

The Indian National Congress.

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Notable Utterances on the Movement.
Portraits of all the Congress Presidents.*

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ANANDA MOHAN BOSE.

A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE AND WORK.

PRE-EMINENT by pure intellect, Ananda Mohan Bose was likewise pre-eminent by those virtues which Hindus are proud to claim as the distinctive features of their civilisation. Perfect humility of heart, devout prayerfulness, undoubting reliance on God, and whole-souled service that looks not too eagerly to the result,—these are the marks of the truly religious spirit everywhere, and they dwelt in Mr. Bose as they dwelt in few other public men. His speeches contain more references than those of any other patriot to Providence. Where others would speak of the need of union and the utility of sinking small differences, he preached the gospel of love,—love of motherland and love of all her children. Patriotism was with him

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a passion. His Address as President of the 14th Indian National Congress held in Madras brought tears into many eyes. And his last public appearance at the Federation Hall in Calcutta, when a deep sense of wrong done to his people made him quit his bed of illness to speak a word on their behalf,—what can be more pathetic, more impressive than that? Even the famous ‘dying speech’ of Chatham does not touch our hearts so nearly, tainted as it was by a desire for effect which it would be a sacrilege to suggest in the case of Mr. Bose.

CAREER AS STUDENT.

A. M. Bose was born in East Bengal in 1846. From the beginning his acute intellect brought him distinction above all his fellows. He secured the first place in the Entrance Examination of 1862 when he was sixteen, and kept that place in the higher examinations also. He was educated at the Calcutta Presidency College, where he was specially marked for his aptitude for mathematics. The Principal, Mr. Sutcliffe, on the occasion of a Vice-

regal visit, presented him to the august visitor as a brilliant Indian student. Later, on his taking the M. A. Degree, he was complimented by Sir Henry S. Maine, who, as Vice-Chancellor, declared, in his Convocation Address, that Mr. Bose's abilities would have secured him high distinction in the Mathematical Tripos at Cambridge. On leaving College, he competed for and won the Premchand Roychand Scholarship of Rs. 10,000. After serving a short term as Professor of Mathematics in the Engineering College, Mr. Bose proceeded to England in the same ship with Babu Keshub Chunder Sen. There he joined Christ's College, Cambridge. During his three years' residence in that University he devoted himself to a study of the exact sciences, and his ability and character were so marked that he was President of the Cambridge Union for some time. His career was crowned by his coming out sixteenth Wrangler at the Mathematical Tripos,—an achievement which, being the first of its kind for an Indian, raised the prestige of the whole nation and was regarded

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as of happy augury for its future. A few months afterwards Mr. Bose was called to the Bar, and returned to India in 1874.

AT THE BAR.

Industrious and keen-witted, Mr. Bose might have achieved a great distinction at the Calcutta Bar, but, somehow, he turned his attention at the commencement to mofussil practice. In this he soon reached a high degree of success and made enough money to invest some of it in the Assam Tea Industry. On one occasion his defence speech in a criminal case before the High Court Sessions received a warm encomium from Mr. John D. Bell, then Standing Counsel in Calcutta, who referred to it in a speech of his own at the Trades' Dinner as the most splendid defence he had ever heard out of Westminster Hall.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY.

Law and tea enterprise could not engross Mr. Bose's energies. It would have been a wonder if his mind had not been attracted to the problems of education. He was the *bear ideal* of students, and in all that concerned

them he took a lively interest. In 1877 he was appointed Fellow of the University, and next year, while yet barely thirty-two, he was elected to be Syndic in the Faculty of Arts. He made a large number of proposals for the improvement of education generally, one of them being a vigorous plea for the conversion of the Calcutta University into a Teaching University. In this, of course, he did not succeed. But he succeeded in getting the age-limit for Matriculation candidates abolished, and in remodelling the Premchand Roychand Scholarship Examination so as to make it an incentive to future work, rather than a reward for past labours. His position among educationists was now so eminent and his character was so high that Lord Ripon, it is said, offered him the Presidentship of the famous Education Commission of 1882. The honour was declined by Mr. Bose, who saw that his being a native would detract from the weight of the Commission's recommendations. If the story is true, it adds another claim to the long list of claims he has to the admiration and loving memory

of his countrymen. It must bring the blush to the cheeks of those public men who hanker after office, official favours, and official decorations. Though he declined the Presidentship of the Commission, he cheerfully accepted a seat on it, and we can guess, though we have no means of knowing, how useful he must have been to Sir W. W. Hunter and his other colleagues. Some time before this, *i. e.*, in 1880, he had started a school teaching up to the Entrance Standard and manned it with able young men from the University. On this institution, known as the City School, and located at first in a small building, he spent much of his anxious thought. It provided better instruction and more wholesome discipline than most other institutions, and so it rapidly grew into what is now known as the City College. By the year 1884, that is to say, within four years of its starting, it acquired a building of its own, which was opened by Lord Ripon. To the catalogue of Mr. Bose's educational services, already long, have still to be added the watchful care and sacrifice with

which he kept up a school for girls, until the Bethune College Committee amalgamated it with their institution.

