

Indian Opinion

No. 46—Vol. XXII.

Friday, November 21st, 1924.

Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper
PRICE FOURPENCE

DEATH OF MR. PARSEE RUSTOMJEE

“THE GRAND OLD MAN OF SOUTH AFRICA”

THE Indian community received a shock on Friday morning, the 14th instant, when the news was flashed round that “Kakaji” had passed away. Mr. Rustomjee had been in poor health for some months but death came unexpectedly. For the past year or more the state of one of his eyes caused much anxiety, and he decided, in June last, to journey to Capetown in order to place himself under the most skilful surgeons for an operation. Whilst travelling down by train, a new trouble arose in the shape of what turned out to be a carbuncle on the chest. On reaching Cape Town, Dr. Gool, in consultation with a specialist, decided to operate. This was successful, but a few days afterwards there followed further and more serious carbuncles on the nose and face which necessitated an operation which taxed the skill of the best medical men in town. It was indeed almost a miracle that Mr. Rustomjee pulled through. It was then announced that the patient was suffering from diabetes. The operation on the eye was therefore postponed indefinitely. Mr. Rustomjee was taken to Dr. Gool's own house where nothing was spared to make him as comfortable as possible under the circumstances. On the 27th July Mr. Rustomjee, accompanied by his son Mr. Sorabjee Rustomjee, who had been with him at Cape Town, arrived in Durban.

Since then Mr. Rustomjee seemed to be regaining a good deal of his usual health, but the fact was the deadly disease was only being checked by repeated injections of Insulin. Twice before the final attack there were serious warnings. In the meanwhile Mr. Rustomjee, feeling that life for him was uncertain, spent his time in methodically arranging his affairs. He was a man of many activities and heavy responsibilities, and he spent the last days of his life in an endeavour to leave all things entrusted to his care in as good order as possible. On the eve of his death Dr. Nanji was called and it was then thought that the end was near. It did not arrive, however, until seven o'clock in the morning when he passed peacefully away at the residence of his son Mr. Sorabjee Rustomjee in Grey Street. His eldest son, Mr. Jalbhoy Rustomjee is at present on the way to Natal from Bombay. The only daughter lives at Bombay.

THE FUNERAL

The officials of the Natal Indian Congress, on receiving the news of the death of Mr. Rustomjee, immediately decided that the occasion was one demanding a general public response, and the decision to close all places of business, so as to show respect and allow all Indians to attend the funeral, was readily and loyally carried out. For an hour preceding the burial, the Parsee community recited prayers and performed the ceremonial appointed for such occasion. At four o'clock the cortege left the residence and proceeded along Grey Street, Queen Street and Brook Street to the Parsee Cemetery. In

the procession were the children of the Roman Catholic Jerbai Rustomjee Orphanage and the Wesleyan Prospect Hall Rustomjee Orphanage, Father Maingot, Rev. Henry Cotton and Rev. A. H. Hodges of the Wesleyan Church, Dr. Nanji, Mr. Wm. Doull, and others present included, Messrs. V. Lawrence, Kallenback, A. H. West, R. K. Khan, G. W. Dick, Councillors Gilbert, Smith and Mrs. Knight, the Chief Constable (Mr. W. Alexander) and the Town Clerk (Mr. A. O. Jones). There must have been over 5,000 persons following, consisting of every section of the Indian community as well as Europeans who came from all parts of the town and district and from the villages of the North and South Coasts and up-country towns to pay their last respects to this “Grand Old Man.” To those who had not previously had the opportunity, a last look at the face was granted before the coffin was taken into the cemetery.

MASS MEETING

A Mass Meeting of the Indians of Durban and District was held at the Rawat's Bio Hall, Victoria Street, on Saturday, the 15th instant, for the purpose of expressing the community's regret at the loss sustained by the passing away of that Grand Old Man of South Africa, the late Mr. Parsee Rustomjee. Amongst those present were Messrs. V. Lawrence, V. S. C. Pather, B. A. Magrajh, B. M. Patel, P. R. Pather, A. I. Kajee, O. H. A. Jhaveri, A. M. Lockhat, A. H. Kazi, Pandit Bhawani Dayal, Satya Dev, Shaik Amod, S. J. Randeria, Ismail Haffejee, and Shaik Himed.

Mr. V. Lawrence presided and the following was the speech delivered by the Chairman:—

“Dear Brothers and Countrymen,—We meet here this afternoon under very sad and painful circumstances; a very sad duty has befallen on me to-day. To me who is suffering under personal loss, the duty is doubly distressing. We have met here to mourn the death of one who was a father to our community and of one who was beloved by us all. Your presence here in such large numbers testifies that never in the annals of South African Indians has the community suffered such a serious and irreparable loss as now by the passing away from hence of the “Grand Old Man” the late Deshbuckth Parsee Rustomjee Jeevanjee Gorcoodoo whom we affectionately called “Kakaji.” Only the other day our community lost in the Transvaal another stalwart of Passive Resistance in the person of Deshbuckth P. K. Naidoo who was a dear comrade of his in that struggle, and who served our cause loyally and faithfully. Our beloved “Kakaji” was not endowed with much English education but he was more than a match to any educated Indian we have in this country in his zeal and public spirit in our fight in this sub-continent to maintain our self-respect and honour. As you all know, he was our revered leader and Mahatmaji's staunch and indefatigable

