

GOKHALEANA

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Gokhale's 110th Birthday

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Edited by :

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FOREWORD

Charles Kincaid C.V.O. (Commissioner of the Royal Victorian Order) who was on active service during the First World War and later a Judicial officer at Poona, is known as the co-author of the *History of the Maratha People* in collaboration with Rao Bahadur Parasnis.

This sketch by Kincaid, reflects the esteem in which he held Gokhale, and is characterised with a sense of objectivity and knowledge of public life of the times.

However there are three statements made by the author in the course of this sketch which have to be contested.

He says that Gokhale's demand for reduction of the excessive tax burden on the people was not justified as Lord Curzon wanted money for the protection and preservation of the ancient monuments. But Lord Curzon utilised the money for raising the grand Victoria Memorial in Calcutta, to rival the Taj and to glorify British Imperialism and his Viceroyalty.

Kincaid disapproves Gokhale's demand for reduction in the army expenditure, forgetting that the Indian Army had been used for Imperial purposes, and had been sent to Afghanistan and China in the interest of the British empire. It was Gokhale's contention that the Indian tax payers' money should not be spent for maintaining the British Army in India to safeguard the interests of the Empire but that the expenditure should be met from the British Exchequer.

Kincaid states that during the first visit of Gokhale in 1897, to London, to appear before the Welby Commission he had entertained the idea to secure the restoration of the Peshwa's regime in Maharashtra, a fantastic idea, heard for the first, time from Kincaid, the historian. However the sketch is a valuable one as it is an estimate of an English historian of Gokhale's life and work.

This sketch is published with acknowledgements to Rushbrook Williams from his *Greatmen of India*, published by the Home Library, Times of India, Bombay in 1939.

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S. R. VENKATARAMAN
Secretary,
Servants of India Society.

GOPALA KRISHNA GOKHALE

(1866—1915)

CHARLES KINCAID, c.v.o.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale was born on May 9 in the little village of Katluk in the Chiplun taluka of the Ratnagiri district on the western coast of the Bombay Presidency. He was by caste a Chitpawan Brahman and he spoke his mother tongue Marathi with the peculiar elegance of his fellow castemen. A strange legend is related of the Chitpawans, which I have told in the History of the Maratha people. It is follows :

Once Parashu Rama, the Brahman incarnation of the god Vishnu, to avenge the murder of his father Jamadagni by the Kshatria king Sahasrarjuna, cleared the earth twenty-one times of the Kshatriya caste. Thereafter he was so reeking with blood that no other Brahmans would eat with him. He therefore went to the summit of the Sahyadris and stood gazing at the sea, which then washed the foot of the mountains, and pondering where he could find Brahmans with whom he could dine. As he looked he saw floating on the surface of the water the corpses of fourteen Mlecchas or barbarians. He dragged them ashore, built a great pyre and burnt them to ashes. From the ashes he created fourteen new Brahmans, who had no scruples about eating with their creator. The meal over, the fourteen Brahmans begged Parashu Rama to give them a land wherein they might live. The hero drew the mighty bow given him by the God Shiva and shot an arrow into

the Arabian Sea. He then commanded the ocean to go back within its borders as far as the arrow had fallen. It did so, thus leaving bare the Konkan. This reclaimed land Parashu Rama bestowed on the fourteen Brahmans. They went to dwell there and built themselves a town called Chitoolan or the Town of the Burnt Heart, which in course of time was corrupted into Chiplun. To themselves they gave the name of Chitpawans or Brahmans purified by the Funeral Pyre.

Whatever truth may underlie this romanlic tale and whatever the real origin of the Chitpawan community may be, they have produced a greater number of eminent men than any other in India. The talented Peshwas or hereditary prime ministers of the Maratha empire were Chitpawans. So too were Ranade the Great High Court Judge, Paranjpye the distinguished mathematician, Tilak the famous journalist and politician and Apte the greatest of Indian novelists. So when Gokhale rose to eminence, he was in excellent company.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale was connected with the aristocratic house of Raste and his ancestors had held responsible office under the Peshwas. His father Krishna Rao Gokhale was educated at Kolhapur, where he became a school friend of Ranade. Unhappily Krishnarao Gokhale was poor and his poverty forced him to give up his studies and accept a small post in the service of the Maratha Prince of Kagal, a kinsman of the Maharaja of Kolhapur. Gopal Krishna Gokhale's mother was the daughter of Bhaskar Oka, a well to-do Brahman of the same taluka. She was illiterate, but after the manner of so many Maharashtra ladies, she was strong willed and

deeply religious and she made a faithful wife and a devoted mother. The early years spent by Gopal in the countryside gave to him what so many other Indian politicians lacked, a first-hand knowledge of the Maratha peasant's difficulties.