OTHER ACTIVITIES.

In the political sphere and in the religious, Mr. Bose was no less active. He was nominated, in 1886, to the Bengal Legislative Council by the Government, and in 1895 he sat in the Council for the second time as the representative of the Calcutta University. Of his labours there, which were worthy of his great renown, we need only mention two efforts which were specially brilliant. One was his speech supporting a proposal to amend the Act of Incorporation of the Calcutta University with a view to give it a teaching side; the other was his criticism of the Village Chaukidari Bill. Besides this, he was a Municipal Commissioner, and took a prominent part in founding and establishing on a firm basis the National Indian Association, and the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science. Like all emotional persons, Mr. Bose was intensely religious. He became a follower of Keshub Chunder Sen

and was a devoted adherent of his, till the Cooch-Bihar marriage broke up the Samaj; and then Mr. Bose, with others, founded the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. His piety and zeal were most unaffected, while his private life was marked by firm friendships and the most open-handed charity.

IN ENGLAND AGAIN.

Towards the end of 1897, his health failing, he was advised to try the waters of Germany. After a short stay he felt strong enough to go to England, where he spent a few months. During this period he placed his services at the disposal of the British Committee of the Congress, and addressed many public meetings, pleading for the redress of India's wrongs. He did magnificent work on this occasion, but at great cost to his health. On his return after an absence of nearly twelve months his grateful countrymen paid him the highest honour in their gift.

CONGRESS PRESIDENT.

In 1898 he was chosen to preside over the 14th Indian National Congress. The roll of

Congress Presidents has many illustrious names, but Mr. Bose's is not the least illustrious among them. He more than justified the choice of the Madras public. His oration yields to none in its literary polish, and as it was delivered in accents of earnestness and faith, its eloquence had a telling effect. Its recapitulation of Congress politics we need not here reproduce. But Mr. Bose's reference to Mr. Gladstone who had just died must not be passed over. The departed statesman's religious side appealed strongly to Mr. Bose, and the tribute that he uttered came from a full and sympathetic heart. His appeal on behalf of the Motherland was one of the most stirring appeals that were ever made to the hearts of Congressmen, and they must have been hard, indeed, who did not feel as if they were about to cry when the orator asked, "Shall India, brother-delegates, be a living or a dying nation?" We shall quote the brilliant peroration here :—

THE MOTHERLAND.

Ladies and Gentlemen,—I began with a reference to Mr. Gladstone and I will finish, too, with a reference to

that great man. It was a cold morning and closely muffled up, pale and ill, the great statesman was entering his carriage at Bournemouth making the last journey of his life on his way to Hawarden there to die. A crowd had assembled at the station to bid him farewell, to have a last look at the face not much longer destined for earth. In response to their cheers and salutations, Mr. Gladstone uttered these words—the last he uttered in public—he who had so often held audiences of his countrymen spell-bound by the magic of his voice, “God bless you all, and this place, and the land you love so well.” The words were few, and the reporters added the voice was low. But there was in them, the last words of the parting hero, a pathos of farewell and of benediction, a deep thrill as of another world, which produced an effect not less, perhaps but more, than the great efforts of a happier time. And let us, too, following those simple words of Mr. Gladstone ask God that He may bless us all and this dear land of ours. Do you, do we, Brother-Delegates, love that land, the land that gave us birth; the land beloved of the gods, they say, in ages gone by, when the world was young and darkness lay over many of its peoples, the land where knowledge lighted her earliest torch, the arts of life and civilization found their home and philosophy pondered deep over the problems of life; where Rishis sang those hymns to the Father in the Shining Sky, the earliest of the Aryan world, which still live and throb in our hearts, and the eyes of the Seer saw visions of things not of this world; that land where after ages the sundered streams of Aryan life unite once again

in the present day? That land, Brother-Delegates, deserves all our love. Love her the more, cling to her the closer for her misfortunes of the past, of the shadows and the clouds that have hung over her in the times that have gone. After centuries of darkness, the dawn of a better day has now opened for her, and the golden light has already begun to stream over her fair face. It depends on us, Brothers and Sisters, Fellow-citizens of this ancient land, it depends on us, on our sense of duty, on our spirit of loving sacrifice and earnest effort, whether the streaks of that light shall broaden and grow unto the lovely day. At length has India awakened from the stupor of ages, the fire of her intellect, of her heroism, of her piety, dimmed but yet not wholly extinguished, and waiting but the breeze of manly effort and kindly help to burn once again in the time to come, let us hope, with splendour and lustre as of old.

Lord Salisbury spoke the other day of the living and dying nations of the world. Shall India, Brother-Delegates, be a living nation, shall the glories that were hers remain for ever a memory of the past, or shall they once again be realities in the time before us? On us, Brother-Delegates, depends the answer, on our efforts, on the lives we live and the sacrifices we make, not in the political field alone but in many another field; and let us not forget that never was progress won without sacrifice. And in that effort, depend upon it, we shall get, as indeed we claim, the loving help and the ardent sympathy of the great Nation into whose hands Providence had entrusted the destinies of this land.