lieutenant, whom he supported morally, physically and financially up to the time of his death. He suffered 18 months' imprisonment during that time when Mr. Gandhi started Passive Resistance in the Transvaal for the preservation of our Nation's honour and self-respect, greatly to the loss of his health and ruination of his business. I who have known him intimately and been associated with him in public work for 30 years, am unworthy of speaking of his public spirit and many acts of charity. It is beyond me to give utterance to his sterling qualities. Who is there, here or elsewhere who can dare to speak ill of him? We all have our faults. Who is there that is without faults? He came to this Province 42 years ago when quite a young man and by dint of sheer industry and perseverance rose to the zenith of his fame as a great philanthropist, leader and public worker. His business acumen was unparalleled and this gave him the power of the purse and he used it unreservedly for the betterment of our community. His many acts stand as colossal monuments. He is no more, but his works live and bear glowing eloquence and lasting testimony. To enumerate his public activities and charitable actions will take days and cover many volumes. To this task I am utterly unfitted and unequal. His loss is not only ours but is the Nation's loss. I therefore close this humble tribute to his memory with moving the following resolution:—

"That this Mass Meeting of Natal Indians deeply and sincerely deplore the irreparable loss sustained by the Indian community of South Africa by the death of the late Parsee Rustomjee, the Grand Old Man of South Africa, the friend, guide and father of the community and hereby respectfully tenders to his sons, daughter and relations, the warm condolence of the community in their sad bereavement."

The Chairman was followed by Messrs. Pandit Bhawani Dayal, O. H. A. Jhaveri, Rooknoodeen, B. M. Patel, A. M. Lockhat, Satya Dev and Shaik Amod. All the speeches touched on the excellent qualities of the late Mr. Parsee Rustomjee and the solemnity in which the speeches were made and in which they were heard by those present, bears testimony to the high regard held by the community for "Kakaji."

OUR GREAT LOSS

TO say that the death of our dear friend, Mr. Parsee Rustomjee, known affectionately as "Kakaji," is a great loss, is no exaggeration. His association with this journal for twenty years has been a very close one, and we had come to regard him with the greatest affection. But it is to his public work we would refer. Such a sturdy character it would be hard to equal if we searched the length and breadth of the land. His strong, independent spirit made him stand head and shoulders over his fellows. In the face of opposition, and even ridicule, he always held to what he believed to be right. Whether it was a question of charitable gifts, or his attitude on some matter of principle affecting his fellows, one always found him uncompromising. Once he had made up his mind on a course of action, that was sufficient. It was a matter of surprise to those who knew how physically strong and capable he was to resist, that

he could calmly submit to imprisonment as a passive resister for conscience sake. Like all really great spirits, Mr. Rustomjee was an extremist. On the one hand he could feel deeply, act strongly, whilst on the other he was capable of intense love and gentleness. His spirit would have prompted him to resist to the uttermost, but once he had enlisted under the banner of non-resistance, he became like another being. In this way Mr. Rustomjee showed his greatness as a leader. He displayed the highest form of courage by sheathing the sword and calmly submitting to suffering in a public cause.

In another column we give a brief sketch of the life of our beloved "Kakaji." It is impossible to write of all the noble deeds he has done, but sufficient has been written to show the sterling worth of the man whose death we record with sorrow. His life was most active, and, although he amassed a fair amount of this world's goods, we know that some of his greatest activity was displayed in righting the wrongs and looking after the interests of others. And even the very wealth he gained was destined to be devoted to the welfare of others. What other man in South Africa has set apart, for the benefit of his countrymen, such a large portion of his wealth? The two trusts established by Mr. Rustomjee—one in the name of his beloved wife, and the other in his own name—stand unique. The magnificent public library established for the free use of the Indian community is as fine a collection of works as can be found anywhere in the world, although it is not the largest. The foundation of these trusts is such that, so long as there are responsible public bodies to carry on the work of schools, libraries, and orphanages, there will always be available funds for the erection of new buildings, and also for the relief of famine and other distress. To found such trusts that will furnish an everlasting supply of wealth for the public benefit is indeed a noble work and well conceived.

Such an example might well be copied by leading Indians in this country. Mr. Rustomjee demonstrated how simple it is to become a benefactor, not for one or two occasions only, but for all time. All may not be able to do so much, but we feel sure that many might do something of the sort on a smaller scale. It opens up tremendous possibilities. If we had a number of similar trusts formed by Indians, there soon would be unlimited funds for educational and other purposes. As we have so often written in these columns, the position of Indians in this country depends upon whether the mass of Indians are educated. If the Indian community remain satisfied with what the Government grudgingly provide, much progress will be lost. The finest thing that could happen would be for Indians, either individually or collectively, to follow the noble example of our late friend, and establish these sources of wealth which should be devoted to the advancement of the Indian community as a whole, without regard to caste or creed. In this way the loss we feel at the departure from the earthly scene of him whom the Indian community lovingly regarded as the "Grand Old Man" of South Africa, will eventually be turned into gain.

THE LATE MR. PARSEE RUSTOMJEE

BRIEF SKETCH OF HIS LIFE

THE late Mr. Parsee Rustomjee Jivanjee Ghorkhodu was born in Bombay in 1861. He was the second son of Mr. Jivanjee Janasedjee, a well-to-do merchant of that city. Misfortune fell upon him and he lost all. Soon afterwards he died and the young lad who was destined to become one of the foremost Indians of his day, was compelled to start life very early and earn his living. He was for some time with a relative in Bombay but an occasion arose that brought out the independent and self-reliant spirit which was to be so strongly developed in after years, and this adventurous youth decided, with the help of his widowed mother who pledged her silk clothing in order to provide his passage, to seek pastures new in South Africa.