When Gopal was ten years old he and his elder brother Govind were sent to Kolhapur for their secondary education but three years later their father died in Kagal and his income died with him. Thus Govind at eighteen had, as his father had done before him, to leave school and give up all hopes of high office. He accepted a small post in the Kolhapur state on fifteen rupees a month. Out of this tiny income he not only supported his mother and sisters, but sent eight rupees a month to Gopal, unable to complete his own education, he determined that his younger brother should not similarly suffer.

On eight rupees a month Gopal contrived to subsist and learn but the struggle must have been appalling. He had to reduce his meals to one and cook it himself, and to read his textbooks by the street lamps because he could not pay for oil. Fortunately he had a retentive memory, a facility for mathematics and a fine constitution. In 1881 he matriculated and as an under graduate went first to the Rajaram College of Kolhapur, thence to the Deccan College in Poona, and finally graduated in the Elphinstone College in Bombay. There he took a second class in mathematics and won a post-graduate scholarship of twenty rupees a month. He was now independent of his generous brother and accepted an assistant mastership in English at the New English High School in Poona. His salary was only thirtyfive rupees monthly, but a youth

trained to live on eight rupees, his salary, added to his scholarship, seemed wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. He sent part of his earnings to his brother towards the liquidation of his debt ; at the same time he kept terms as a law student and coached pupils for their public service examination.

Some years previously two distinguished Brahmans, Messrs. Tilak and Agarkar had founded the Deccan Education Society. It controlled a number of schools, but anyone who joined it had to bind himself for twenty years never to ask from the society more than seventy-five rupees a month for his services. This self-denying rule appealed to the young Gopal and he resolved to become member of the society. The chief obstacle was his brother. Govind had during the best years of his life denied himself not merely luxuries but ~~base~~ necessities and he wished in return that Gopal should exploit for the family's benefit his great abilities. Nevertheless the young man struck to his point and Govind gave way. They were right, for if Gopal never reached affluence, he won immortality.

In 1884 the Deccan Education Society decided to turn the New English School into the Fergusson College and the first classes were opened in 1885. Gokhale was appointed one of the professors of English ; but English was only one of the many subjects that his versatile mind enabled him to teach. He had taken his degree in mathematics and he had published an excellent textbook on arithmetic ; so he was soon teaching mathematics as well as English. At other times he was required to lecture on history and political economy. In fact, one cannot but

think that his seniors exploited somewhat ruthlessly their junior's many-sided ability. Gokhale, however, was no bookworm. As a boy he had been a useful if not an outstanding cricketer and he was an excellent billiards, chess and card player.

While Gokhale was still a master at the New English School he made the acquaintance of his father's old school friend, Mr. Justice Ranade, in a somewhat unusual way. To celebrate some academic function the New English School had invited all the most prominent Poona citizens. The youthful Gokhale was posted at the door with strict instructions to prevent "gate crashing," he was only to admit would-be entrants who could produce tickets. Suddenly a guest presented himself without a ticket. He had left it at home by mistake, he said. Gokhale jumped to the conclusion that here was the very type of intruder against whom he had been warned. Coldly he told the visitor that there was no admittance without a ticket. Unfortunately the reputed "gatecrasher" was no less a personage than Ranade, the greatest Indian then living. Flabbergasted for the moment, he looked round for an acquaintance who might help him. He found one in Mr. Sathe, who put matters right and introduced Ranade to the conscientious door-keeper. The great man was far too magnanimous to bear ill-will towards the young obstructionist, and Gokhale became not only Ranade's firm friend but his devoted pupil, and to be a pupil of Ranade was no sinecure. In the following passage Mr. Shahani (Gokhale, Page 59) has described Gokhale's training.

"Under instructions from Mr. Ranade, the disciple set to work with intense application. Many were the

dreary hours spent in hunting up materials; many were the nights when sleep was denied the young man, because work had a stronger claim. Even fever was not admitted as an excuse. 'Fever would go away if medicine were taken,' the ^{executing} ~~executing~~ master would say, 'but a Wednesday lost could not be reclaimed' (Wednesday being the day when they usually met for their work).

This was no doubt an excellent training for one gifted with immortal youth, but the strain of it may well have been partly responsible for Gokhale's early death.