The German host marched to its triumph to the cry of "God and Fatherland". Let ours be a still dearer cry, the cry of "God and Motherland", as our mission also is the holier and nobler enterprise of peace, of love, of loyal progress, of every duty to our Beloved Sovereign faithfully discharged, of individual growth and national regeneration. Hear we, my friends, the trumpet-call of duty resounding to us amid the stirring scenes, the moving enthusiasm, the thrilling sights of this great gathering? Yes, the call sounds clear, but let our hearts gather the strength to respond to that call, and to be true to her, our Common Mother, the land of our birth, to be true and faithful to the light that is within us, and to every noble impulse that stirs within us. And may we, as we return to our homes, to the spheres of our daily duty, carry a little more of the living love to our country than when we came, a little more of the earnest longing to be good and true and useful before the day closeth and our life's work is done.

One other passage, containing a personal reminiscence, must be quoted also. After speaking of the detention of the Natu brothers, Mr. Bose proceeded:—

At the conclusion of a meeting, I think it was at Oldham, in which I had taken part, several of the audience came up to speak to me; and I happened to mention that, should it please the Government so to act, which I trusted it would not, there was nothing to prevent their dealing with me on my return to India as they had dealt with the Natus. I shall not easily forget the scene that

followed. One of my hearers, a working-man, I believe, with indignation and excitement depicted on his face, told me—"We know you, Sir. Should the Government treat you in this way, Lancashire men will know the reason why." I am sorry to say, Ladies and Gentlemen, I forgot to ask his name or to note down his address. But as I told him, I trust his interference on my behalf will not be needed.

For an adequate illustration, however, of Mr. Bose's style of oratory, one must read his concluding speech to the Madras Congress. It was *ex tempore* and abounded in that sort of diction that the highest pulpit oratory affects. It is in one key of exalted feeling. It is too long to quote here, and no extract will do it justice.

LAST SERVICE.

His health broke down after this effort, and he practically retired from public life. But there was to be another occasion for his service. From what he himself described as his last bed of illness he was borne on a litter to lay the foundation-stone of the Federation Hall which was intended to mark the determination of the Bengalee nation to remain united, notwithstanding the late Viceroy's attempt to split them

asunder. He was not able to stand or read the whole of his address. But his presence must have been inspiring; the spectacle of an old and tried friend of the people conveying his last message is a priceless memory which the Bengalees ought to cherish as their dearest possession.

Few passages in the whole range of patriotic literature can rival his speech on this occasion in power or beauty. We are sure none of our readers would grudge it if we reproduced it here entire; but we must resist the temptation, and give only parts of this gem of Indian eloquence:

It is, indeed, a day of mourning to us, when the province has been sundered by official fiat, and the glad-some spirit of union and of community of interest which had been growing stronger day by day, runs the danger of being wrecked and destroyed and many other evils into which this is not the occasion to enter are likely to follow in its wake. And yet in the dispensation of Providence, not unoften out of evil cometh good; and the dark and threatening cloud before us is so fringed with beauteous gold and brightening beams, and so fraught with the prospect of a newer and stronger national union, that we may look upon it almost as a day of rejoicing. Yes, as our glorious poet has sung in one of

his many noble and inspiring utterances "Mora Gangee-Ban Ashe-chse" the dead, currentless and swampy river has felt the full force and fury of the flood and is swelling in its depths. Have we not all heard the booming of that national call and its solemn summons to our hearth? Let our souls mount forth in gladness to the throne of the Most High, at this sacred natal hour of the new and united Bengali nation; let us bear in mind, as a writer in the *Patrika* has said, that from dark clouds descend life-giving showers, and from parted furrows spring up the life-sustaining golden grain, that in bitter biting winter is laid the germ of the glorious spring. I belong to the sundered province of East Bengal and yet, my brethren, never did my heart cling more dearly to you or your hearts cherish us more lovingly than at the present moment and for all the future that lies before us. "The official" separation has drawn us, indeed, far closer together, and made us stronger in united brotherhood. Hindu, Mussalman and Christian, North, East and West with the resounding sea beneath, all belong to one indivisible Bengal: say again, my friends, from the depth of your hearts, to one indivisible Bengal, the common, the beloved, the ever-cherished Motherland of us all. In spite of every other separation of creed, this creed for the common Motherland will bring us nearer heart to heart and brother to brother. And this Federation Hall, the foundation-stone of which is being laid to-day, not only on this spot of land, but on our moistened tearful hearts is the embodiment and visible symbol of this spirit of union, the memorial to future generations yet unborn of this unhappy day and of the

unhappy policy which has attempted to separate us into two parts. It will, I trust, be a place for all our national gatherings ; in its rooms will be held social reunions and meetings for different purposes.