That was in 1880 when Mr. Rustomjee was about 19 years of age. He landed at Durban and shortly afterwards he was engaged as storeman in a small shop at Verulam. The owner of this business, after Mr. Rustomjee had nursed him through a serious illness, decided to make the pilgrimage to Holy Mecca. Mr. Rustomjee thereupon conceived the idea of becoming a business man on his own account. The value of the concern was not very high, and he managed to pay £50 in cash, out of which £25 he borrowed at a heavy rate of interest, and the balance in promissory notes. By diligence in business and great energy he succeeded not only in repaying the loan but in establishing a prosperous concern with the result that, in 1889, he was able to pay a visit to India, calling at Mauritius on the way. After a stay of ten months in India, Mr. Rustomjee returned to Natal, accompanied by his wife and son. He brought with him a stock of furniture, spices, etc., with which he opened business at 110, Field Street, Durban where he was very successful.

MET MR. GANDHI

In 1891 Mr. Rustomjee first met Mr. M. K. Gandhi and there commenced a firm friendship which lasted without a break until his death. Those who have been in close touch with Mr. Rustomjee know how strong and affectionate was their attachment. For Mr. Gandhi and any cause he took up, nothing was too great for Mr. Rustomjee to undertake. In 1893 the Natal Indian Congress was formed and Mr. Rustomjee took a prominent part in its inauguration and maintenance. Through his persistent efforts the financial position was made sound. In all public affairs Mr. Rustomjee was most enthusiastic and he was honoured by being elected Vice-chairman of the Congress. He refused to accept the chairmanship, choosing to remain in a humbler position. One of the historic incidents in which Mr. Rustomjee figured was the great anti-Asiatic Demonstration at the Point in 1896 when Mr. Gandhi was threatened with his life by a wild mob of Europeans. It was in Mr. Rustomjee's house that Mr. Gandhi took refuge, and it was through Mr. Rustomjee's assistance that Supt. Alexander managed to get Mr. Gandhi away unharmed and unobserved whilst Mr. Rustomjee good-humouredly and very cleverly conducted the enraged demonstrators through his premises in search of their prey, and, in order to cool their ardour, regaled them with refreshments.

In the formation of the Indian Ambulance Corps, in charge of Mr. Gandhi, during the Boer War, Mr. Rustomjee showed his loyalty and public spirit by greatly assisting in the supply of necessaries for the campaign. In 1900 Mr. Rustomjee and family returned to India where, after six months, Mr. Rustomjee left his family so that his children might continue their education.

In 1903 Mr. Rustomjee showed generosity and broadmindedness by donating the handsome sum of £1200 for the purpose of building an orphanage in connection with the Mahomedan Mosque at Lower Umgeni under the priesthood of the late Soofi Saheb. This Orphanage for Mahomedan children is a handsome two-storied building overlooking the Umgeni River and the Indian Ocean. Some of his co-religionists in India criticised this act of beneficence and said that he might have confined his gifts to the Parsees. But it was characteristic of Mr. Rustomjee to treat all Indians as brethren and equal sons of Mother India. Such criticism did not affect him.

It was in June, 1904, that Mr. Rustomjee received that sad news of his beloved wife's death in India.

That same year saw the establishment of the Phoenix Settlement and the taking over of INDIAN OPINION by Mr. Gandhi. Mr. Rustomjee, whilst not altogether approving of the idea of removing the printing plant from Durban to such an out-of-the-way place as Phoenix, nevertheless lent his aid, and whole-heartedly assisted, by a gift of building material, and by his presence on the spot, whilst the buildings were being erected. When Mr. Gandhi handed the Phoenix property over to the Phoenix Trust, Mr. Rustomjee was made a Trustee and he continued to take a keen interest in the Settlement and the newspaper ever since.

In 1905 Mr. Rustomjee again visited India and whilst he was there, he not only built a handsome pile of buildings for family use, but he generously contributed Rs. 10,500 for the purpose of building an Observation Block to the Parsee General Hospital at Bombay, and this was named after his late wife, "Bai Jerbai Rustomjee Jivanji Ghorkhodu Observation Block."

AS A PASSIVE RESISTER

Mr. Gandhi had no more faithful follower than Mr. Rustomjee. When the call came in 1906 for united action Mr. Rustomjee did not hesitate to cross the Transvaal border and court imprisonment as a passive resister. On being deported by the Transvaal Government, he immediately re-crossed the border and was arrested and sentenced to six months imprisonment. In the two campaigns of 1906 and 1913, Mr. Rustomjee suffered imprisonment for various periods totalling 18 months. The intense cold of the Transvaal winter made gaol life anything but pleasant, but Mr. Rustomjee did not shrink from the ordeal, and always spoke of these hardships with pride and satisfaction. During his last imprisonment in 1913 Mr. Rustomjee suffered in health, and his eyesight became impaired. In fact that period marked the commencement of his breakdown in health, for he was never the same man after. Still he always held himself in readiness for the call to suffer again if the occasion should demand it.

TWO MORE ORPHANAGES

Following out his policy of broadmindedness in giving, Mr. Rustomjee donated £1,600 to the Roman Catholic community which enabled Father Maingot, who is in charge of the Indian Mission Church, to build an orphanage for Indian boys in Victoria Street, Durban. This was opened in 1921.