For the time being, however, all was well. Ranade honoured Gokhale by making him one of the secretaries of the Sarvajanic Sabha of Poona, then the chief political association in India. Its communications were always acknowledged and answered by the Bombay government. Under the care of Ranade the young secretary wrote drafts for the Sarvajanic Sabha's letters. Thus he had the advantage of writing English and moderate and restrained criticism under the eyes of a master. Unfortunately between 1889 and 1891 the Deccan Education Society passed through stormy times. The two founders Messrs. Tilak and Agarkar quarrelled. Mr. Tilak was a staunch upholder of the old-fashioned Hindu orthodoxy and tried to keep all his pupils free from modern influences.

Mr. Agarkar inclined towards the liberal unorthodoxy of Ranade, who had waived his objections to eating and drinking with his English ^{acquaintances} ~~acquaintances~~. Eventually the differences between the two friends became acute. Mr. Tilak left the Education Society and the Fergusson College and took with him Mr. Mamjoshi, to whom had

been entrusted the organisation and collection of the college funds. This was a great loss to the staff, for Mr. Tilak was the senior mathematical tutor and Mr. Mamjoshi had been very successful in his somewhat ungrateful duties. The all-too-willing Gokhale was directed to take their places, and he became permanent professor of mathematics and bursar as well as professor of English and political economy. Such labours would have overwhelmed the ordinary man, yet Gokhale still made time for weekly articles in the *Sadharak*. In fact the English articles were all by him and the Marathi articles by Mr. Agarkar. For this extra toil Gokhale refused payment, since his journalism, as he explained, was a labour of love for this country.

In 1890 Gokhale first entered politics. When only twenty three he was called upon to speak at the Congress in support of a resolution to reduce the Salt tax. He did so with great effect, and he continued to inveigh against this impost until its practical abolition in 1906. In the Congress of 1892 he spoke strongly on the Indianisation of the public services and his speech brought him prominently before the public eye; but while Indians outside Maharashtra were coming to regard Gokhale as one of their chief political leaders, he was unhappily becoming more and more without honour in his own land. Gokhale's sympathies were with reformers like Ranade and Agarkar, but accident had put him in an unfortunate position. His first wife was found shortly after their marriage to be suffering from an incurable disease. Pressed thereto by his relatives and with his wife's consent he married a second lady. He thus incurred the wrath of the Hindu reformers who were preaching monogamy. On the other

hand his support of the claims of the untouchable castes and, above all, his partaking of refreshments at the headquarters of a Poona mission brought down on his head the resentment of the orthodox party. Mr. Tilak took advantage of Gokhale's difficulties and stirred up the Poona mob against him. This was particularly the case at the Ganapati festivals, organised by the extremist wing in opposition to the Muharam celebrations. The students vied with each other in composing verses in derision of the moderate group. Unfortunately both "Gopal" and "Gokhale" lent themselves readily to Marathi rhyme, so that in every poem the owner of these names came in for jeers and jibes, always offensive and often obscene. Some years later this literary campaign reached its climax in the appearance of a play called "Kichak Wadh" or "The killing of Kichak" in the principal theatre of Poona. The author was Krishnaji Khadilkar, the chief leader writer on the Kesari staff. The play was based on an incident in the Mahabharata. The disguised Pandava brothers and their joint wife Draupadi took refuge in Viratnagar. Unfortunately Draupadi's beauty roused the passion of Kichak, the queen's brother, and he resolved to make her his mistress. She fixed a meeting with him, but sent instead the giant Bhima the second of the five brothers. When Kichak appeared Bhima killed him. In Mr. Khadilkar's play the eldest brother Yudhisthira preached patience. Bhima was full of a just wrath and advocated violence. The author intended that Yudhisthira should stand for the moderate party and its leader Gokhale; Bhima stood for Tilak and his followers; and Draupadi stood for India. The actors made Yudhisthira utterly contemptible and Bhima admirable. The play proved extraordinarily popular, but one strange circum-

stance led to its suppression by the Bombay government. Unexpectedly, the public took Kichak to stand for Lord Curzon. The actors played up to the public and every night Kichak's appearance led to a demonstration against the famous viceroy. The suppression of the play followed, but it continued to be read and enjoyed for many years afterwards by Gokhale's political opponents,