* * * * *

For they, indeed, fatally misapprehend this movement, who imagine that it is the student community or any other single section or two in the province that has caused this upheaval. I thank you all for the ardour, devotion, and spirit of sacrifice which have so far distinguished your efforts. I have heard of people and even of respectable journals which speak glibly of the lawlessness and disobedience to authority of our student community. Let me bear testimony—and this I can do from personal knowledge—as to what is thus described as lawlessness and disobedience on the part of students of British Universities, whom our students would not even dream of approaching in this respect. But I will not pause to give examples, numerous and glaring as they are, but wonder whether our rulers and our critics most of whom, I presume, have passed through the universities of their country, have so completely forgotten the experience of their student days. Why, our students are absolutely spotless, in comparison with British youths, as indeed, I believe, they are spotless, not as a matter of comparison only but by themselves. Let us, my friends, continue in the same career, regardless of our own personal interest and all individual and sectional jealousies, if such indeed there be. For if the true spirit of loving sacrifice and nothing of a baser admixture be ours, surely God will provide for us, and for

you my student friends, and grant us true happiness and the true blessing—how great only those who have tasted it can say—of a self-consecrated existence.

One has heard of different orders in this country for religious and philanthropic service, of vows of self-sacrificing devotion carried to life's last day. Enter you, my friends, into what I might call the order of the Motherland or of Bangabhumi, and with characters unstained, aims that are placed high and spirits that are pure and noble and absolutely self-forgetful, serve the land and suffer for the land of your birth. Hindus and Mussalmans, let us in the name of God all unite in this sacred crusade for the welfare and prosperity of our common mother. We have come, most of us, bare of foot and in garbs of mourning to the site of our future shrine. Silent are the busy marts of men and silent is the roar of trade. Throughout the town and its suburbs Hindus, Mussalmans and Marwaris are closing all shops, in fact, except the small fraction owned by Englishmen. We are present in tens of thousands here and millions throughout the province, I believe, are fasting to-day and no fires shall be kindled in our hearths. But let the fire burn in our hearts, purify us and kindle an enthusiasm which shall be all the brighter and all the warmer for the quenched fire in our homes.

And now, farewell, my friends with these, which may perchance be the last words which I shall utter to you on this side of Eternity. Farewell on this day of fraternal union when the bond of Rakhi is tied in our

arms. Much that comes pouring into my heart must remain unsaid. Ours is not the Land of the Rising Sun, for to Japan, victorious, self-sacrificing and magnanimous belongs that title, but may I not say that ours is the land, where the sun is rising again, where after ages of darkness and gloom with the help, let me gratefully acknowledge, of England and English culture, the glowing light is bursting once again over the face of the land? Let us all pray that the grace of God may bless our course, direct our steps and steel our hearts. Let action and not words be our motto and inspiring guide. And then shall my dream be realised of a beautiful and blessed land by nature and filled by men true and manly, and heroic in every good cause—true children of the Motherland. Let us see in our heart of hearts the Heavens opening and the angels descending. In ancient books the gods are described as showering flowers and garlands on the scene of a notable battle. See we not, my friends, those flowers dropped to-day from the self-same hands, welcoming us to the new battle, not of blood but of manly and stern resolve in the country's cause?

And thou, Oh God! of this ancient land, the protector and saviour of Aryavārtha, and the merciful father of us all, by whatever name we call upon Thee be with us on this day; and as a father gathereth his children under his arms, do thou gather us under thy protecting and sanctifying care.

CONCLUSION.

Death was close at hand. A life of sixty years cannot in India be called short, and when

it has been marked by so many honours and so many useful services, it may even be called long and full. Mr. Surendra Nath Bannerjee summed up his life truly when he said: "There is lying on the litter the earthly remains of one of the greatest, noblest, and purest of mortals." Mr. Bose used his rich gifts of head and heart in the furtherance of unselfish causes and for the advancement of his country. He lived a life of piety, charity, and noble endeavour. He died honoured and mourned by a whole nation.

Judged by his achievements, Mr. Bose's career will not, perhaps, rank with the highest. Born to be eminent in anything he undertook, Mr. Bose, however, did not reach the first place in any field. His services were great in education, in politics, in religion. But everywhere he fell just short of the highest. That is the penalty of being many-sided. None but the most gifted mortals can reach pre-eminence in many fields of activity. But to Mr. Bose belongs the glory of having performed everything that he undertook, and he undertook a great many things, in the true spirit of unselfish patriotism. If the spirit be everything and the actual result immaterial, then Mr. Bose is entitled to the highest honours.

MR. A. M. BOSE'S MESSAGE TO THE BENARES
CONGRESS, 1905.

DEAR MR. GOKHALE,

In expressing the deep rejoicings of my heart at your occupying the Presidential Chair of the Indian National Congress, fresh with your laurels from the West and, what I think is more honoured and loved by us all, for your long and many noble services in the country's cause in the past, permit me to send for your consideration, and that of my brother-delegates, some thoughts which occur to me with regard to the working of our beloved Congress. I greatly grieve that I cannot personally present them before you and my brethren. But illness claims me as its own, and for nearly a year I have been practically chained to my bed. But though I shall not be with you to explain, justify or urge my views, I am sure they will receive such consideration as they may deserve.