A similar amount was given by Mr. Rustomjee to the Wesleyan Church for the purpose of building an orphanage for Indian children at Prospect Hall, near Umgeni. The work was successfully carried through by the Rev. Lucas, and the fine building, standing as it does in healthy surroundings in extensive grounds facing the sea, owes its existence largely to the generous gift of Mr. Rustomjee.

FORMATION OF TRUSTS

In 1922 Mr. Rustomjee decided to take a step which brought to a climax a long series of charitable work. This was the handing over to a board of trustees a fine property in Durban, costing nearly £20,000, as a perpetual investment for the purpose of providing a regular income to be devoted to the erection of orphanages and industrial schools for the benefit of Indian children, to found Indian National schools for the teaching of Indian languages and English for the poorer classes, to establish and promote libraries of a national character, to provide schools for commercial education, and to assist financially, properly constituted bodies who desire to carry out such schemes. It is a condition that all monies expended by the Trust must be for the benefit of Indians without regard to caste or creed. This trust is named after Mr. Rustomjee's late wife, "The Bai Jerbai Rustomjee Trust."

The property consists of a three-story building in Queen Street, Durban, containing three shops on the ground floor, a tea room on the first floor and a photographic studio and residence on the second floor. Behind this building is the Parsee Rustomjee Hall which contains the M. K. Gandhi Library and Reading Room. Underneath are three warehouses. The establishment of such a magnificent library is a great boon to the Indian community who have the free use of it.

The second Trust is named "The Rustomjee Jivanji Gorcoodoo Trust." The objects of this trust are to erect schools, including spinning and weaving schools, in South Africa or India, to found hostels and public halls, to provide money for famine relief or like distress, to assist in digging wells, to erect hospitals and dispensaries.

The trust has for its source of income a large piece of ground and buildings in Victoria Street, Durban, and the sum of £20,000 represented by a Mortgage Bond.

These trusts have already provided for several Schools in India besides which Mr. Rustomjee has given from time to time large amounts for famine relief, well-digging and spinning wheels. All these gifts, amounting to Rs. 130,000, have gone through the hands of Mr. Gandhi.

A School is at present being erected in May Street, Durban, at a cost of £1,500 for the Tamil Community out of funds provided by the Trust. It was Mr. Rustomjee's desire also to build a Gujarati School, and at the time of his death this matter was under consideration by the Gujarati Hindus. The trustees are empowered to carry on, all the funds, as they become available, will be used in accordance with the objects as laid down in the Trust Deeds.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Mention should be made of Rustomjee's energetic assistance rendered to the Red Crescent-Society at the time of the war in Tripoli when £10,000 was collected in South Africa for the sick and wounded. For his work in this connection Mr. Rustomjee was presented by His Majesty the Sultan of Turkey with a gold medal. The special work on behalf of his Moslem brethren is yet another illustration of Mr. Rustomjee's broad and generous disposition.

This sketch will be incomplete if reference were not made to the very great work done by Mr. Rustomjee in connection with the Governor-General's Fund during the Great-War and, the S. A. Indian Bearer Corps Comfort Committee. He took part in street collections, generously providing refreshments for the collectors, and visit the hospitals with comforts for the patients of the Bearer Corps.

As a patron of sport Mr. Rustomjee "played the game" by providing accommodation for all committee meetings and he was the donor of two challenge cups: the Gandhi Memorial Cup for adults and the Sarojini Naidu Cup for the Juniors.

In a brief history of this nature it is not possible to enumerate the many acts of charity and private benevolence which were so well known to his friends. He was a man of simple tastes, refusing to adopt modern and expensive modes of living. He preferred to use the money which he could reasonably have spent on his own comfort for the benefit of his power countrymen and in establishing these magnificent Trusts which will be a lasting Memorial to his self-sacrifice and public spirit.

Such a life is worthy of emulation by all.

DEATH OF MR. RUSTOMJEE
SOME PERSONAL TRIBUTES

I have learnt with much regret of the death of Mr. Parsee Rustomjee. He had, during his long residence in this town, earned the well-deserved respect of all sections of the community, being a man who, in the dispensation of his charity, paid no heed to race or religion. His acts of benevolence will for many years remain as a monument to the memory of one who recognised the obligations of prosperity, and will serve as an example which I hope all others with like capacity to help humanity will emulate. To his own kith and kin I offer sincere condolences in the loss they have sustained, a loss which in only a slightly lesser degree is general to the whole community.

T. M. WADLEY,
(Mayor of Durban.)

It was with the very-deepest regret that I heard last Friday of the death of Mr. Parsee Rustomjee; it will indeed be a great loss to the community; my knowledge of him convinced me that he had grasped and realised in a wonderful way the truth that 'No man liveth to himself'; and his life was the earnest effort to help others along this world's thorny path! He was a great man, and was a good man, with indeed 'The wider Vision,' and we cannot help feeling that his loss will be irreparable, especially to the young, for whom he seems indeed to have carried out Christ's words 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me.'

EVELYN L. KNIGHT,
(Town Councillor.)

As one who has come into close contact with the Indian Community and as one who has humbly tried to associate himself with the problems surrounding them, I feel called upon to express the deep sympathy I feel for them in the loss they have just sustained of the greatest and kindest of them, the late Mr. Parsee Rustomjee.

The Grand Old Gentleman was a man who commanded the respect of the whole of the Indian and European community alike.

In his lifetime his grand personality indelibly engraved itself on the hearts of everyone with whom he came into contact he was a shining example of love and self sacrifice.