In 1896 Gokhale went with Sir Dinshaw Wacha to England to give evidence before the Welby Commission. His chief theme was the growth of Indian expenditure in excess of the growth of Indian revenues. While he was absent in England the bubonic plague attacked western India with fury. The Bombay government, anxious at all costs to check the horrible disease, were led by their doctors into measures that were not tolerable to the orthodox inhabitants of Poona. Great feeling was roused by the inspection of plague-ridden houses by English soldiers, and friends of Gokhale wrote to him exaggerated accounts of the sufferings of the Indian public at the hands of unclean barbarians. The climax was reached when Mr. Rand and Lieutenant Ayerst were shot when driving to Government House at Ganeshkhind by two excited young fanatics. Gokhale, not doubting the accuracy of his correspondents' letters, made wild charges against the Bombay government. An official enquiry was ordered; but when Gokhale, on his return to India, called on his informants to substantiate their statements, they one and all implored him not to reveal their identity. The unfortunate bringer of charges was thus unable to prove them. He had been deceived. The stories told him were either false or greatly distorted and he had unwisely accepted them as true. After grave thought he decided

that he was in honour bound to apologise to the Bombay administration. In this decision he was strongly supported by Ranade and under his guidance he sent a full and frank apology to the Governor in Council. This action greatly increased the respect in which he was held by Indian and English officials but the extremists were furious. Their papers described him as a mean and time-serving poltroon. Their view to which Tilak cordially subscribed seems to have been that when one brings an unfounded charge against the administration, one should stick to it at all costs, but Gokhale was too great a gentleman to adopt this course. He bore patiently his enemies' attacks in the sure consciousness that time was on his side. He proved right. The government appointed a commission to go into the question of plague and inoculation, and they nominated Gokhale as a member.

The journeys necessitated by the work of the Plague commission on the top of his journey to England changed considerably Gokhale's outlook. Before his western voyage he had been a Maharashtra Brahman and probably hoped for nothing more than the restoration of the Peshwa's rule but whereas Tilak, for all his ability, continued to his death to hold this view, Gokhale, became more and more an All Indian and less and less a Chitpawan Brahman in his opinions. Indeed he was all for joining hands with the Moslem, community against whom the extremists fomented unquenchable hatred.

In 1899 Gokhale was elected to the Bombay Legislative Council by the Municipalities of the Central Division of his Presidency. He soon came to prominent notice by his speeches against the Land Alienation, Bill, introduced

to restrict the Maratha peasant's power of alienating his lands. Gokhale, who knew the lives of the peasantry well, took the view that the restriction would only reduce the peasants responsibility and self-respect, and that the best course was to create co-operate credit societies. How far Gokhale was correct it is hard to say. The Land Alienation Bill did produce good results where introduced; at the same time the Bombay Government adopted his suggestion and introduced co-operative credit societies all over the Presidency and with marked success.

In 1902 Mr. Gokhale succeeded Mr. (afterwards Sir) Pherozeshah Mehta on the Imperial Legislative Council. Of this body he remained a member until his death some thirteen years later; and it was at Simla and Calcutta that his reputation reached its zenith. It was, however, clear that he could not in his new office continue his work as a professor at the Fergusson college, and after eighteen years of most onerous service he resigned. It was a grave step to take. His experience and reputation as a political leader and orator had given him very great influence over college students and, as he knew, that influence was sound and moderate. Nevertheless there was no alternative. He gave up his post, which had brought him in the small salary of seventy-five rupees a month and took instead the even smaller pension of thirty rupees a month.

When Gokhale joined the Indian Legislative Council, Lord Curzon was viceroy and dominated by his vast energy and ability every department of the administration. So successful had been his financial policy that in spite of disastrous famines he had a handsome surplus at his disposal. He proposed to spend much of this in restoring

and beautifying the historic monuments of India. Gokhale's view was that all such surpluses should be returned to the taxpayers by reduced taxation. There was much to be said on both sides. It is true that the peasants, who paid the land revenue, were extremely poor, and nowhere more so than around Gokhale's home. Still the division of the surpluses among the hosts of peasantry would benefit each one very little; whereas the Government of India were trustees of some of the magnificent structures in the world. These had been badly neglected and Lord Curzon restored them to their ancient splendour. Any tourist who visits the Taj Mahal, the sites of former Delhis, the mosque of Babar at Panipat, the fort at Agra, etc., etc., will, I think, glorify the great Viceroy's name. Gokhale further attacked the salt tax and here he was more successful as I have already said. Salt taxes have always been hateful and in pre-revolutionary France the salt tax (*la gabelle*) was detested. Another of Gokhale's demands was the reduction of military expenditure. The army was, he said, too big and the officers were overpaid; but the army only numbered 2,80,000 men. It had to police a country more than half the size of Europe as well as guard hundreds of miles of frontier from the incursions of lawless and ferocious barbarians. The officers in the British army were so badly paid that none of them could stay in their regiments without private means. I do not, therefore, think that there was any real justification for this criticism. The fact was that neither Gokhale nor the Indian Government understood the situation. The administration was so poor that once when I was on Lord Sandhurst's staff he complained to me that he had just had to refuse the money for white washing a traveller's bungalow. Yet the country was not really so poor as that.