There were two main objects with which the Congress was started 20 years ago, namely, to bring nearer together all earnest workers in the country's cause, remove sectional or provincial prejudices and consolidate sentiments of National Unity; and secondly, to record, after full discussion, the opinions of the educated classes, on some of the questions of the day, and by subsequent practice, forward them to Government.

The first of these two objects has, one is glad to feel, been largely attained so far as the educated classes are concerned, and this, I consider to be a great and notable gain. But I think the time has fully come when we must extend this work so as to embrace, within its scope as largely as possible, the peoples, the masses of our different Provinces and Presidencies. This is essential in order to secure, not in a day but by and by, the solidarity of the whole Indian Nation and the unity, the fellow-feeling and sympathy for each other, of the inhabitants of different parts of the country.

I would suggest for this purpose the delivery of addresses in the vernacular of the Provinces by speakers selected from the whole body of delegates at places out-

sides the Congress Pandal; and what is more important, at different towns and important centres in the neighbourhood, say within fifty or sixty miles of the Congress, when there is communication by rail. These meetings, of course, are not for delegates to the Congress, but mainly for the common people; and there might be at the same time Congress fairs and various attractions to draw them together. Let me state here my own experience in connection with the holding of the Annual Meeting of the National Liberal Federation at Leicester. I had the honour of being sent as a delegate to that gathering, and of being selected as one of its speakers, an honour done I was told, for the first time to an Indian. What I said was most appreciatingly noticed, in the *Manchester Guardian*, in terms which I need not quote here. But the important point to which I wish to draw the attention of our Congress is this, that the speakers or the chief speakers at the meeting of the Federation were divided into different groups which addressed various places around Leicester, the day and evening previous to the meeting of the Federation at that place. A member of Parliament and myself were allotted to Market Harborough (if I remember the name aright), where we addressed a gathering of the local people coming the next day to Leicester for the annual meeting. Such a plan would produce, I believe, very beneficial results, and limiting the number of days for the Congress itself. If this be possible, as I believe it is, I would devote one or two days at least to several of our speakers, including many local gentlemen, addressing meetings held at different places around the Congress centre. There would of course be interpreters with them, wherever this may be needed. And not only should there be meetings but also, as stated before, different kinds of entertainments, games and sports. In this way we would popularise the Congress, and further Congress ideas and general political education to a much larger extent than is the case now, kindled amongst the people of the Province, a feeling of enthusiasm and of brotherliness towards the other Provinces. I wonder if we could not have a "Congress Rakkibandhan" both for Hindus and Mahomedans, for delegates

as well as non-delegates, as a symbol of union and fellow-feeling just as we had in Bengal on our ever memorable 16th of October last. I wonder, too, whether, at least to some extent, and in spite of difficulties of caste and otherwise, we could not place Congress delegates from different parts in private houses at the Congress centre. It may perhaps be said that this will interfere with the delegates coming to know each other as at present. But I think this result could easily be prevented, or at least very greatly mitigated. I need not enter into details, but it is at any rate obvious that the arrangement I have suggested will, to the extent it is carried out, enable local friendships to be formed, and useful local knowledge to be acquired. I will only add that this also is the plan which is adopted in England in connection with the holding of the National Liberal Federation and other Congresses. In my case I was the guest of a Unitarian family which originally Liberal, was Unionist in its political complexion, and bitterly opposed to Mr. Gladstone and his Home Rule Policy. And of course they did not join in meetings of the Federation. But yet I have a most pleasant recollection of my stay with them, and I formed valuable friendships with members of the family.

In connection with this subject, though not coming immediately within the scope of my foregoing observations, may I mention the desirability of having a Secretary or Secretaries at all the principal places of India, whose duty it would be to receive visitors, properly introduced from other parts, in the course of the year (not coming of course on their own business), accommodate them in private houses or in suitable Halls, if there are any, and place them in the way of making acquaintances and acquiring information as to the social habits, local institutions and local feelings, etc. In cases in which they specially desire it, visitors might make their own arrangements as to their meals. It is accommodation that will be specially needed, and which should thus be provided for. In this time of revival, should we not do something to revivify the ancient and valued virtue of hospitality which we are in danger of losing from our contact with an alien civilisation. I will not dilate on

the beneficial results of carrying out this plan, which, indeed, are sufficiently obvious.