To the Great God who loves all alike whether they be European or Indian, we can safely leave the Great Soul that has passed, there to reap the reward for his exemplary life of self-denial and devotion on this earth.

S. J. SMITH,
(Town Councillor.)

The death of Parsee Rustomjee came as a shock to the town in which he has been a monument of philanthropy for close upon half a century. His sudden demise means the loss of a sincere friend and benefactor to many. He was one who was held in the highest esteem and respect by all with whom he came in contact both commercially and in his private capacity. He had a large heart, so

much so that every waif and stray found a corner in it. In the early days of trouble he brought sound common sense and argument to bear for the common welfare.

He was closely associated with many charitable institutions of which he was the founder, and his passing will be a profound loss to the Indian community.

W. ALEXANDER,
(Chief Constable.)

Parsee Rustomjee is dead! My good staunch friend of forty years has gone and I must say a few words at the parting, address them to his countrymen, young and old, whom he has left behind, in the hope that they will endeavour to follow in his footsteps. He was an upright man, unselfish, true-hearted, and sympathetic towards the young and the poor. He lived frugally that he might have the more to give away. His benefactions covered many thousands of pounds.

He has gone to his eternal rest a model to each of us of duty to poor suffering humanity. He was a worthy disciple of M. K. Gandhi.

Farewell old friend there are few like you, would that there were more.

F. A. LAUGHTON.

Mr. Parsee Rustomjee, or as he was more familiarly and affectionately known as "Kakaji" has gone. The closing of stores and the record attendance at his funeral indicated in itself the high regard and esteem in which he was held by all. There are many who will be poorer in the loss of a friend, as he was a friend to all in distress and the details of his private benevolence will never be fully known. But though he has passed away he will not be forgotten as he has left lasting monuments to his benevolence and of his desire to improve the status of the Indian community, in general, which will perpetuate his name and good work for all time. As one who has been in close touch, almost daily, with him for some years past, the writer can speak with authority of the late Mr. Rustomjee's enthusiasm in the cause of uplifting and assisting the Indian community, and the method of carrying out these objects was the creation of the two well known Trusts, viz: the Bai Jerbai Rustomjee Trust called after his late wife and the other the Rustomjee Jivanji Gorcoodoo Trust called after himself. In creating these Trusts Mr. Rustomjee donated almost £50,000 so that from their very inception the Trusts have an income sufficient to meet any calls made on them within reasonable limits. That these trusts may be of inestimable value to the Indian community is self-evident. Whether they will be of the value intended by the donor, depends to a very large extent on that community itself. Mr. Rustomjee has given the community the facilities for improvement but if these facilities are not taken advantage of to the fullest extent, the objects of the Trusts will be defeated and the blame will then rest with the community. In so far as the M. K. Gandhi Library is concerned, a library generously donated by Mr. Rustomjee, the deceased took an active interest with the view of encouraging others to derive the benefits of such an institution. Whilst hoping that in the course of time this institution would be availed of to its fullest extent, the writer feels sure that in his heart the late Mr. Rustomjee felt it was not being utilized to the extent it might, although he never actually said so in words. Now that he is gone, let the community make up its mind to express its appreciation of Mr. Rustomjee's generosity, by supporting his aims and objects to the utmost of its ability. This is the only recompense or thanks Mr. Rustomjee required.

As regards Mr. Rustomjee himself, it is superfluous

to say much, where so much has already been said and written. Suffice it to say, his word was his bond and nothing more can be said. He was a man of unbounded charity and one who devoted himself actively to the protection of the rights of his community. His loss will be felt more and more particularly in times of trouble and difficulty and his place will be difficult to fill.

WM. DOULL.

The passing of my dear friend Mr. Rustomjee leaves a gap which cannot be filled. One was so used to seeing him, that it is difficult to realise that his familiar face will look upon us no more. His place of business seems empty without his familiar figure. During the twenty years that I knew him, I had the fullest opportunity of getting to know him from every side. We did not always agree on every matter, in fact, we sometimes strongly disagreed. But the frank expression of our feelings did not drive us apart, because there was always a strong feeling of mutual attachment and friendship which would forget and forgive. I am proud to have known Mr. Rustomjee. His noble example to his countrymen compels admiration. Even his stubborn determination to live a life of privation from the ordinary comforts of life, and what appeared to be needless care about trifles, I must forgive when I think of his well-directed aim through life. "Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves" was specially applicable in the case of Mr. Rustomjee. He never willingly wasted a penny, but he would deliberately donate thousands of pounds to a worthy object. His steady and persistent participation in all good work in the community's interest was a wonderful thing. His advice on business and private affairs was always worth taking. And even his sharp rebuke might well be swallowed, for the motive behind it was unselfish. Such a life will long be remembered; and, long after his peculiarities and weak points are forgotten, one will remember his faithful service and self-sacrificing labours for others. Such men do not live in vain. Their good deeds live for ever.

A. H. WEST.

Be reverent to true greatness, admire what is noble, shun what is base.—DR. ANNIE BESANT.

