body and of mind. Whether I have done it well or ill, fittingly or otherwise, I dare not judge. But to you who have come to me in your hundreds, nay, in your thousands these three days in succession and listened to what occasionally might have been tedious and burdensome, my heartiest and profoundest thanks are due.

APPENDIX.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS.

1866. May 9. Born at Katluk in Chiplun Taluk, Ratnagiri District.
1876. Migrated to Kolhapur for education.
1879. Death of his father.
1880. Married.
New English School started in Poona.
1881. Matriculated.
1882. Studied in Rajaram College, Kolhapur.
1883. Studied in Deccan College, Poona.
1884. Studied in Elphinstone College, Bombay.
Took the B.A. Degree.
Joined Law Class.
Formation of the Deccan Education Society.
1885. Fergusson College opened.
Employed as Assistant Master, New English School.
Maintained coaching establishment for Public Service Certificate Examination.
1886. *Became Life Member of the Deccan Education Society.*
Wrote frequently to the *Mahratta*.
First public speech at Kolhapur on India under British Rule.
1887. Married second time.
First introduced to M. G. Ranade by S. H. Sathe.
1888. Edited English section of *Sudharak*.
Elected Hon. Secretary of the Sarvajanika Sabha and Editor of its *Quarterly*.
Public speech (not delivered) upholding the action of Lord Reay in the Crawford case.
1889. Took part in the Indian National Congress held at Bombay.
1890. Tilak resigned from the Deccan Education Society.
Spoke at Calcutta Congress on the reduction of salt duty.

1891. Appointed Secretary of the Deccan Education Society.
Spoke at Nagpur Congress.
1892. Spoke at Allahabad Congress on Public Services.
1893. Death of his mother.
Secretary, Bombay Provincial Conference.
Engaged in collection of funds for the Deccan Education Society.
1895. Joint Secretary of the Indian National Congress.
Fellow of the Bombay University.
Editor of the *Rashtra Sabha Samachar*.
1896. Resigned Secretaryship of Sarvajanika Sabha and Editorship of its *Quarterly*.
Organisation of the Deccan Sabha.
First meeting with Gandhi.
1897. *First visit to England. Evidence before the Welby Commission.*
Plague Measures in Poona. Publication in England of complaints on the subject.
First meeting with John Morley.
Return from England. Apology incident.
1898. Took prominent part in plague-relief work.
1899. *Elected Member of the Bombay Legislative Council.*
Criticised famine relief measures of Government.
Death of his second wife.
1901. *Opposed Land Alienation Bill. Walk-out from the Council.*
Opposed introduction of communal principle in the District Municipalities Bill.
Supported Temperance movement.
Death of Kanade.
1902. *Retired from the Fergusson College.*
Elected to the Imperial Legislative Council.
Criticised Government's financial policy :—
1. Currency surpluses ;
 2. High level of taxation ;

3. Salt duty ;
4. Army expenditure.
1903. Budget speech :—
1. Reduction of salt duty ;
2. Abolition of excise duty on cotton goods ;
3. Indianisation of services ;
4. Increased effort for spread of education.
Gandhi stayed a month with Gokhale in Calcutta.
1904. *Received title of C.I.E.*
Budget speech : Criticised increased army expenditure.
Opposed the Official Secrets Bill.
Opposed the Indian Universities Bill.
1905. Opposed the Universities Validation Bill.
Budget speech :—
1. Reduction of salt duty ;
2. Pleaded for relief to agriculturists ;
3. Indianisation of services.
Founded the Servants of India Society : 12th June.
Second visit to England.
Presided over the Benares Congress.
President of the Poona City Municipality.
1906. Third visit to England.
1907. Death of his brother.
Deportation of Lala Lajpatrai.
Undertook lecturing tour in Northern India.
Budget speech :—
1. Urged complete abolition of salt duty ;
2. Pleaded for free primary education ;
3. Pleaded for constitutional reforms.
Congress split at Surat.
1908. Evidence before the Decentralisation Commission.
Fourth visit to England.
Announcement of the Minto-Morley Reforms.
Arrest and imprisonment of Tilak.
Defamation suit against the *Hindi Punch*.

- Indian National Congress at Madras.
 Founded Ranade Economic Institute.
1909. Rejected offer of lecturing tour in America.
1910. Moved a resolution on Indentured labour to Natal (adopted).
Moved a resolution on Elementary Education (withdrawn).
 Criticised the Press Bill.
 Acted as Secretary to Sir W. Wedderburn at Allahabad Congress.
1911. *Introduced the Elementary Education Bill.*
 Opposed the Seditious Meetings Bill.
 Contributed a paper on "East and West" to the Universal Races Congress.
1912. Spoke on the resolution of Bhupendranath Basu on Police Administration in India.
 Moved a resolution on Indentured labour.
 Moved a resolution on resources of local bodies.
Defeat of the Elementary Education Bill.
 Fifth visit to England.
Visit to South Africa.
Appointed to the Public Services Commission.
1913. Sixth visit to England with the Public Services Commission.
 Raised funds for South African struggle.
1914. Seventh visit to England with the Public Services Commission.
Declined offer of K.C.I.E.
 Gandhi-Smuts agreement.
 Met Gandhi in London.
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ERRATA

- Page 6, line 33—*For* " are " *read* " is ".
- " 8, " 3—*Add* " the " after " all ".
- " 21, " 34—*For* " were " *read* " are ".
- " 64, " 14—*Add* " the " after " would ".
- " 65, " 20—*For* " was " *read* " were ".
- " 98, " 11—*For* " here " *read* " there ".
- " 100, " 1—*For* " for compromise as if that was
a discredit." *read* " for com-
promise," as if that was a
discredit.
- " 104, " 5—*For* " lead " *read* " lend ".
- " 117, " 27—*Add* " from the methods of these " ^{and}
after " methods ".
- " 126, " 34—*Add* " scarcely " after " can ".