I am not one of those who look upon the Congress as a three-days' *Tamasha*. On the contrary, I believe that a good deal of very important work has been and is being carried on by our beloved gathering. But I most earnestly wish that in the interval between one Congress and its successor, much more of practical, sustained and devoted effort should be made to spread information, create interest and promote in various ways our National cause. Permit me in this place to quote a passage from the address delivered at Madras by the President of the Fourteenth Indian National Congress:—"Ladies and gentlemen, the time has come when, if we are to reap the full fruits of our deliberations and to give *living force* to our resolutions, we must have a standing organization to carry on the work of the Congress from year's beginning to year's end, to carry on that work continuously, steadily, earnestly, sending agents and missionaries to different parts of the country, spreading information, awakening interests, issuing leaflets and pamphlets, educating the public mind, drawing attention to the many wants and grievances of the dumb masses, whose spokesman it is the privilege of the Congress to be, pointing out the duty we owe to Government, and helping the Government to the best of our power in its endeavours for the better administration, the better education, the better sanitation of the country,—and we must have men wholly devoted to this most important work. As I am standing before you my mind goes back to the great gathering at Leicester in March last, the National Congress, I may say, of the Liberal Party, which it was my privilege to attend and to address as a delegate from Cambridge. There are many points of resemblance that struck me between the Annual Meeting of the National Liberal Federation and the Indian National Congress. * * * But behind all this what a difference, what a busy, active, powerful organization with a Secretary and a staff of officials wholly given to its work, with a Publishing Department, with its separate staff of officials, with its Council Meetings held throughout the year and directing its operations, with its army of agents and

workers and its allied Associations at work all over the country and the same is the case with the great Conservative Party whose organization won such splendid results at the last election. Brother-delegates, I do not expect you to reach to such heights. If Rome was not built in a day, neither are organizations. They are the results of patient labour for many a long day. But let us resolve that at least a beginning, a fair beginning, shall be made in the year before us, that when in the closing year of the century we meet once again we may look back upon some work done, some foundation laid, some progress achieved in the direction I have ventured to indicate.

The passage was received with much cheering. Instead of one, seven years have since then winged their flight. I ask my brother-delegates seriously to consider what progress has been achieved in the meanwhile in the direction there indicated, and if much or sufficient work has not been done in our different Provinces, should we not, in these evil days of re-action or even in good days, if they should come, brace ourselves up for practical and active work, for strenuous and manly efforts, for the progress of our cause, and on behalf of our dear Motherland. Ah! Never so dear as now!

As to the other object of the Congress, namely, formulating and conveying our views to Government, I think we have done enough for the present, to give work for another dozen years or more, even to a sympathetic Government. Barring exceptional cases, and new or recent measures of a retrograde character, which have been carried out or proposed since the last Session of the Congress, we must enlarge our Omnibus and not be content simply with re-affirming our previous resolutions. And with respect to proposals which may have to be separately brought before the Congress, I would suggest that, with perhaps the exception of two or three speeches, besides the Presidential Address, these be embodied in pamphlets previously written in which facts, figures and arguments can be clearly and correctly set out, and which would be readily accessible for future reference. A summary of these pamphlets could also be given by the writers at the Congress Meeting. I would also suggest that not more than two or three matters be taken up (at least as main

subject) at each sitting of the Congress, and we should confine our chief attention to them in the ensuing year. In this way we can, I think, compress the work of the Congress itself, including the Presidential Address, into two days instead of three as at present, and devote the day thus saved, and more, in the way I have indicated, including visits to the Industrial Exhibition and places of local interest, in social parties and entertainments and other ways that would readily suggest. This limiting of subjects would at the same time have the advantage of giving definite direction and concentration to our practical efforts in the coming year.

With regard to the present practice of sending copies of our Resolutions to the Government, would it not be better to embody them in a representation which would succinctly give the arguments and facts on which those Resolutions are based; and this, modified to some extent, if necessary, would at the same time form a sort of Congress manifesto to the outside and specially the British Public. This matter may be worth the consideration of the Subjects Committee.

I will not enter into the question as to how far certain privileges and concessions granted since the Congress came into being may really be placed to the credit of the Congress propaganda; but with regard to which some of our friends think that they were granted by Government of its own motion and would have been granted just the same, even if there were no Congress in existence. But this, however, is certain that now and for many years past the Resolutions of the Congress are treated by the authorities with utter indifference, and in some cases even with ridicule or contempt. What happened last year? While the representatives of a commercial gathering were received with the utmost cordiality by the Viceroy, and were encouraged by his speech addressed to them, the President of the Indian National Congress himself but lately a most distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service and an administrator of the widest experience and the highest repute personally known to the Viceroy, was not allowed the very small privilege of presenting the resolutions of the Congress personally to him. And the Secretary of State for India, whom

appealed to in England, defended this action of the Viceroy. And also bitter and painful experience in Bengal of only the other day has shown with what contempt the Government treats the Resolutions of the Congress, and the unanimous and earnest expression of opinion by a whole people, and the methods of repression with which it puts down that expression. We must, as our first and foremost duty, strenuously strive to educate and energise our people, teach them more and more to rely on their efforts and learn the sacred lesson of sacrifice for the country's sake and to be manly and brave in the great constitutional struggle that lies before them. Let them revive their industries, re-introduce their own village communities or Panchayets, establish Arbitration Courts, take charge as far as may be of their own education at least in its primary stages, and of village roads, water-supply and sanitation and other practicable matters. In the next place we must direct our efforts more and more towards our England frequently sending, and if possible, permanently maintaining, deputation to that country. After, Sir, your brilliant work in England, nobody will question or doubt, if only we can get suitable men for the purpose, the desirability of having such deputations. But I very humbly think that for this purpose and for accomplishing the chief work that lies before every lover and well-wisher of his country, we must now take a bold step forward and try to get Local Legislative Councils based wholly on election, with power of financial control, for at least three of the older Presidencies. Our friends in other Provinces may be sure that if the experiment should succeed with these Presidencies, it will not be long before their turn comes to obtain similar Councils.