It is with feelings of sorrow that I pen this small tribute to the late Mr. Parsee Rustomjee, a true patriot and the greatest philanthropic Indian in South Africa. The news of his death will no doubt be a shock throughout the Indian world and a blow to the struggling community in South Africa because of the loss of the father of all Indian movement in this part of the world. He was looked upon as the leader and the guide of the Indians since the Mahatma had left these shores for India. There was no movement in which he was not consulted and nothing was done without his advice and guidance in the struggle for existence in this country. It was through his assistance that it was possible to hold both the South African Conferences in Durban. He will always be remembered for his charity and personal sacrifices he made for the good of his countrymen in South Africa. The generations to come will also remember his splendid work in building schools and orphanages for those other than his own nation, the Parsees. Historians will record his name in golden letters and will state, I have no doubt, that he was a MAN who had spent all or mostly all his wealth which he had earned in South Africa for the South African Indians. He spared none in his criticism if he felt that there was need for such criticism. He loved the Indians and devoted his whole life for the service of his Motherland. What other man in South Africa has done as much or half as much as the late Kakaji? He

always felt sorry for the Indian merchants who never tried to come up to the scratch. He never failed to give praise where praise was due, and never censured unless censure was justified. He has passed hence, but his spirit and his example remain with us. To those of us, who saw him very often, the loss is cruel, indefinite, and inpalpable. Whatever the future, we know that his life was fragrant, and that to those of us who are still stumbling on the world's great altar stairs, his words and actions will be an incentive to mount to the highest step, as he would wish, and to join in the labour of doing all that can be done for the people whom he loved. In offering my heartfelt sympathy to Jalbhoy, Sorabjee and family, I commend these comforting lines to them and to the members of the Indian community:—

Weep not, beloved friends. Nor let the air
For me with sighs be troubled.
Not from life have I been taken. This is genuine
life,
And this alone—the life which I now lead
In peace eternal; where desire and joy
Together move in fellowship without end.

MATABADAL BEETHASEE MAHARAJ.

The passing of Mr. Parsee Rustomjee who was familiarly known as "Kakaji" will be a great blow to the Indian community.

He had a vast knowledge of worldly experience being in business in this country for over forty years. His counsel was frequently sought and readily given. He was foremost in extending a helping hand where assistance was needed. He was loved by one and all. He was a great patriot and gave practically everything he was possessed of for the use and benefit of his countrymen. The history of the two Trusts which he founded and which involved over £60,000 is too well known and need not be enumerated here.

Personally I believe that the prejudice of Europeans that subsists against Indians is largely due to a want of proper understanding of the Indian people. Men like the late Mr. Parsee Rustomjee formed a sort of medium to remove such misunderstanding, but unfortunately we have not enough of such mediums to entirely eliminate same.

May I hope that the objects of the above Trusts will be carried out with added usefulness in perpetuation of his great memory.

R. K. KHAN.

A great soul has passed on to its eternal rest. May Almighty God give it peace and joy.

The late Parsee Rustomjee was familiarly known as "Kakajee" to those who were intimate with him and well did he deserve this homely appellation. "Kakajee" will not be seen by us any more but he will never be forgotten. His influence upon Indian public life has been so useful and impressive as to render it impossible for any of us to estimate it at its true value. He was associated with the early beginnings of the Indian public here and was largely responsible for the opening of the Indian Educational Association which gave place to the Natal Indian Congress. His unselfish labours with Mahatma Gandhi to bring that body into healthy and active existence is far too well-known to need repetition here. Criticism and opposition there was much but his indomitable courage, his unflinching honesty of purpose and his sincere pleading overcame all obstacles and the Natal Indian Congress in due course became an organised and recognised body. Having done that much he left it to others to carry on the good work and it is a proud boast that the Natal Indian Congress still lives and does effective Indian public service. Other bodies have come into existence but have been short lived. They have been welcomed as showing an active

interest in the affairs of the country. His interest in the Natal Indian Congress was keen to the last.

No charity was complete without Kakajee's support. He gave unstintingly and always with good grace. His charity was distributed without any thought or distinction of class or religion. He truly loved and therefore gave and that is the real meaning of charity. He did not give as one would give alms but he gave because there was in him that innate sense of duty to his poorer countrymen. It was for their betterment and upliftment that he gave. The institutions that have received assistance show his catholicity of spirit and are a living monument to his great character and thoughtful consideration of those he loved best.

None ever appealed to him in vain. Many will miss the regular donations he delighted in giving. His face would beam with happiness to see the distressed relieved. Of him it may rightly be said he believed that it was 'more blessed to give than to receive.'

His abiding interest in the younger members of the community impelled him to provide them with a library which is second to none in South Africa on matters Indian. He has by this library provided a medium of instruction and inspiration which if fully taken advantage of will produce from amongst some of our young Indians, men who will surely be a credit to themselves and to the community. They may prove to be the bridge of the difficulties between the European and the Indian races here. This was Kakajee's idea in providing the library. We can best reverse his memory by making full and fuller use of this great gift.

In the realm of sport—well he played the game. He was always in the front and encouraged good clean play. The losing side he said had always something to learn and that was to play again and beat the winner.

Kakajee may have had his faults—who has not, but whatever they may be they were very much overbalanced by his great sacrifices both of person and purse. He was honest to a fault and made his conscience his only guide. Having made up his mind that a certain course was correct and that none others could be injured by his action, he persisted in it if in the result some good were to accrue to the community.

Kakajee was a man the like of whom we shall not easily find again. Much can be said about him. Even his critics admired him and gave him credit for conscientious action. He has played his part in this life and played it well. He has set a splendid and unselfish example to our well to do Indians in South Africa. Of him I fitly quote.

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints in the sands of time.

To his son Sorabjee and other members of the family I tender my sympathy.