What was needed was a broader basis of taxation. When Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson widened the basis of taxation, revenues poured into the treasuries.

In 1905 Gokhale did the greatest thing in his life. He founded the "Servants of India Society". It was created in imitation of the Society of Jesus and was originally an autocracy under Gokhale. It is now controlled by a body of three, with a president and a secretary. Its object was to collect together a group of disciples who would voluntarily abandon all ordinary ambitions and pledge themselves to a life of toil and poverty in the cause of their country. It was a great conception and worked admirably so long as Gokhale lived. Afterwards it was affected by the rapid growth of the extreme Congress party.

In 1908 came the Minto-Morley reforms and their initiation was undoubtedly due to the influence that Gokhale, when in England, had acquired over Lord Morely. He also threw himself into the cause of elementary education. Towards that end he introduced in 1911 an Elementary Education Bill; but, as usual, the Government had no money and many of the non-official members refused to support it. Another cause that he championed was that of the indentured Indians. These unfortunate persons were lured by crimps to distant colonies and there abominably treated. I am glad to say that I was myself a member of the legislative Council of the Viceroy, when Sir William Vincent many years later decreed the abolition of the system.

The partition of Bengal and the treatment of Indians in South Africa were other subjects of Gokhale's tireless oratory. It was when he was eloquently defending the

cause of South African Indians that he first met Mr. Gandhi who was working in their behalf in Cape Colony. On the latter's invitation Gokhale went to Africa. Backed as he was by the Indian government he was able to make proposals that first the Government of India and then Mr. Smuts accepted; but Gokhale did not live to see this triumph. He had long been suffering from diabetes, and the ever increasing tasks that he assumed as a member of the Public Services commission, as head of the Servants of India Society, as member of the Legislative Council, as president of the Congress, as representative of the South African Indians, aggravated the disease. On Feb. 19, 1915, the great orator and political leader passed away. His last words spoken in Marathi to his comrades of the Servants of India Society,

“ This side of life has been good to me. It is time that I should go and see the other.”

The death of Gokhale caused wide-spread grief among his followers and great regret among his English friends. Although he was politically opposed to the English officials, he always got on with them very well, Lord Kitchener, whose army estimates he tried so hard to reduce, was very fond of him and loved to chaff him. The magnificent Lord Curzon, who hated criticism, forgave it in Gokhale and was so impressed by his abilities, his self-restraint and his eloquence that to show his appreciation of his critic's services, he obtained for him a Companionship of the Indian Empire. Yet it was not only great men such as these who came under the wand of the magician, but all who met him. Once, when I was judge of Poona, I thought it my duty to call on Gokhale; but as it was a purely formal call I did not intend to stay more than five

minutes. He received me with such courtesy and his graceful Marathi speech was so delightful to listen to, that thirty-five minutes passed before I left his little house in Bhamburda. The fact was that if he loved his country dearly, he also loved his fellow men and he could not but be charming to all of them. Whatever his faults may have been, and they must have been very few, they will surely be forgiven him or his abounding love of numaniy.

[From the *Greatmen of India*—
 Edited by Rushbrook Williams]

NOTES

Agarker, Gopal Ganesh, M.A. (1856-1895): First Editor, *The Kesari* life member; Dcecan Education Society, Poona, Principal Pergusson College, (1892-95) taught history and philosophy. Resigned from *The Kesari*, started *Sudarak*, was a well-known writer on political and Social problems, called the Patron Saint of the Fergusson College; was born poor and died poor. An ardent advocate of Women's education, a Girls High School in Poona is named after him.

Apte., Hari Narayan: Editor, *Dynaprakash*, the Maratha Daily conducted by Servants of India Society, and a most popular historical novelist in Marathi.

Balachandra Krishna Dr. Sir, : (1852); an eminent physican, member Bombay legislative Council, (1902); fellow Bombay University and, Dean, Medical Faculty.

Curzon of Kedleston Lord: (1859-1925) Secretary to State for India (1891-92); Viceory and Governor General of India 1898-1905 an autocratic imperialist.