It is almost with fear and trembling, that I submit this proposal to make the granting of such Elective Assemblies not indeed the sole, but the chief object of our deputations to England, and as the main plank in the Congress Platform. Leaving our Anglo-Indian friends aside probably some of our honoured leaders may deprecate and criticise such an idea, as being a departure from the Congress ways as hitherto pursued, and as wanting in moderation. But if I make the proposal with a feeling

akin to fear I make it also with a strong assurance and a firm faith that in a few years' time we shall be wondering we did not direct earlier our attention to this matter. That it is a new departure I admit, but for what does a progressive organization like the National Congress exist if not in the progress of time, for absorbing and taking up of new ideas? And as for the charge of absence of moderation, why we might earn ever the praises of the *Pioneer* and other Anglo-Indian papers, if like some organizations that I know of, we were to sing poems as to the blessings conferred by our rulers with just a mention of a few petty grievances and prayers, to give piquancy to the song of praise. Need I state to my brother-delegates that moderation depends on the point of view of the on-looker, that what is moderate looked at in one way becomes revolutionary when looked at in another way, that what was regarded as extreme some years ago is now considered moderate and fair, that even the proposals of our Congress propaganda, mild as they are, are looked upon as wild and visionary, yea, in some quarters as almost akin to sedition. All that promoted, not by illegal and unconstitutional I would care for is, whether the prayer we make is just and practicable, and if it is of violent means, but in the open daylight by constitutional methods and without the slightest or the faintest tinge of violence or disloyalty. We have often been used to look down to the ground. We must now learn to look up and behold the snow-clad mountain and the azure skies, and then we shall admire their beauty, and breathe in their inspiring and ennobling influence.

Let me more fully explain my proposal. It is not necessary to enter into the details of election, though no doubt property and education will be important factors, and the number of members should not be less than about a hundred. If it be deemed necessary I would further admit the element of sectional representation allotting to different communities or interests a certain minimum representation in the Local Councils. Then further I would give to the Government the very important power of vetoing any legislation, or part of legislation, whether of a general or financial character.

after granting a hearing to some members selected by the Council for the purpose. The reason for the Government disallowing any legislation should be recorded in a Resolution which would be placed for a certain length of time on the table of the House of Commons, and be open to consideration of the House on the motion of a member of it, or say of five of them. While this would provide for the vetoing of any legislation which the Government considered objectionable, I would at the same time allow the Government in special cases to introduce into the Supreme Council, where the nominated element would preponderate, any measures of a local character which it should consider desirable so to take up. It should record the reasons for introducing such a measure directly in the Viceroy's Council and in any case it should grant a hearing to nominees selected by the Local Council, on the merits of the measure. It would, as finally passed, together with the reasons for its introduction in the Supreme Council, be liable to the same process before the House of Commons as in the case of vetoes above described. If thought absolutely necessary, I would further allow the Government to nominate one-fourth, including officials, of the members of the Local Council, though with the checks and positive powers above described. I do not think this concession to be either just or called for. A certain number of official members would have the right to be present and speak at meetings of the Councils. I would at the same time allow the Supreme Government to reserve all matters involving questions of Imperial Finance for consideration before the Viceroy's Council. One-third of the members of this Council should be elected by the elected members of Provincial Councils, a certain number being allotted to each Province. The remaining two-thirds, including officials, would be nominated by Government.

There is, it is true, in some quarters or with some authorities, a feeling of doubt in regard to the representative system. But even from such quarters, no, not even for Russia with autocratic principles ingrained as it were for all these ages in the minds of its people, has any other system been proposed. And never were

Representative Institutions introduced and nursed under better, or more hopeful auspices than in the sketch I have ventured to set forth above. For the vagaries, if any, of the popular will, would at once be checked and controlled in the way I have mentioned by the Government which would wield no mere shadowy power, but very real power with the Army at its command.

I have had, I think I may say, a fair amount of acquaintance with the English Agricultural Labourer with whom I have come into contact and whom I have addressed in connection with several election meetings, and I know our ryots at least in Bengal. And I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that whether in intelligence, sobriety, or power of grasp over different questions, the average Indian ryot is superior to the average English labourer who delights in the possession of a vote. And for me quite unexpectedly I have had the testimony of many Anglo-Indians whom I have met in England to the same effect. I considered, therefore, that our prayer, hedged round further as it is by the safeguards previously described, is a just one.