J. W. GODFREY.

By the passing away of the late Mr. Parsee Rustomjee the Indian community of South Africa has sustained an irreparable loss. Kakaji, as he was so intimately known throughout the length and breadth of South Africa, was certainly an "uncle" to every Indian. That the South African Indian community has lost a noble and devoted son cannot be gainsaid. His generous heart knew no bounds. He was a great philanthropist. His various charities will ever live as a colossal monument to his memory.

It was in the year 1912 that I first came to know "Kakaji." It was through his efforts that I was landed in Natal. Since that year I have been more or less closely associated with him, and indeed he was a noble son of Mother Hind. His sufferings in the Passive Resistance Struggle are still fresh in our

minds and in him Mahatmaji found an able lieutenant whose sincerity was beyond description. His sufferings in gaol for a period of 18 months—at a time when he had passed his prime of life—is sufficient to show his sincerity of purpose. That he had not suffered in vain was shown in the Smuts-Gandhi agreement, of 1914. He was a great devotee towards the furtherance of education and the Trust Building that stands in Queen Street, will, I hope, be the medium of fulfilling his ambitions.

He had a warm place in his heart for the South African Indian Congress, and his assistance—financially and otherwise—during the last two conferences was highly appreciated by the officials.

Sport did not escape a place in his generous heart and the fact that all the sports meetings were held in his spacious premises in Field Street, shows the interest he had taken in sports.

He was indeed a Great Man whose place could hardly be filled. He has gone but his works would live as a lasting monument to memorise his name.

May Paramathma shower his blessings on the departed soul is the fervent wish of the writer.

BHAWANI DAYAL

Parsee Rustomjee has been a true friend to me, a friend rarely encountered in one's life-time. His loss I am still feeling, and this is the only personal tribute I am able to render to him.

A man so intensely human, with many weaknesses, and with such a strong and stout heart, he had the rare gift of almost invariably discerning essentials from non-essentials.

The South African Indian Community has lost one it will be difficult to replace, and with you all I share and feel the loss.

H. KALLENBACH.

INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

That, though the segregation Bill has been dropped, says *New India*, the danger of drastic anti-Indian legislation being passed in the near future has by no means disappeared was shown by the attitude of the new Union Government in the debate last month on the Indian question in the South African House of Assembly. The debate was initiated by Mr. Marwick, a Natal member, who introduced a resolution requesting the Government to bring forward legislation for (1) segregation of Indians in urban areas, (2) prohibiting, where local option by landowners has been exercised to that effect, the transfer of any landtitles by Europeans to Asiatics, (3) prohibiting the employment of Europeans, particularly women, under Asiatics, and (4) giving power to local Councils to provide that no trade licences be permitted to pass into the hands of Asiatics whether from other Asiatics or Europeans or the issuing authorities. The usual arguments were trotted out to support the motion. Another Natal member, Mr. Reyburn, moved an amendment to this resolution requesting the Government to consider advisability of enabling the Provincial Councils to pass legislation (1) providing for trading and residential segregation, (2) the establishment of a minimum wage based on European standards, and (3) the making of the necessary financial provision for ensuring the emigration of Asiatics in large numbers. The debate was adjourned after the House listened to the speech of the Minister of the Interior, Dr. Malan. He did not criticise the proposals of the movers of the resolution and the amendment. On the other hand, he said that with regard to the Asiatic question there was "only one possible standpoint," evidently the European standpoint; but the Government wanted a free hand in investigating the problem during the recess. He felt that the whole

Asiatic question was assuming a more and more acute form everyday and so the Government would introduce legislation as soon as it was expedient to do so. His speech showed that he was substantially in accord with the previous speakers, and there is no ground for hoping that the Coalition Government of the Nationalist and Labour parties would be any better than its predecessor. The Nationalists have the upper hand by reason of their greater strength, and they have always shown themselves to be bitterly anti-Asiatic. Colonel Creswell, the Labour party leader, speaking from the Opposition bench, only last April, in the debate on the Segregation Bill, expressed the view that repatriation and segregation were not the right remedies. After referring to the distress in which many of the repatriated Indians were living, he said rightly; "We have brought these people here, and we are responsible for their position." Admission of the fact, but not the inference, was made also by Dr. Malan who observed:

I want to remind hon. members that this difficult question about which so much has been said is a problem of our own creation. In this regard I have in mind especially Natal which has been importing Asiatics for 20 years. Later on Asiatics came of their own accord, a direct consequence of the importation.

The Asiatic was then wanted as a labourer. Having climbed to prosperity on his shoulder, it is now felt that he is an encumbrance. So let him be kicked away. The Minister of Interior announced that, with a view to speeding up "voluntary" repatriation, he was increasing the inducements offered to emigrating Indians and their families and getting recruiting officers to try to persuade the Asiatics to return to India. Colonel Creswell is a member of the Cabinet, but apparently on the Asiatic question he either does not deem it politic or wish to have his own way. In his speech in April he had indicated that the question, being as alleged at bottom an economic one, will have to be tackled by economic, not racial, remedies. He suggested that the prevailing principle that labour was a marketable commodity, paid for at rates subject to the laws of demand and supply, irrespective of the conditions of life imposed upon the labourer, was the root cause of the trouble. Evidently the fixing of a minimum wage was what was indicated. Further the Colonel would rigorously enforce public health laws through the Municipalities. But Dr. Malan is not of this view. He regarded the minimum wage proposal contained in the amendment as useless, "as Asiatics will find means of evading the law." However, Government had not come to a decision upon it. Dr. Malan's speech does not encourage the hope that even if it be adopted it would be *in lieu* of racial legislation. He did not give any idea to the House as to the trend of the Government's views on the other points suggested. He only made it clear that it was in sympathy with those who were of opinion that the Asiatic "menace to the white civilisation in South Africa" should be rigorously checked, and was contemplating the introduction of considered measures at an early date. With that view the Government had "reserved" the Boroughs Ordinance (to deprive Indians of Municipal franchise) unanimously carried by the Natal Provincial Council. The only other point, to us of little importance, made by the Minister was that such legislation affecting Asiatics should not be passed by the Provincial Councils but by the Union Legislature as it affected "our international relations." We may in passing notice the argument he advanced that South Africa was supported in her policy by the sister Dominions. All of them have legislation, he said, to keep out Indians. Evidently he did not realise that keeping them out was one thing and ill-treating them after they had become citizens of the