Gandhi Mahatma: (1869-1948) Barrister, went to South Africa found the helpless deplorable conditions of Indians settled there, successfully espoused their cause and with the active support of Gokhale, removed some of their disabilities returned to India in 1914; worked for the freedom of India through his weapons of Non-Cooperation boycott Swadeshi and Satyagraha, a Hindu fanatic shot him dead, became Martyr on 30-1-1948.

Kitchner, Lord: (1850-1916) Indian Commander in Chief (1800-1909). He was drowned when the cruiser Hampshire was sunk off Orkney Islands during the first World War.

Mehta Sir, Pherozeshah: (1845-1915) One of the founders of the Indian National Congress, a well known Barrister, city father of Bombay, known as the king of Bombay, was the foremost leader of public opinion in his days, was President of the Congress four times.

Minto Lord: (1847-1914) Viceroy of India (1905-1912) and joint author of Minto Morley Reforms

Morely-John Henry: (1838-1923) a distinguished English Man of letters. His life of Edmund Burke is deservedly well known. As Secretary of State for India (1906-1910) he was the Coauthor of the Minto Morley Reforms.

Nam Joshi B: (1853-1896) Passed his matric; was connected with the *Kesari* and *Maratha*; good at collecting funds for the D.E.S. The Poona Ray Museum owes much to him. His name was removed from the list of members of the Deccan Education of Society, as he offered Satyagraha by neither working nor resigning his membership.

Paranjoye, Sir, Raghunath Purushottam: (1876-1966) a brilliant student of Gokhale stood first in B.Sc. of the Bombay University secured a Government of India

Scholarship, entered the Cambridge University, passed out with flying colours as the first Indian senior wrangler. But he joined the Deccan Education of Society as a life member; principal Fergusson College, Poona from [1902-1920] Minister of Education in the Bombay Government [1921-23]; member of the India Council in London [1927-32]; Vice-Chancellor of Lucknow University [1937-38]; the Honorary Vice-Chancellor of the Poona University [1956-59]; High Commissioner for India in Australia [1944-47]; Author *Life of Gokhale*, *Life of Karve*, *The crux of the Indian problem*; 84, not out.

Ranade Mahadev Govind M.A. L.L.B. [1842-1901]
A modern Maharshi, father of Indian Economics, Editor, *Indu Prakash*, a Judge of the Bombay High Court [1893-1901]; founder of the Indian National Congress and the Social Conference, [1885] Author *Rise of Maratha Power and Essays on Indian Economics*.

Sathe, Shivan Hari : Secretary of the Sarva Janik Sabha, Poona laid the foundation stone of the Servants of India Society on 6th October, 1905, on Dasara day, and not on the 12th June 1905 as many writers have mistakenly stated.

Tilak, Bal Gangadhar : [1856-1920]; Life member of the Deccan Education Society, professor of Mathematics and Sanskrit in the Fergusson College [1885-90]; resigned and Edited the *Kesari* and the *Maratha*; an extremist in politics and a conservative in social reform; convicted for sedition [1897]; transported to Mandalay in Burma for his political activities [1907] started the Home Rule Movement, went on Deputation to England [1918].

Author : *The Gita Rahasya* etc.

DEPRESSED CLASSES

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But the attainment of a democratic form of Self-Government, such as obtains in other parts of the Empire, must depend upon the average strength in the character and capacity of our people taken as a whole, for it is on our average strength that the weight of the edifice of Self-Government will have to rest. And here it must be regretfully admitted that our average today is far below the English average. The most important work before us, therefore, now is to endeavour to raise this average so that it may approach the English average as the French and the Dutch averages do. There is work enough for the most enthusiastic lover of his country. In fact, on every side, whichever way we return, only one sight meets the eye, that of work to be done, and only one cry is heard, that there are but few faithful workers. The elevation of the depressed classes who have to be brought up to the level of the rest of our people, universal elementary education, co-operation, improvement of the economic condition of the peasantry, higher education of women, spread of industrial and technical education and building up the industrial strength of the country, promotion of closer relations between the different communities these are some of the tasks which lie in front of us, and each needs a whole army of devoted missionaries. Shall the need go unsupplied?. Out of the thousands of young men that leave our Universities year after year, shall not even a few hear within them the voices that speak to the spirit and respond gladly to this call?. The work is the work of our country. It is also the work of humanity. If, after all the awakening of which we speak and over which we justly rejoice, these fields do not yield their harvest for want of workers, India must wait for another generation before she receives faithful service from her children.

—G. K. GOKHALE

From *The Select Gokhale*—P. 274