Then the question arises is this request a practicable one? After what you, Sir, have said in England as to postponing this prayer, and confining our attention to certain matters important in their own way, no doubt, but comparatively minor in their character, such as the enlargement of our Councils, introduction of an Indian element in the Executive Council of the Government of India and the Indian Council in England, it is with every deference to your views and with the utmost hesitation that I raise my voice in favour of my proposal. In this state of my health I have been able to read only a few of your eloquent utterances in England; I am not sure, therefore, whether you may not yourself have advocated raising to the first place the proposal I am now submitting. I am in the utmost sympathy with you in the proposal as to introducing a certain limited number of India's representatives in Parliament. I myself had the honour of advocating this step several years ago. But I am afraid the English people will not grant it. I am also in thorough sympathy with the other proposals mentioned above. But permit me to say that

it is only retired Anglo-Indians and a very limited number of other people who will fully understand them. But it is not from them that we can expect much help or support. Whereas the question of introducing Elective Legislatures will present a clear issue which the English people will grasp and understand—an issue with which they are familiar both in the history of their own country and of other countries, that they know of and with which a great many of them no doubt after some continued agitation on our part will be in ready sympathy. No taxation without representation is a maxim deeply cherished by them, and is enshrined in their hearts.

It is a difficult matter to prophesy, but I thoroughly believe that this last prayer of ours has a chance of being granted as early as the minor proposals mentioned above, if indeed not much sooner. Let us remember that in this prayer of Elective Legislature, we shall at once have the sympathy of the Irish Nationalists who form a large compact phalanx in the House of Commons, of the Labour Party with its growing influence, of the Social Democratic Party, and certain other existing and living organizations as well as of many Liberals and Radicals. Here are these organizations already formed, and yearly wielding greater and greater power, whose co-operation we can secure if not indeed at the very start at least in a very short time. But this cannot be said in reference to our other proposals. We shall have no doubt misapprehensions to remove from interested, prejudiced or official classes. But I humbly venture to think that some years of sustained agitation amongst the English people who, after all, are right-minded and justice-loving, and are wedded to the representative system, will secure our object. And they have no interest whatever in a poverty-ridden India with the heavy annual drain from her resources, and furnishing a few loaves and fishes and pensions to the official classes. All their interest, on the other hand, is in a prosperous India with the growing needs and commerce of her teeming, well-doing and contented millions, increasingly buying their numerous products; delighting in her connection with the mighty mistress of the

main, the inheritor of the proudest traditions of progress and liberty, the Mother and Dispenser of free institutions and the centre of the largest and the most powerful Empire that the world has ever seen. Beloved England, how I love thee and cherish the memory of many dear friends and the righteous and heroic men and women whom I have met in your glorious land. Speak of loyalty to England! What loyalty can be greater than that of this country with its noble past and succeeding gloom rejoicing in the helping hand lent her by the English people in her time of distress, and raising her, glorying in the intelligence, the skill, the sobriety and the moral grandeur of her people, to her rightful place amongst the nations of the world? I advocate the granting of representative institutions and gradually of administrative power of the people of India because it will intensify and strengthen the feeling of loyalty to England, because it will be alike to the interests, material and moral, of both the people, because it will make more abiding, more permanent and more glorious the connection between the two countries, both belonging to the same Aryan stock, which Providence in its Dispensation has brought together.

I have taken more space with this subject than I had intended on account of its supreme importance and comparative novelty. I do not enter into the question of a constitution for the Congress and other topics. I need hardly say that I am not wedded to the particular system of election, a short outline of which I have given in this letter. I daresay a much better system may be devised. It is the *system* of representative Institutions, it is controlling the destinies of India by her own people, subject, it may be, to certain safeguards, it is preventing the unmanning and the demoralising effects of the present system by which Indians are kept away from the higher posts, and in consequence of which they are every day losing whatever of manliness, of fitness to command and control which they possessed in the past, that I advocate, and on behalf of which I raise my voice in these perhaps my closing days.

As to the method to be pursued to attain our end, I need not say anything more. I have already said

that it will be absolutely constitutional, appealing to the conscience and reason, yea, even the generosity of the English people. I trust, therefore, that I have said enough to show that our prayer for the Representative system and enlarged liberty is just and practicable, and is to be carried on by loyal and constitutional methods. I trust I shall not be considered a revolutionary, but moderate, just and reasonable in my proposal, and that from the Holy City of Benares will go forth in trumpet tones the holy cry of Freedom that from the City which, it is said, belongs not to Earth and where Emancipation is granted to the Spirit from the terrors of "Yama," the mighty Lord of Death, the sweet and melting strain of Emancipation from official thralldom, shall go over the length and breadth of this land, awakening new life, infusing new vigour, kindling new enthusiasm and meeting with responsive sympathy from the heart of the Great English Nation.

In conclusion permit me, my dear brethren of the National Congress, to convey to you, one and all, my deep love and kindest wishes. Though absent in body my heart will be with you. May the Lord of the Universe, the God of this ancient and ever-beloved Motherland, guide your counsel, bathe you in the fountain of His Love, and grant you this day a new Inspiration and a new Strength!

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