Dominion, and especially if at its instance as in the case of Natal, was quite another. The latter breeds international and Imperial complications. The right to shut out whomsoever they choose has been conceded to the Self-Governing Dominions and India. There are disabilities imposed on domiciled Indians even in the other Dominions. But they are small and affect a very small number compared to the disabilities of Indians in South Africa. If only the other Dominions, acting on the Imperial Conference resolution of 1921, which they have accepted and reaffirmed, will soon put Indians on the same level of civic opportunities as others, they will not only have done something appreciably to strengthen the Empire but also have set a good example instead of a bad one to their South African sister. India will be very keenly on the watch for more indications of General Hertzog's policy. She must be prepared for more oppression of her children settled in South Africa than they have yet undergone. How does the Government of India propose to meet the situation?

PROPAGANDA AGAINST FIJI INDIANS

Sjt. Benarsidas Chaturvedi writes:—

The Kenya betrayal has produced its harmful effects in other Colonies also. The Europeans of Fiji are now agitating against the Indians being given equal rights in those Islands. Here is an extract from a speech delivered by Sir Maynard Hodstrom (Representative of Fiji at the Empire Exhibition) in a meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute.

"There is a danger of Fiji becoming more an Asiatic settlement than anything else. There are 60,000 Indians there to-day, who are continually being added to, and there is also an unnecessarily large influx of Chinese. It is a matter in which Australia should take an interest because Fiji is standing in a somewhat dangerous position—the same danger threatens Kenya. These people are not by any means good representatives of the Indian race; they are below the best type of Indians; but there is a strong movement towards giving Indians the franchise on the same basis as Europeans, and the handful of Europeans feel as strongly as Europeans in Kenya do on that matter. I would like broadminded and farsighted people in Australia to take an interest in this matter, because it will not be a good thing to have an alien race, even though Asiatic, in control of so important a centre when there is trouble. I was hoping to hear something on the question of combination of forces in the Pacific for mutual self protection. I would emphasise the importance of keeping these Islands we already hold in the hands of our own people, because once you give the Indian population the communal (Common?) vote these Islands will within a short time, become a place in which few Europeans will care to live."

Thus the 4000 Europeans of Fiji want to keep in bondage for ever the 60,000 Indians who are living in that Colony and who have made it what it is to-day. The British Government having definitely decided to give only second class Citizenship to Indians, it is but natural that the Whites of Fiji should copy the example of Kenya Whites. No wonder Sir Hedstrom utilised the opportunity given by the Empire Exhibition to indulge in anti-Indian propaganda at the Royal Colonial Institute.

SWARAJ AND UNITY

INSPIRING MESSAGES FROM LEADERS

Hitherto it has been a struggle and yearning for a change of heart among Englishmen who compose the Government of India. That change has still to come. But the struggle must for the moment be transferred to a change of heart among Hindus and Mussalmans.

MAHATMA GANDHI.

"Unity is the path to National Freedom."

SAROJINI DEVI.

"I would that all could realise that there are no rights which do not carry with them commensurate responsibilities. The assertion of rights with the shouldering of the responsibilities alone will lead to unity."

FOSS WESTCOTT.

"Be ready to give and you will get back a hundred fold."

SARALA DEVI.

"Swaraj is true Swaraj only when the higher, the wiser and the selfless self of the community rules over it."

BARU BHAGAVAN DAS.

"No Swaraj without Hindu Muslim Unity. Without that Unity I shall not accept it. It is the concern of every Indian to strive for the attainment of national unity before everything else."

DR. KITCHLEW.

"So strive in all things small and great, incessantly and with such faithfulness with the aim that Kingdom of Heaven may come the true Swaraj, the inner freedom without which all else were vain."

GEORGE JOSEPH.

"There can be no peace in the world until the preservation of Brahmacharya is preached universally."

SHRADDHANAND.

"I want the whole of India to be brave. It would not do if only the Hindus or the Mussalmans were brave. I want both to be brave, as brave people never fight with each other."

SHAUKAT ALI.

OUR TOILING BROTHERS

With bending backs
I watch them pass
To fields of toil,
The working class:
And I wonder why
As they pass along,
The world can sing,
So glad a song.
The weight they bear
Through all the years
Should call from us
A world of tears;
And I wonder why,
In God's great plan,
Few tears are shed
For toiling man.

"Navayuga."

Natal Indian Congress

A Special General Meeting of members will be held at the Rawat's Bio Hall, Victoria Street, Durban, on Sunday the 23rd instant, at 3 p.m. to confirm the appointment of a Deputation to interview the Minister of the Interior re the Boroughs Ordinance.

Sorabjee Rustomjee,

V. S. C. Pather,

Joint Honry. Secretaries